

Seeing art in objects from the Pacific around 1900: how field collecting and German armchair anthropology met between 1873 and 1910¹

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When reviewing the historical records of how aesthetically remarkable objects of non-European origin came to be considered as art, one is immediately confronted with at least two common myths. Both paint the picture of the ugly anthropologist and, more specifically, of an ethnologist so deprived of aesthetic sensibilities and unable to recognize the artistic quality in these objects from foreign cultures. The argument dates back to the initial period of Primitivism in the first two decades of the 20th century; it was at least partly subscribed to by William Rubin and was at the heart of Jacques Kerchache's famous 1990 manifesto 'Pour que les chef-d'oeuvres du monde entier naissent libres et égaux', which demanded the opening of the Musée du Louvre to the 'Arts premiers'.² Accordingly, so the first myth, European artists were the first to immediately see and recognize the artistic value of such works when encountered either in an ethnographic museum, on the wall of a bar, or in a curio-shop. The second myth blames anthropologists of subscribing to vulgar Social-Darwinist views that understood primitive as meaning under-developed, or lower and savage, pending replacement based on the logic of natural selection, that is, evolution, by the 'true thing' at least one notch above. In the following I will show that quite the contrary was the case and that early anthropologists, often having been trained as medical doctors or as natural scientists, and visiting local groups *in situ*, contributed decisively to the recognition and appreciation of the latter's artistic activities and achievements. Thus, field experience became key to the opening up of the researchers' minds for the appreciation of art, despite the evolutionary bias to their studies.

¹ An earlier version of this paper was read at a conference held at the University of Tilburg in January 2014. The author thanks Nigel Stephenson, PhD, Basel for the highly professional care applied to the language used in the final version.

² William Rubin, 'Modernist Primitivism. An introduction', in: Rubin, William, ed, "*Primitivism*" in *20th century Art. Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984, vol. I, 1-81, here 6-8; *Libération*, Paris, 15 march 1990, see Nogent, Vincent, 'Jacques Chirac inaugure', http://www.liberation.fr/evenement/2000/04/13/jacques-chirac-inaugure-aujourd-hui-les-salles-consacrees-aux-oeuvres-africaines-amerindiennes-et-oc_322640, 13 April 2000; more recent echoes resounded in the debate in the German media now terminated, with regard to the contents of the future Humboldt Forum in Berlin, see <http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article139415428/Ein-Brite-macht-Berlins-Mitte-zum-Leuchtturm.html>, consulted on 15 April 2015.

Nevertheless, as always, myths and misconceptions usually contain at least a grain of truth. With regard to the second myth, it is true that most lay readers as well as some anthropologists misread simple forms of society and what they regarded as more basic forms of cultural equipment as a statement about lower as opposed to higher orders of development, the latter allegedly superior for having proven to be more complex and therefore efficient. In terms of figurative representation, the closer to nature an artwork seemed to be, the more accomplished and thus the more efficient in rendering intrinsic value it was viewed according to the prevailing European canon during the second half of the 19th century. However, a close reading of the original texts concerning the facts observed by the authors to be dealt with here reveals that, in most cases, they did not apply the term simple as opposed to complex in a pejorative sense in their analyses.³ Hence the debate about the 'primitive' in Primitive Art is often flawed, mistaking the term as a reference to 'lower art', and thus often adding a racist undertone to the matter, instead of considering it as an art which is simply technically less complex. A rigorous application of historiographic tools could save us considerable time and energy.

Turning to the first myth, the one stipulating that it was up to European artists to rescue the testimonies of the arts of Africa and Oceania from the hands of careless ethnologists, one must acknowledge that it was indeed initially up to a few European avant-garde artists to winnow works of Asian, African, American or Oceanic origin from their ethnographic context. This enabled the European artists of the first decade of the 20th century to look at these objects as if they were works from the hands of yet unknown artists of an origin more assumed (e.g. Africa) than known. A few European avant-garde artists even included some of these works in their own exhibitions or publications. Yes, it was members of the *Blaue Reiter* such as Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, August Macke and Paul Klee who, in 1912, paved the way for a new approach to these works. Even before that, members of the *Brücke* including Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Erich Heckel had started to embrace works from Africa or Oceania as motifs in their own productions.⁴ Moreover, perhaps with the exceptions of the 1897 Congo show at Tervuren⁵ in Belgium and the Hall of Northwest Coast American Indians

³ Ernst Grosse restricts his analysis to Australian Aboriginal societies not because he feels that these societies or their art forms are more savage, but because they are less complex and thus more easily accessible to comparison. In his conclusion he stresses that differences between primitive [i.e. primary] art forms and highly developed art forms are more quantitative than qualitative. 'By its fundamental motives, means and goals the art of the primeval age is in one with the art of all ages' [my translation], Grosse, Ernst, *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, Freiburg i.Br.: J.C.B.Mohr, 1894, 293; see also Van Damme, Wilfried, 'Ernst Grosse and the birth of the anthropology of aesthetics', *Anthropos* 107, 2012:497-509, esp. 499-501.

⁴ For comprehensive lists see Gordon, Donald E., 'German Expressionism' in William Rubin, ed., *"Primitivism" in 20th century Art*, 1984, vol. II, 369-403, here 377-99.

⁵ Designed, among others, by Henry van de Velde, see Debora L. Silverman, 'Art Nouveau, Art of Darkness: African Lineages of Belgian Modernism, Part III' *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 20, no. 1 (Spring-Summer) 2013, 3-61, according to van Nimmen esp. pp. 8-13, a quotation I was referred to by Jane Van Nimmen, 'Henry van de Velde Year in Germany and Belgium: Part One', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 12, no. 2 (Autumn), 2013, note 51 at the end of the online paper [[2](http://19thc-</p>
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installed in 1898 by Franz Boas at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, which brought each tribe's specific style to the fore, until 1907 anthropological curators had not yet come up with ways of presenting the works of art in their custody that were any different to the presentation modes at the world fairs of their period.⁶ And Emil Stephan, who initiated a new view through his pioneering publication, did not live to see the results of his fieldwork presented in an exhibition.⁷

As so often the case with folk theory, the first myth informed and continues to inform opinions, which, by dialectic processes, is bound to irritate the historian. The campaign launched by the Nazi regime against artists producing so-called 'Entartete Kunst' (Degenerate Art) later triggered a reaction with surprising results. In the process of rehabilitating the artists concerned, a firm and positive correlation seems to have made between the early twentieth-century modernist artist and his appreciation of primitive art. This interpretation infers that every artist must have looked at important pieces of non-European art in order to be seen as a truly sophisticated artist – at least this is what we hear and read more and more often, even from the pen of art curators or feuilleton writers. However, one should remember (a) that not all pieces of non-European art referred to by European artists were of remarkable quality – rather the opposite,⁸ and (b) that the individual way of dealing with non-European artworks varied largely. For example, in a 1964 interview broadcast by the German channel NDR Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980) pointedly said that it would have been futile for him to seek inspiration from foreign forms such as Bushman, Congo or Inca art, because there was no way for him to establish a close link with these cultural manifestations.⁹

In the following I will go on to show how decisive, already at a much earlier point in time, face-to-face encounters with works created by non-European artists had been in triggering more thorough reflections on the status of these works as art. In the best of cases, face-to-face contact included observations of how a specific type of work visually impressed the foreign observer, yet still reflected its context by

artworldwide.org/index.php/autumn13/van-nimmen-on-henry-van-de-velde-year-in-germany, consulted on 10 April 2015].

⁶ Philippe Peltier, 'From Oceania', in Rubin ed. "*Primitivism*", vol. I, 99-123, esp. 100-7.

⁷ Emil Stephan, *Südseekunst - Beiträge zur Kunst des Bismarck-Archipels und zur Urgeschichte der Kunst überhaupt*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1907.

⁸ William Rubin quotes Picasso's statement on the subject saying that it was just the idea that counted, not the quality of the work, Rubin, 'Introduction', in Rubin, ed., "*Primitivism*", 1984, vol.I, 14;

⁹ *Oskar Kokoschka - Ein Selbstportrait*, Hamburg, NDR, 1964, German original see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHgnC5qiT0Q>, consulted on 19 September 2014. Kokoschka says in a sequence (end of the second minute) of the period around 1912: '... Hitherto unseen forms arrived from... the Bushmen, the Congo, Africa, the Inca, and all of a sudden everyone wanted to become a Bushman.....or an Inca. But you can't simply assimilate to a culture where you have no roots. I myself preferred to seek inspiration from where I felt a comfortably close link, i.e. from the Greeks...' [my translation]. See also Tobias G. Nattter et al., eds, *Kokoschka : das Ich im Brennpunkt*, Leopold Museum, Wien: Brandstätter, 2013, this view is endorsed by B. Reinhold on p. 30 as well as by P. Werkner who, on p. 40, mentions, but does not substantiate, an interest in the art of the primitives.

reference to its use, to formal or material properties, or to the symbolical values it conveyed. These aspects come into play already during the early history of scientific reporting. The age of Enlightenment saw objective observation of natural phenomena and the proper reporting based on these observations becoming a well-established practice, notably in botany. Reflecting on what people saw and on how they reported their observations, soon began to have wider ramifications. In this context the biography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau is revealing, especially with regard to the period in which he closely cooperated with the botanist Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, thus inspiring Augustin P. de Candolle, the great Geneva botanist.¹⁰ However, we need to move forward.

Early steps in appreciating Pacific art

I shall now briefly sketch three examples linked to our investigation into how visual elements of cultures from across the Pacific came to be appreciated by Europeans well before the start of the 20th century. The three cases chosen from a larger field map out the path from the age of Enlightenment to the second half of the 19th century.

Following this historical sketch I shall familiarize the reader with two intellectual developments based on what happened in numerous small-scale encounters between known individuals, with or without an institutional background, on the one hand, and an unknown number of field contacts, helpers, hosts, assistants, interlocutors and local co-travellers, on the other. Occasionally scientists or scholars back home also come into play. I group encounters stemming from trading activities into one strand, while encounters made in the field by of scientists resulting in a thorough comparative analysis of the collected materials after returning home fall into strand two. The model of a third strand will serve to discuss how fieldwork and university teaching became interrelated activities.

When James Cook, Joseph Banks and their crew reached Tahiti they soon established a fruitful relationship with a man named Tupaia to whom members of the crew, namely John Gore and up to seven other men, had already established contact during Samuel Wallis' earlier voyage to Tahiti in the *Dolphin*¹¹. We can take it that Tupaia, a native of Raiatea and an expert in traditional navigation, greatly contributed to the success of Cook's first voyage.¹² Indeed, Tupaia volunteered to accompany Cook to Great Britain. He was a tremendous help to him and his crew by acting as an interpreter not only in Tahiti, but also in their dealings with the Maori in New Zealand. Unfortunately, Tupaia died during a prolonged stay of the *Endeavour* in the docks of Batavia, and so did Sydney Parkinson, the draughtsman he had befriended, soon after the *Endeavour* left Batavia. This had bitter

¹⁰ Danielle Buysens and Christian Delécraz, *C'est de l'homme que j'ai à parler : Rousseau et l'inégalité*. Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, Conches: Gollion, Infolio, 2012.

¹¹ John Gore was the master's mate on the *Dolphin*, see J.C. Beaglehole, *The Life of James Cook*, London: The Hakluyt Society, 1974, 138.

¹² Joan Druett, *Tupaia : Captain Cook's Polynesian navigator*, Santa Barbara CA: Praeger; 2011; Anne Salmond, *The trial of the cannibal dog. Captain Cook in the South Seas*, London: Penguin, 2003.

consequences as far as the visual records of Cook's first voyage were concerned. We have Sydney Parkinson's admirably precise coloured studies of plants which he executed for the botanist Joseph Banks. The records of objects and especially of objects designed to have an aesthetic impact, that is, to serve more than just a simple utilitarian purpose, and which were published only later, lacked the artist's direct input. Nevertheless, Banks, who was a keen observer but a bad draughtsman, was able to clearly outline his artistic understanding with respect to carving. Speaking of canoe prows produced by Maori carvers Banks would write into the *Journal of the Endeavour*:

...I shall therefore content myself with saying that their taste varied into two materialy different Stiles, I will call them. One was intirely formd of a number of Spirals diff[er]ently connected, the other was in a much more wild taste and I may truly say was like nothing but itself. Of the former the truth with which the lines were drawn was surprizing, but above all their method of connecting several spirals into one peice, which they did inimitably well, intermingling the ends of them in so dextrous a manner that it was next to impossible for the eye to trace their connections. For the other I shall say nothing but referr intirely to the few drawings which I had an opportunity of getting made of them; premising however that the beauty of all their carvings depended intirely on the design, for the execution was so rough that when you came near it was difficult to find any bea[u]ties in the things which struck you most at a distance....¹³

Banks refers to the 'beauty in things', despite the fact that the quality of carving technically does not measure up to his European standards. He distinguishes between an ornamental style with grouped carved spirals, and one which displayed a much more 'wild taste'. Here we may assume that Banks is referring to carved figurative elements not linked to the spiral motif, as featured on the openwork board of a canoe prow (*tauihu*) held in the British Museum.¹⁴ From Maori carving we move on to Easter Island sculpture. Georg Forster has the following to say about what the members of the second Cook expedition experienced during their explorations on Easter Island: On Monday, 14 March 1774

...About fifty yards farther to the south there was another elevated area, of which the surface was paved with square stones exactly similar to those

¹³ Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768–1771*, edited by John C. Beaglehole, Sydney and Melbourne: Angus and Robertson, 1962, vol 2, 24, online at: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Bea02Bank-t1-body-d2.html>, consulted on 18 September 2014. The drawings in Rüdiger Joppien and Bernard Smith, *The art of Captain Cook's voyages*, vol. 1: *The voyage of the Endeavour*, New Haven: Yale UP, 1986, fig. 151b and 152. For the role of primitive ornaments in European theory, see Frances S. Connelly, *The sleep of reason: Primitivism in modern European art and aesthetics, 1725-1907*. Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

¹⁴ Adrienne Kaeppler, *et al.*, *Oceanic art*, New York: Abrams, 1997, 415, fig. 314, compare fig. 315 for the spiral style.

which formed the walls. In the midst of this area, there was a pillar consisting of a single stone, which represented a human figure to the waist, about twenty feet high, and upwards of five feet wide. The workmanship of this figure was rude, and spoke the arts in their infancy. The eyes, nose, and mouth were scarcely marked on a lumpish ill-shaped head; and the ears, which were excessively long, quite in the fashion of the country, were better executed than any other part, though a European artist would have been ashamed of them On the top of the head a huge round cylinder of stone was placed upright, being above five feet in diameter and in height. This cap, which resembled the head-dress of some Egyptian divinity, consisted of a different stone from the rest of the pillar....¹⁵

A day later, when observing 'captain Cook trading with the inhabitants', Forster found that Tahitian barkcloth was very much in demand among the natives of Easter island.

The desire of possessing this cloth prompted them to expose to sale several articles which perhaps they would not have parted with so easily under other circumstances. Among these there were their different caps or head-dresses, their necklaces, ornaments for the ear and several human figures, made of narrow pieces of wood about eighteen inches or two feet long, and wrought in a much neater and more proportionate manner than we could have expected, after seeing the rude sculpture of the statues. They were made to represent persons of both sexes; the features were not very pleasing, and the whole figure was much too long to be natural; however, there was something characteristic in them, which shewed a taste for the arts. The wood of which they were made was finely polished, close-grained, and of a dark-brown, like that of the casuarina. But as we had not yet seen this tree growing here, we eagerly expected the return of our party, hoping they would make some discoveries to explain this circumstance. Mahine [Cook's companion from Tahiti on the second voyage] was most pleased with these carved human figures, the workmanship of which much excelled those of the *e Tees* of his country, and he purchased several of them, assuring us they would be greatly valued at Taheitee. As he took great pains to collect these curiosities, he once met with a figure of a woman's hand, carved of a yellowish wood, nearly of the natural size.¹⁶

¹⁵ George Forster, *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's sloop Resolution*, commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the years 1772,3,4, and 5, 1778, Book II, chap. IV, Easter Island, March 1774, p.441, quoted from Gerhard Steiner, ed., *Georg Forsters Werke. Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Werke*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968. 1, 325.

¹⁶ George Forster, *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's sloop Resolution*, commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the years 1772,3,4, and 5, 1778, Book II, chap. IV, Easter Island, March 1774, p.450, quoted from Gerhard Steiner, ed, *Georg Forsters Werke. Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Werke*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968,. vol 1,325 and 332-3. Mahine donated the sculpture of the arm to Johann Reinhold Forster who, in turn, later presented it to the British Museum.

Despite the early interest shown by Banks and the Forsters, the collections acquired on the Cook voyages were – a generation later – disposed of again. Curiously enough, the bulk of the material collected, including works we consider today as artistic masterpieces, ended up in Vienna's Imperial, or K and K, Museum, and later helped to promote the activities of renowned collectors such as W. Oldman and others.¹⁷

Expeditions sent out during the age of Enlightenment not only had the task of acquiring geographical knowledge but also of making observations which could be of relevance for the fields of natural science and the study of human culture. This is why trained scientific specialists and artists were recruited. Gaspard Duché de Vancy (1756-1788) was the draughtsman on Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse's, ill-fated expedition. La Pérouse visited Easter Island en route to East Asia (around Cape Horn). On 8th of April 1786, the team studied a few of the famous stone statues, *molokai*, following a European artist's best practice, that is, measuring the relevant proportions and drawing the object in perspective. The drawings were sent back to Paris from Kamchatka, before the expedition's two ships, *L'Astrolabe* and *La Boussole*, were thrown up onto the reefs of Vanikoro Island in the Santa Cruz group south of the Solomon Islands by what must have been an exceptional storm; even of those initially saved nothing was ever heard of again, with one exception.¹⁸ Although full of praise for the high quality of the cutting and shaping of the stones required for the platforms, La Pérouse was less impressed by 'the shapeless busts', although noting that 'Mr Hodges's drawings of the statues is a very imperfect rendering of what we have seen...'. His second in command, de Langle, and the expedition artist, Duché de Vancy, visited a total of seven platforms in the island's interior, and found near the last one visited '... a kind of human figure made of reeds, 10 feet tall; it was covered with a white cloth of local manufacture; the head was of natural size, the body slim, the legs fairly in proportion; ...'. Attached to it was 'the representation of a child two feet in lengths', with arms stretched out.¹⁹ In comparison, the tapa figure fared better than the stone statues which were judged by the observers as objects of an art form not yet fully developed, with the rendering of the human figure incomplete, thus echoing Georg Forster's statement quoted above where he speaks of 'arts in their infancy'.

A third example selected from explorer reports shows how at least this account left a direct trace on an influential German book on the history of art. Adelbert von Chamisso, of noble French descent, who later in life became a German writer, was chosen to serve as botanist on the Russian imperial expedition under the command of Otto von Kotzebue, later Vice-Admiral von Kotzebue. Louis Choris was chosen as the artist. The expedition's strategic aim was to help develop Russian

¹⁷ Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *Holophusicon. The Leverian Museum. An Eighteenth-Century, English Institution of Science, Curiosity and Art*. Altenstadt and Vienna: ZKF Publishers and Museum für Völkerkunde, 2011, 113-193; Hermione Waterfield and J.C.H. King, *Provenance. Twelve collectors of ethnographic art in England 1760-1990*. London : P. Holberton, 2009, 110.

¹⁸ Jean-Christophe Galipaud and Valérie Jauneau, *Au-delà d'un naufrage. Les survivants de l'expédition Lapérouse*. Paris : Actes-Sud/Errance/ IRD, 2012.

¹⁹ John Dunmore (ed. et transl.), *The Journal of Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse 1785-1788*, 2 volumes, London : The Hakluyt Society, 1994, vol 1, 61, 65, 71.

trade in the northern Pacific. Nevertheless, von Chamisso and Choris, who shared a narrow cabin as their workplace, recorded valuable information in different scientific disciplines. After the voyage Choris published his visual records in 1822 before moving to Mexico where he was murdered in 1827.²⁰ It was only in 1834 that Adelbert von Chamisso published his account of the voyage; in the meantime he had been promoted to head of the Royal Prussian Botanical Institute and Herbarium at Dahlem near Berlin. Von Chamisso lived in Berlin and was married to Antonie, foster daughter of Julius Hitzig, the prominent publisher whose daughter, Clara, was married to the art historian Franz Kugler who lived close by to von Chamisso.²¹ In his *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* of 1842 Kugler devotes the first section to early art free of influence from either European Graeco-Roman or early Chinese art.²² As examples he chose artworks from the European Bronze Age as well as from Easter Island and Hawai'i, followed by artworks from Mayan and Aztec sites in Mexico. His selection aimed at developing a concept of world art which would include, as a matter of principle, art created outside the traditional canons of classical East Asian or classical European art. Kugler specifically quotes from von Chamisso's text and relies on Choris' illustrations. The Handbook was accompanied by an atlas which was published a few years later, in 1851.²³ Plate III (1, 2, 3) shows the drawings of three Hawaiian sculptures, directly copied from Choris' plates. So, art from the Pacific actually featured prominently in a leading compendium, at the dawn of German art history (or *Kunstwissenschaft*, so to speak. Notably, this was some time before colonial powers began recruiting 'uneducated savages' for their labour force.

Three pathways to non-European art being explored as art

While it might come less as a surprise to find traces of appreciation of non-European art – or, in the case of Kugler, of non-Eurasian art – as a result of the age of Enlightenment, and of the quest for historical sources launched by the Romantic movement – so prominent in the German-speaking world – the facts from the period of evolutionary studies are even more revealing. Ever since Goethe's studies of natural phenomena, everyone knew about the aesthetic impact a natural science approach implied when working in the field. Charles Darwin was not immune to this. Natural history collections began slowly growing almost everywhere, in cities, in centres of learning and at the courts, expanding in scope from herbaria to collections of minerals and rocks, to zoological specimens and the remains of long-

²⁰ Now again available in Christian Döring and Matthias Glaubrecht, eds, *Adelbert von Chamisso. Reise um die Welt. Mit 150 Lithographien von Ludwig Choris und einem essayistischen Nachwort von Matthias Glaubrecht*, Berlin: AB-Die Andere Bibliothek, Sonderband, 2012, 526 pages.

²¹ Wolfgang Freiherr von Löhneysen, 'Kugler, Franz', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*. 13, 1982, 245-7 [<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/ppn11877820X.html>, consulted on 15 April 2015].

²² Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Ebner und Seubert, 1842.

²³ Ernst Guhl and Joseph Caspar, *Denkmäler der Kunst zur Übersicht ihres Entwicklungs-Ganges von den ersten künstlerischen Versuchen bis zu den Standpunkten der Gegenwart*, vol. 1: *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, Stuttgart: Ebner und Seubert, 1851.

extinct animals. Often these natural history collections also incorporated ethnographic specimens in a special section.

The publication of the two key works by Charles Darwin and by Alfred Russell Wallace on natural selection, the variation in species as well as on their origin gave enormous boost to field studies – private as well as publicly funded – as well as collecting. This occurred when knowledge about remote areas and the people living there began to grow exponentially. The initiative came from the private sector as much as from learned societies, academies and royal courts. Gradually works of art from the Pacific moved more into focus; they were appreciated as skilfully made and aesthetically attractive objects, but not considered as true art, at least not yet. Overall, three strands of development catch the eye.

Strand 1: Collecting specimens as part of commercial activities

While botanists focussed on plant life, increasingly on species with the potential of becoming prolific food resources or suitable building materials, scientists interested in animal life had to make a choice. Often these men had received a first training in medicine or taxidermy. In the mid-19th century they became either general zoologists, or specialised in ornithology or marine biology. We find exactly this mix at work when, in 1860, Johan Cesar VI Godeffroy, the Hamburg trader (of Huguenot descent), decided to establish as part of his commercial activities a museum focussing on collecting, preserving, analysing, displaying, and eventually selling items of interest to institutions or dealers specialising in natural science and ethnography.²⁴ Having developed an interest in natural science himself, Godeffroy chose the zoologist (marine biologist) Eduard Graeffe as his first museum director in Hamburg and, subsequently, his long-term field co-ordinator and conservator in Apia, Samoa.²⁵ In 1863 Graeffe went on to hire Johann Diedrich Schmeltz as his aide at the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg. When Graeffe, recently married, moved to Samoa for seven years, Schmeltz became the key person in Hamburg. Later he became the first scientist and eventually the director of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum in Leiden. Schmeltz, trained as a cabinetmaker, was an autodidact in zoology, starting his career as a taxidermist. He received informal training from the three Semper brothers, all of whom were zoologists working abroad and supplying Godeffroy with *naturalia* such as conch shells, sponges, etc.²⁶ One of the brothers,

²⁴ Birgit Scheps, *Das verkaufte Museum. Die Südsee-Unternehmungen des Handelshauses Joh.Ces.Godeffroy & Sohn, Hamburg und die Sammlungen „Museum Godeffroy“*, Abhandlungen des Naturwissenschaftlichen Vereins in Hamburg, NF 40, Keltern-Weiler: Goecke & Evers, 2005.

²⁵ Eduard Graeffe, 'Meine Biographie. In meinem 80.Lebensjahr geschrieben' [1913]. *Verhandlungen der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Zürich*, 61, 1-29; Katharina Haslwanter, *Die Südsee-Sammlung von Prof. Carl Cramer und Dr. Eduard Graeffe am Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich*, unpubl. MA Thesis, University of Vienna 2009. – I would like to thank Katharina Haslwanter for bringing Graeffe and his autobiography to my attention; see also the details on Graeffe's biography in Scheps, *Das verkaufte Museum*, 72-86.

²⁶ Of the Semper brothers Georg, Karl and Otto, Karl Semper (1832-1893) was the most prolific, he served as professor of Zoology and Anatomy at the University of Würzburg from 1868 until his death, see also Hess, 'Semper', in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, 54, Nachträge

Karl worked in the Philippines and other Spanish dependencies for seven years. He conducted zoological field studies on the Palau islands of Micronesia, then still under Spanish control.

Schmeltz's contribution to the specific developments we are interested in began with the engagement of Johan Stanislaus Kubary as his field collector.²⁷ In 1873 Kubary paid his first visit to the tiny atoll of Nukuoro on the southern fringe of the Carolines, a Polynesian exclave, where people had preserved a special version of their Polynesian heritage. This included the skill of 'masterly carving in wood', mainly canoes, but also a wide variety of anthropomorphic statues. Through the interference by traders in search of coconut oil and copra as well as by European missionaries and their Polynesian catechists, their old economic structure and modes of religious expression were giving way to new options. No longer would they go sailing to distant islands on their own. Their sculptures featuring ancestors and deities of the past, *tino aitu*, had lost their cause and were sold off to visiting missionaries and traders, including Kubary.

As a matter of fact, in 1877 Kubary, impressed by the quality of the carvings, succeeded in obtaining the most impressive series of these works on behalf of the Museum Godeffroy. According to his own words he lost only the largest and most striking statue to a competitor – this figure, Kawe, went directly to the Auckland Museum in New Zealand. The crucial question here: did Kubary, who explicitly appreciated the carvers' expertise, also recognize the artistic qualities of these sculptures? Yes and no. Yes, by the simple fact that he collected them, that he documented their making, meaning and the use of the carvings by diligently recording local knowledge and having the objects shipped to the Museum Godeffroy in Hamburg. No, if we go by that simple phrase in his notes: 'No doubt the Nukuor *rapakhau* are talented woodworkers, but modelling the human figure seems to be beyond them so that their idols have something very plump and clumsy about them.'²⁸ To understand the context of this sentence we have to take into account that Kubary, who was of mixed Polish and German descent, was expelled from his home country Poland after training in medicine there, and had to find ways to survive in Germany. He worked in a Berlin workshop preparing plaster sculptures which, of course, in those days strictly conformed to the conventional canon of European sculpture (be it Graeco-Roman, Renaissance, Baroque, or 19th century Classicism). Clearly, to Kubary the faceless *tino aitu* figures with their forms reduced to the minimal did not tally with his view of what an artist should achieve.

bis 1899, Leipzig: Scheurl-Walther, 1908, 315-316, <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/bsb00008412/images/index.html?id=00008412&fip=eayaxsqreayayztsxsxdsydxdsydfsdrawqen&no=2&seite=318> -- Incidentally, Gottfried Semper, the architect and writer in art history, publishing in those very years on the history of style in architectural and textile ornaments, was their uncle.

²⁷ Scheps, *Das verkaufte Museum*, 117-130; Hilke Thode-Arora, 'German sources on Nukuoro and the ancestor statues: Kubary, Jeschke and the Hamburg South Sea Expedition', in Christian Kaufmann, and Oliver Wick, eds, *Nukuoro. Sculptures from Micronesia*, Munich: Hirmer and Riechen: Fondation Beyeler, 2013, 44-59.

²⁸ From Kubary's notes first quoted in the catalogue of the Museum Godeffroy by Johann D.E. Schmeltz and Rudolf Krause, under entry 3404, here after the English translation by N. Stephenson in Kaufmann and Wick, eds, *Nukuoro*, 216 and 223, note 2.

These sculptures would have to wait another fifty years before being specifically interpreted as proper artworks befitting a modernist approach, incidentally by a German anthropologist, Ernst Vatter, and his art-loving photographer.²⁹

The set of *tino aitu* figures collected by Kubary and a number of *malagan* carvings from New Ireland are at the heart of a series of unusual developments when museums in Berlin, Hamburg and Leipzig eagerly began competing to get hold of them. It all began when, in 1877, the house Godeffroy got into financial trouble. The problem was partly solved when a nephew of Johan Cesar VI Godeffroy lent the latter a considerable sum of money through which he became – unknown to outsiders – the owner of the core of the Museum Godeffroy collection.³⁰ In 1878 Schmeltz sold a small figure each to the Ethnological museum in Berlin and the University Museum in Oslo, explicitly as specimens of craftsmanship. In 1879 the Godeffroy company went broke, but the museum survived as a separate body. A sales catalogue featuring the museum's holdings was published by J. D. Schmeltz and R. Krause in 1881. It listed all the *tino aitu* figures collected, together with condensed excerpts from Kubary's original field notes. A group of citizens from Leipzig won the bid for the entire collection with an offer of 95'000 Reichsmark (Goldmark), a very considerable sum at that time, yet in the fall of 1885 the majority of the *tino aitu* figures, especially the large and most impressive ones, were still in Hamburg. The death of J. Cesar VI Godeffroy earlier that year brought the wealthy nephew, Wilhelm von Godeffroy, back into play again, privileging his hometown for the sake of keeping the idea of the Godeffroy Museum alive.³¹ Definitely, all these people in Leipzig, Hamburg and Leiden, where Schmeltz became keeper of collections in 1882, saw in the Nukuoro sculptures more than colonial curios. Even if the new owners and donors did not fully appreciate the pieces as works of art, they nevertheless sensed that these carvings were something very special.

Evidently this also applies to the carvings from New Ireland that belonged to the Godeffroy collection. In this context it seems relevant that in 1875 Godeffroy employed Richard Parkinson (1844-1909) – more of Schleswig (Danish-German) than British descent – as his field assistant and – as noted on his business card – as an 'art collector'. Parkinson was inducted by Kubary, and the two remained in regular contact for the next twenty years, long after the Godeffroy company had gone bust. However, with J. Cesar VI Godeffroy gone and his Pacific properties having passed into the hands of the *Südseehandels- und Plantagensgesellschaft* under the control of men such as Adolph von Hansemann, who were busy drumming up support for the establishment of German colonies in the Pacific, the curiosity to learn more about these works of art soon waned at home in Hamburg. Interestingly enough, it was kept alive especially by Richard Parkinson and his wife Phebe Coe (of Samoan-American descent, and a sister of Mrs Emma Coe Kolbe, locally known

²⁹ Ernst Vatter, *Religiöse Plastik der Naturvölker*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1926. The photographer was Marie-Louise Vatter-Altheim, Vatter's first wife. Vatter chose a *tino aitu* sculpture to exemplify how a spiritual approach to a concept of the body overrides the interest in physiognomy, producing a surprisingly modern form, see the English translation of the quote by N. Stephenson in Kaufmann and Wick, eds, *Nukuoro*, 240.

³⁰ Scheps, *Das verkaufte Museum*, 198.

³¹ Scheps, *Das verkaufte Museum*, 219-223.

as Queen Emma) who had established themselves near Rabaul in New Britain (then Neupommern), the capital of German Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, as collectors and dealers of Melanesian art. Museums from Australia, North America and Europe sought advice and practical help from the Parkinsons when collecting in the Bismarck Archipelago and beyond. In Australia Richard Parkinson became known and much respected as the 'German professor' and was held in high esteem by German anthropologists and academic institutions in cities such as Dresden and Berlin. A. B. Meyer of Dresden co-authored a volume on carvings and masks, mainly from the Bismarck Archipelago.³² Bernhard Ankermann, employed by the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, founded by Adolf Bastian, ultimately helped Parkinson publish the condensed records of his observations.³³ From studying acquisition records at museums in Australia and Europe, Jim Specht reckons that about 10,000 objects passed through the hands of Richard and Phebe Parkinson, the majority of them artworks in some form or another. But let us first turn to the second of the three strands, which focuses on scientists and their approach to fieldwork.

Strand 2 : From a biological approach to evolutionary processes to an understanding of non-European art

We have already mentioned the boost to field studies which had its origins in the fields of natural history. The trend had certainly reached Adolf B. Meyer in Dresden, director of the Royal Anthropological and Ethnographical Museum in Dresden from 1874 to 1905, who in 1870 published a book in German on Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace, and their publications on natural selection and the origin of species, including short biographies and a bibliography. This means, Karl Semper, whom we already came across in conjunction with the Godeffroy museum and who, by 1875, had become professor of zoology at Würzburg, was not an isolated case. While Meyer closely cooperated with Richard Parkinson in publishing his observations and collections from the Bismarck Archipelago, particularly from New Ireland, Semper encouraged young zoologists to go out into the field to study the differences between the continents, preferably along the continents' margins. For this type of research they needed first to secure the necessary financial resources.

Semper and Meyer's encouragement proved decisive for two young Swiss zoologists who, by the end of the century, were to become leading figures in the development of the ethnographic collections at the Basel museum by means of

³² Adolf B. Meyer, *Schnitzereien und Masken vom Bismarck-Archipel und Neu Guinea*. Publicationen aus dem Königlichen Ethnographischen Museum zu Dresden, 10 (Folio size), Dresden: Stengel, 1895.

³³ Richard Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee, Land und Leute, Sitten und Gebräuche im Bismarckarchipel und auf den deutschen Salomoinseln*. Herausgegeben von B. Ankermann, Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1907, see the more recent English translation, *Thirty Years in the South Seas*, transl. by John Dennison, with a short biography by Jim Specht, "The German Professor": Richard Parkinson', Bathurst NSW: Crawford House, 2000, and the relevant publications by Adolf B. Meyer and Parkinson.

collecting in the field. By the turn of the 20th century, the Sarasin cousins, Paul and Fritz, had successfully tested this new type of fieldwork-based approach to multidisciplinary studies, assembling exemplary collections on the islands of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Celebes (now Sulawesi). Later on, one of the cousins, Fritz, travelled to New Caledonia to do fieldwork, again in the company of a zoologist. Interestingly, the ethnographic materials these men collected included a large number and variety of artworks, although they abstained from calling them art.³⁴

Still, in bringing together the interests of field biology and ethnography the most significant contribution came from Alfred Cort Haddon, who was based in the United Kingdom. Following Wallace in choosing his field study area in the zone between the Moluccas, New Guinea and Australia Haddon conducted research on the marine biology of Torres Strait (between Australia and New Guinea) in 1888. Being a keen observer in general, he also began studying the artefacts used by the people on the local islands. In the course of the process he became aware of the fact that missionaries had already traded many important objects to museums in the United Kingdom. In 1894 Haddon began publishing on art, using the term *Decorative Art* as a header.³⁵ He argued from a biologist's perspective, saying that to a zoologist familiar with all the up-to-date methods natural selection certainly appeared to modulate evolution, however, at the same time, the variety of related, yet different forms in both domains, nature and art, fascinated him. Haddon reckoned that the two fields were based on common ground; in the unfolding of natural as well as cultural forms he saw an aesthetic drive at work. The different forms resulting from the process were not without a purpose, which only fieldwork could detect and describe. Haddon was well aware of what was going on in the field he was entering: in the conclusion to his 1894 volume he makes reference to Hjalmar Stolpe who was working parallel to him on ornaments from Polynesia (from the Marquesas Islands, to be precise), publishing first in Swedish in 1890, then in English as well as in German in 1892.³⁶ Haddon also said, that he considered the contributions by Paul Ehrenreich and Karl von den Steinen as essential since they were based on direct observations *in situ* (in Central Brazil); we shall return to them below. Haddon also mentioned Ernst Grosse and H.V. Stevens (edited by A.

³⁴ Sylvia Ohnemus, 'Fritz Sarasin, Paul Sarasin and Paul Wirz: their significance for the Indonesian Collections of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Basle', in Schefold, Reimar et al., eds, *Treasure hunting: collectors and collections of Indonesian artefacts*, Leiden: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 2002, 183-207; Kaufmann, Christian, 'Les raisons d'une recherche. Fritz Sarasin et Jean Roux en visite en 1911 et 1912', in Fritz Sarasin, *Ethnographie des Kanak de Nouvelle-Calédonie et des Îles Loyauté (1911-1912)*, trad. par Raymond Ammann et Bernard Gasser, Paris : Ibis Press, 2010, 11-20.

³⁵ Alfred C Haddon, *The Decorative Art of British New Guinea: A Study in Papuan Ethnography*, Cunningham Memoirs 10, Dublin: Academy House, 1894. Anita Herle, et al., eds, *Cambridge and the Torres Strait. Centenary essays on the 1898 expedition*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

³⁶ Hjalmar Stolpe, *Entwicklungserscheinungen in der Ornamentik der Naturvölker : eine ethnographische Untersuchung*. Wien: Anthropologische Gesellschaft, 1892, parallel translation from Swedish into English: *Evolution in the ornamental art of savage peoples*. Rochdale: Aldine Press.

Grünwedel), indicating that he himself was working on a book on the *Evolution in Art* (eventually published in 1895, followed by a second edition in 1902).³⁷

With regard to the evolution of ornaments Haddon accepts Paul Ehrenreich and Karl von den Steinen's conclusions that in Central Brazil geometrical ornaments may have originally been based on the observation of local natural phenomena, while afterwards the forms gradually became stylised through the process of tradition.³⁸ Indeed, through this process historical developments come into play. Haddon tentatively seeks to ask whether the development of art forms might have associations with the differentiation of languages along the southern coast of New Guinea as suggested by S. H. Ray when setting apart the so-called Papuan from Melanesian (i.e. Austronesian) languages, or even tie in with the results of craniological (physical anthropological) research. In doing so a wider scope of hypothetical relationships within Melanesia moves to the fore. With that wider perspective in mind, Haddon is ready to launch a comprehensive research project in the Torres Strait, paying special attention to visual perception, performance, language and oral tradition, in short, full scale anthropology. Haddon's focus thus shifts from man-made objects to the wider field of human agency.

Still, in Berlin a hands-on approach to physical objects as material markers of culture prevails for quite a while. Museums oriented towards collecting and presenting art from all around the globe parting the sense of an ethnographic overview have yet to reach the peak of their development, most notably in the capitals of Germany's numerous kingdoms and principalities such as Munich, Dresden, Berlin, Stuttgart, Braunschweig, Detmold, etc., as well as in the independent, so-called imperial free cities such as Hamburg, Lübeck, Cologne, Frankfurt, and Leipzig. Ernst Grosse advises Wilhelm (von) Bode, the museum promoter in Berlin, on what to collect from Japan.³⁹ Felix von Luschan not only acquires on the London market an extraordinary collection of bronzes from Benin but hails these bronzes as a climax of African art.⁴⁰ Among others, Felix Speiser

³⁷ Haddon, Alfred C., *Evolution in art as illustrated by the life-histories of design*, London: Scott, 1895 [second edition 1902].

³⁸ Anita Hermannstädter, 'Abenteuer Ethnologie. Karl von den Steinen und die Xingú-Expeditionen', in A. Hermannstädter, ed, *Deutsche am Amazonas. Forscher oder Abenteurer? Expeditionen in Brasilien 1800 bis 1914*, Veröffentlichungen de Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, NF 71, Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 2002, 83-4; Ehrenreich, Paul, 'Mitteilungen über die zweite Xingu-Expedition in Brasilien', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 22, 1890, 89-98.

³⁹ For an introduction to Grosse's biography from an anthropologist's perspective, see Herbert Ganslmayr, 'Grosse, Ernst Carl Gustav', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 7, 1966, 148-9, see <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd117564273.html> (consulted on 7. Januar 2014).

⁴⁰ Felix von Luschan, 'Alterthümer von Benin', Session of 19 March 1898, *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte 1898*, appendix to *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 30, 1898 with separate pagination, 146-162; von Luschan, an Austrian medical doctor by training, became an itinerant archaeologist and ethnographer in the Middle East, a physical anthropologist, and a museum curator, appointed by his friend Adolf Bastian; for elements of his intellectual biography see Peter Ruggendorfer, and Hubert D., Szemethy eds, *Felix von Luschan (1854-1924). Leben und Wirken eines Universalgelehrten*, Wien: Böhlau, 2009, 339pp.

learns to study material culture through collecting in the field from von Luschan in 1907. According to von Luschan, direct field observation leads to a better appreciation of a wider range of art.⁴¹ During his field studies in the New Hebrides and Banks Islands in 1911-12 Speiser heeds his advice and documents in great detail how female artisans produce mats with intricate designs, besides collecting series of carved and painted male grade monuments as well as weapons and other tools. In his monograph on the material he collected Speiser (writing in 1914) explicitly considered as art ornamented objects and more specifically sculptures representing human faces and figures.⁴² His collection and his views on the subject provided one of the cornerstones of the Basel ethnographical museum which opened a few years later.⁴³

Sadly, in 1913 German museums were not prepared to deal with the mass of recently collected material in terms of its relevance to both social anthropology and art history. A shift seems to have occurred at some point between 1900 and 1910. Was it a shift imposed by the authorities from a more civic and regionally rooted form of engagement with science and art to imperial military primacy and colonial top-down dominance? It was definitely a shift away from what outstanding members of the previous generation had been striving for.

A third strand: How to develop an inventory of World art

While one is impressed by the encyclopaedic approach of Franz Kugler to create a descriptive corpus of works worth being considered as art, the fact is that museum collecting is far from being a systematically reflected field of action. In his text

⁴¹ Felix von Luschan, 'Zur Ethnographie des Kaiserin-Augusta-Flusses', *Baessler-Archiv*, 1, no.1, 1910, 103-117.

⁴² Speiser addresses explicitly the existence of artistic expression and art, starting with its significance in the spiritual life especially of members of the grade societies in northern Vanuatu. After music, songs, and dance – ending with masks – visual arts ('Bildende Kunst') are discussed. Speiser reviews sculpture, the ornamentation of weapons and utensils, modelling in clay, drawing and painting, and ends the chapter with observations on abstracting form, especially in representing the human face and the pig's jaw, see Felix Speiser, *Ethnology of Vanuatu. An early twentieth century study*, translated [from the German original published in 1923] by D.Q. Stephenson, Bathurst: Crawford House Press, 1991, 373, 375-85, 386-98.

⁴³ Felix Speiser (1870-1949) with a PhD in Chemistry found his vocation in anthropology while working in his profession in New York. Upon his own incentive he went to visit a group of Hopi Indians, then still living days away from the Santa Fe railroad. Speiser then spent a year for professional training at the Berlin Museum as well as at the University under Felix von Luschan; for a sketch of his biography, see Christian Kaufmann, 'Speiser's fletched arrow: A paradigm shift from Physical Anthropology to Art Styles', in: M. O'Hanlon and R. L. Welsch, eds, *Hunting the Gatherers. Ethnographic collectors, agents and agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930s*, New York: Berghahn, 2000, 203-226; for a recent critique of his method of collecting see Knut Rio, 'High chief, waetman and the codification of ritual objects in Vanuatu', in Edvard Hviding, and Knut Rio, eds, *Made in Oceania. Social Movements, Cultural Heritage and the State in the Pacific*, Wantage: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2011, 223-251; for Speiser's first publication in anthropology, see Felix Speiser, 'Pfeile von Santa Cruz', *Archiv für Anthropologie*, 8, 1909, 308-311.

Kugler analysed whether the works he selected contributed to the knowledge on architecture, sculpture and ornaments as applied to vessels and containers, including the samples chosen from Easter Island and Hawai'i. Following in this line of thought, Gottfried Semper created a grid of reference by linking the unfolding of ornaments to the techniques used in creating elements serving a function in architecture. He was quite original in including textiles and textile techniques into his categories of art, thus explicitly integrating female artists into his understanding of evolution across all fields of art.⁴⁴ Yet, his theories seem not to have inspired German museums focusing on cultural history and ethnography, in particular, to develop collecting guidelines. One could argue that Adolf Bastian's idea of combining evolutionary processes based at the roots of cultural developments with a historical approach to differentiated cultural solutions indirectly acknowledges Semper's ideas about structuring the approach to artistic techniques. In Bastian's search for overall guiding principles – including his *Elementargedanke*, that is, basic ideas that guided humans to find elementary technical or social answers to their needs, seen in contrast to the highly varied solutions that groups, or peoples, adapted to their culture-specific values and visions, a level he called *Völkergedanke* – he did not consider artistic activities or art as a whole as a specific field of culture. With Bastian's role in the foundation of the Berlin Museum of Ethnology we open a major chapter in our short historical overview.⁴⁵

Following a basic education including classical and modern languages as well as science, and after an early interest in law, Bastian trained as a medical doctor. Like most museum founders his aim was to amass a lot of material in a short period to serve as a basis for a comprehensive overview of culture, not really an ideal situation for a reflective practice of collecting. He showed no qualms in acquiring objects from commercial sources such as big dealers or colonial companies and their employees. In 1889 he even negotiated an agreement with the various German states that the Berlin museum was to be offered first choice of any object collected in a German colony abroad.⁴⁶ However, the museums in the non-Prussian kingdoms and principalities, let alone those in the old free city states couldn't care less about such an agreement. They preferred to compete with Berlin; this led to an incredible wealth of parallel collections in which, by and large, the appealing items

⁴⁴ Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder Praktische Aesthetik*. 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main/München: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft/Bruckmann, 1860-1863.

⁴⁵ Klaus-Peter Köpping, 'Einführung', in Peter Bolz and Manuela Fischer; eds, *Adolf Bastian. Ausgewählte Werke*, vol 1, XI-LXXVII offers an approach to Bastian for the modern reader. Bastian emphatically took no interest in art and artists as von den Steinen testified in his obituary in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 37, 1905, reprinted in Bolz and Fischer, eds, *Bastian. Ausgewählte Werke*, vol. 9, 2012, 275-288, here p.279; Klaus-Peter Köpping, *Adolf Bastian and the Psychic Unity of Mankind. The Foundations of Anthropology in Nineteenth Century Germany*, Münster: Lit., 2005; Manuela Fischer, et al., eds, *Adolf Bastian and his Universal Archive of Humanity. The Origins of German Anthropology*. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007.

⁴⁶ Marion Melk-Koch, '...denn Kuriositäten haben wir nachgerade genug in unseren Sammlungen... Felix von Luschan als Kurator', in: Peter Ruggendorfer and Hubert D. Szemethy, eds, *Felix von Luschan (1854-1924). Leben und Wirken eines Universalgelehrten*. Wien: Böhlau, 2009, 86.

outweigh the ethnographically equally important objects of daily use. Thus the museums of Munich, Dresden, Stuttgart, even Hildesheim, but also Cologne, Hamburg, Lübeck, Frankfurt am Main, as well as the University of Göttingen – among others – became important repositories of artworks from the Pacific.

One should also remember that, generally, early collectors also included missionaries who were inclined to preserve works of ritual significance while not preventing the destruction of others, as in the case of John Williams of the London Missionary Society stationed in the Austral Islands and Cook Islands between 1823 and 1838 or the French Fathers of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart (Pères de Picpus), notably Honoré (Louis-Jacques) Laval on Mangareva in Eastern Polynesia.⁴⁷ A major step towards conscientious collecting was achieved when people began documenting their collection while still in field or at least shortly thereafter, as in the case of the people working for Godeffroy. Other examples could probably be found in museum archives across the globe. For researchers linked to the Royal Prussian Museum of Ethnology in Berlin documenting artworks, their religious function and, less prominently, their aesthetic impact while still in the field actually became standard practice.⁴⁸ This development deserves closer attention.

When members of Berlin's learned societies went out to study more simply structured societies well adapted to their environment, they were not in search of the Savage but of the not (yet) literate Native, a fully developed human furnished with a life style of his own. Franz Boas learnt about Bastian's ideas whilst working for him at the planned Museum of Ethnology. In 1883 Franz Boas left Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University and undertook a geographical expedition to Baffin Land in Canada, where he encountered local Eskimo, or Inuit. Later he became acquainted with Indian groups on the northwest coast of the American continent and began to study their art. After leaving Germany for good, allegedly because of having been exposed to anti-Semitic sentiments, he first served as a coordinator for the American Indian exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition held in 1893, then as a curator at the Field Museum of Natural History – created as a result of the Fair – and later as curator of the American Indian department at the American Museum of Natural History. There he was instrumental in acquiring collections and mounting permanent exhibitions which, in parts, have survived to this very day.⁴⁹ When teaching anthropology at Columbia University from 1896 on, the art practice

⁴⁷ Steven Hooper, 'La collecte comme iconoclasme. La London Missionary Society en Polynésie', *Gradhiva*, 7, 2007, 120-133 ; Philippe Peltier, *Mangareva, panthéon de Polynésie*. Paris, Musée du quai Branly et Somogy, 2009. See also Corbey & Weener, this volume.

⁴⁸ Felix Von Luschan, *Anleitung zum ethnologischen Beobachten und Sammeln in Afrika und Oceanien*. Berlin: Gebr. Unger, 1904, republished as *Anleitung zu wissenschaftlichen Beobachtungen auf dem Gebiete der Anthropologie, Ethnographie und Urgeschichte*, in: Neumayers *Anleitung zu wissenschaftlichen Beobachtungen auf Reisen*, 3.Aufl., 1914. Reprint in Edition Classic, Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2007, on art explicitly pp. 87-89 and implicitly on pp. 51,77-80 and 86.

⁴⁹ Aaron Glass, 'Le musée portatif. Les premières notes de terrain visuelles de Franz Boas et la récupération des archives par les Indiens', in Michel Espagne, et Isabelle Kaliowski, eds, *Franz Boas. Le travail du regard*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2013, 109-133.

of diverse American Indian groups took up important teaching space.⁵⁰ Boas always remained in contact with his earlier colleagues in Berlin.

According to Robert Lowie a parallel, yet different story could be told by Karl von den Steinen, a life-long friend of Boas.⁵¹ Von den Steinen was trained in medicine, specializing in psychiatry and then left Berlin in 1879 on a three-year trip around the world, studying institutions offering psychiatric treatment. On Hawai'i he happened to meet Adolf Bastian whom he knew from Berlin. Bastian urged him to visit New Zealand, Samoa and the Marquesas Islands. In 1882-83 von den Steinen served as a ship's doctor on an expedition to South Georgia (Antarctica). On the way back he set out from Argentine on an exploratory trip to the upper Xingu River in Brazil. He travelled with his cousin Wilhelm, who served as his draughtsman, and the physicist and geologist Otto Claus. They in fact first travelled overland to the upper Xingu River and then mainly by canoe all way down the Xingu to where it joins the Amazon. Karl von den Steinen returned to the upper Xingu in 1887/88, again with his cousin and accompanied by Paul Ehrenreich, an anthropologist, and the mathematician and zoologist Vogler. After returning to Berlin von den Steinen worked at the Museum of Ethnology and published his travel account *Unter den Naturvölkern in Zentral-Brasilien* in 1894.⁵²

Long stretches of this book are devoted to his studies of the way the American Indians use drawings to communicate and when telling stories. He believed to have learnt from his Amerindian interlocutors how from depicting real things – the course of a river, a specific animal, a group of people, etc. – their ornaments might have developed.⁵³ Based on these insights Karl von den Steinen went on in 1897/98 to study the art practice and the artworks of the Marquesas Islanders in eastern Polynesia. Tattooing as well as sculptures in wood and stone, also in carved bone – most of it no longer practised at the time – belonged to his interests, in addition of his commitment to record as much as he could of the oral

⁵⁰ Robert H. Lowie, 'Biographical Memoir of Franz Boas 1858-1942', *Biographical Memoirs*, National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol. 24, no. 9, 1947, 303-322, here pp. 306-307.

⁵¹ Lowie, 'Biographical Memoir of Franz Boas 1858-1942', here p. 313. See also Obituary Karl von den Steinen, in *Nature*, 1250, 1930, 208-209.

⁵² Karl Von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens: Reiseschilderung und Ergebnisse der zweiten Schingú-Expedition 1887-1888*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1894, and abbreviated popular edition 1897; Anita Hermannstädter, 'Abenteuer Ethnologie. Karl von den Steinen und die Xingú-Expeditionen', in: Hermannstädter, Anita, ed, *Deutsche am Amazonas: Forscher oder Abenteurer? Expeditionen in Brasilien 1800 bis 1914*. Veröffentlichungen des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, N.F.71, Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 2002. – The „von“ in von den Steinen is an integral part of the name, not an indicator of nobility.

⁵³ See for a very recent appreciation of the early research by von den Steinen and Ehrenreich into the significance of drawings made by American Indians, and its consequences: Pierre Déléage, 2014. 'L'origine de l'art (2/15)', in: *Leçons d'écriture – variations amazoniennes (2/15)*, E-publication, <http://pierredeleage.wordpress.com/2013/01/10/lorigine-de-lart/>, consulted on 31 October 2014 ; see also Déléage [this volume] .

tradition in the Marquesan language.⁵⁴ Unfortunately we do not have in writing the second lecture he gave, presumably on objects made of stone, at the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte on 18 March of 1899.⁵⁵

This lecture would be of considerable interest because a year earlier Felix von Luschan, in another lecture, had presented Benin bronzes and carved ivory tusks, acquired on the London market in 1897/98, as well as a sculpture from the Congo, hailing them as masterpieces of genuine African art. In 1900 both von den Steinen and von Luschan were appointed as part-time professors at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University, the former for cultural anthropology (Völkerkunde) – warmly welcomed by well the Faculty of Humanities – the latter for physical anthropology (understood in a broad sense of the term, that is, including material culture) – in his case with some reservations by the faculty despite the evident support for von Luschan from the side of the government. Both were made departmental directors at the Museum of Ethnology, the former for the Americas, the latter for Africa and Oceania.

The unresolved rivalry between the two men seems to have led to rather absurd consequences. In 1907 von den Steinen retired early from the university and the museum in order to concentrate on his Marquesas monograph.⁵⁶ In 1910, when von Luschan, having been appointed full professor of anthropology at the university, left the museum he, too, was not replaced by a curator or director with first-hand experience of the societies whence the collections originated. Thus, the focus on art based on first-hand knowledge gradually withered away.

Nevertheless, von Luschan's text of 1899 was almost completely reissued in his 1919 monograph on the Benin bronzes at the Berlin museum. As for von den Steinen, his monograph on the art of the Marquesas Islanders, containing a meticulous analysis of the transformation series of figurative form and ornaments, was only published in 1925-28 – not least thanks to the help provided by Franz Boas and friends in New York, a support for which von den Steinen expressed his special thanks in the preface.⁵⁷ In retrospect and as far as methodology is concerned, it is

⁵⁴ Karl Von den Steinen, 'Reise nach den Marquesas-Inseln', meeting of 3 December 1898 in *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 25, 1898:489-513 (appendix to *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 30, 1898). This first lecture deals mainly with oral traditions and religion, and only mentions lower gods and ancestral representations towards the end.

⁵⁵ The chairman R. Virchow, in thanking the speaker, mentioned 'the surprisingly rich and original' presentation which 'for the first time presented a clear image and a deep understanding of these remote islands' old and dying culture" (my translation); see *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 26, 1899, appendix to *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 31, 1899, and paginated separately. On p.(403) the entry for item (16) starts: ' Hr. Carl von den Steinen spricht, unter Vorlage zahlreicher Objecte über das Stein-Geräth der Marquesas-Inseln. Der Vortrag wird später nachgeliefert werden.' - (follows Virchow's paraphrased remark).

⁵⁶ Ulrich Von den Steinen, *Expeditionsreisen am Amazonas. Der Ethnologe Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929)*. Mit einem Geleitwort von Mark Münzel, Köln: Böhlau, 2010, 124-5.

⁵⁷ See Karl von den Steinen, 1925-28. *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst. Studien über die Entwicklung primitiver Südseeornamentik nach eigenen Reiseergebnissen und dem Material der Museen*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen), 3 vols (I. Tatauierung, II. Plastik, III. Die Sammlung). – More recently, this publication has been translated into French and re-

remarkable that von den Steinen begins his meticulous analysis with tattoo patterns recorded either by earlier visitors to the field, therefore rather dated, or applied to carved objects, or still available for visual recording on individuals alive at the time of his own fieldwork. Over the years von den Steinen visited many museums in Europe and abroad holding ethnographic material from the Marquesas Islands in order to extend his analysis to all the variants documented. Before going into print, von den Steinen insisted on comparing the evidence he had prepared for publication with the Maori material he had studied in parallel.

Instead of my trying to present a condensed version of von den Steinen's results, suffice it to refer to Alfred Gell who made excellent use of von den Steinen's findings in his analysis of stylistic developments and the transformations underlying them.⁵⁸ Gell bases his argument on detailed photographs and drawings of objects collected, as well as on the local interpretations and explanations collected and analysed by von den Steinen. In fact, the latter had succeeded in interviewing many individuals about their traditional knowledge of the iconological meaning of the forms and objects which they still commanded.⁵⁹ All in all, von den Steinen's work on art traditions among specific groups of American Indians as well as among the Marquesan islanders – the latter accomplished after retiring from his jobs in Berlin – marks a major step in the development of a genuine anthropology of art. We may assume that it was realized in communication with Franz Boas, who published his own book on *Primitive Art* for the first time in 1927. Can we hope to find more than just shreds of their correspondence? We also would love to hear about their contacts and exchanges, if any, with Aby Warburg in pre-1900 New York.⁶⁰

Up to World War I, the collecting activity of the Berlin museum of Ethnology certainly was designed to contribute substantially to a model inventory of World Ethnology and, by implication, at least up to 1907/1910, of World Art. The directors (keepers) of the geographical departments at the museum were also teaching courses in ethnography, von Luschan on Africa and Oceania, von den Steinen on American Indians. Area studies were produced, specifically on the art of German New Guinea, for example, by Konrad Theodor Preuss, again an Americanist, in 1896-97, which dealt above all with ornaments, both figurative and non-figurative.⁶¹ Von Luschan wrote on New Guinea ethnography for a handbook in 1899, giving priority to complex objects including headrests, figurative sculptures as well as

published as *Les marquisiens et leur art : étude sur le développement de l'ornementation primitive des mers du sud d'après des résultats personnels de voyage et les collections de musées*, 3 vols. Punaauia, French Polynesia : Musée de Tahiti et des Îles - Te Fare Iamanaha et Editions Motu 2005-2009.

⁵⁸ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency. An anthropological theory*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 165-220.

⁵⁹ For excerpts from Karl von den Steinen's travel log for the Marquesas see Burgl Lichtenstein, *Die Welt der 'Énana. Eine Reise durch Geschichte und Gegenwart der Marquesas-Inseln*, Berlin: Mana, 2007, 91-120.

⁶⁰ Warburg, [Abraham Moritz]'Aby M.', in *Dictionary of Art Historians*, Durham NC see <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/warburga.htm>, consulted on October 16, 2014.

⁶¹ Konrad Theodor Preuss, 'Künstlerische Darstellungen aus Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land in ihrer Bedeutung für die Ethnologie', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 29, 1897, 7-139 and 30, 1898, 74-120.

decorated objects such as lime containers. His text addresses form and structure of individual objects, deals with style and repeatedly touches on the importance of getting to know what kind of art is being produced and who the yet unknown native artists are.⁶² At the same, a new generation of anthropologists was being trained by professors elsewhere, among them Ernst Grosse in Freiburg i. Br.⁶³, the university attended by students of medicine who were intending to become navy doctors. In a way Grosse was an atypical armchair anthropologist in so far as he appears to have insisted on collecting more data from local people before drawing grand conclusions. One of Grosse's medical students was Emil Stephan. On his first assignment on a navy survey ship, the *SMS Möwe*, he befriended members of the local staff and other informants whom he began questioning methodically on ornaments, their forms and their meaning as found on small objects such as lime containers used for chewing areca nuts on a daily basis. Art does not need the big format. After publishing a monograph of his collection⁶⁴ he boldly went on to produce a major volume, the first introduction to Oceanic art. It was specifically dedicated to the art of the Bismarck Archipelago but also dealt with the prehistory of art!⁶⁵ He was nominated expedition leader for the second year of the 1907-1909 German Navy Expedition to New Ireland and New Britain, yet succumbed to malaria or black water fever in May 1908 in New Ireland just after beginning fieldwork.

He was replaced by Augustin Krämer. This led to more intensive anthropological fieldwork on the art of *malagan* ceremonies, including the first descriptions of individual artists in the Pacific. Two publications resulted from this research: Elisabeth Krämer-Bannow's travel account, which also contained detailed local information provided by Augustin Krämer, and Augustin Krämer's short monograph on the Malanggans of Tombará. When in 1911 Krämer became the first director of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart and professor at the University of Tübingen, the Oceania department in Berlin fell into the hands of a non-specialist, Grünwedel, whose focus was on Asian cultures. This may help to explain partly why the immense collection assembled by the Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss-Expedition (Sepik-Expedition) was not really appreciated back in 1913/14.

⁶² Felix von Luschan, '[Kap.] X. Beiträge zur Ethnographie von Neu-Guinea', in: Maximilian Krieger, *Neu-Guinea*, Berlin: Alfred Schall, 1899, 440-522, the term art explicitly used on pp. 505-8 and 518-9.

⁶³ See contributions by Leeb and Déléage, this volume

⁶⁴ Emil Stephan and Fritz Graebner, eds, *Neu-Mecklenburg (Bismarck-Archipel) : die Küste von Umuddu bis Kap St. Georg : Forschungsergebnisse bei den Vermessungsfahrten von S.M.S. Möwe im Jahre 1904*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen), 1907.

⁶⁵ Emil Stephan, *Südseekunst - Beiträge zur Kunst des Bismarck-Archipels und zur Urgeschichte der Kunst überhaupt*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1907. More on 'Stephan, Emil' in *Deutsches Koloniallexikon* (1920), vol 3, 405 (http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Stephan), consulted on 31 December 2013); Stephan donated in 1907 a number of artworks from New Ireland to the Museum of Ethnography in Freiburg i.Br. as an expression of thanks for the teaching by Prof. Grosse, see Margarete Brüll, 'Kolonialzeitliche Sammlungen aus dem Pazifik', in: E.Gerhards, ed, *Als Freiburg die Welt entdeckte. 100 Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde*, Freiburg: Promo Verlag, 1995, 109-45.

Only four years earlier, in 1910, von Luschan had published a paper summing up the then current knowledge about Sepik ethnography and its limitations, featuring pictures and texts of the major pieces already held at the Berlin museum, thus encouraging the expedition to specifically study art-related questions. Borrowing from some of von den Steinen's ideas he demanded a fieldwork approach to art ('Kunstleistungen'), enquiries that could provide answers to the basic questions regarding materiality as well as the art's links to the domain of ideas and worldviews ('geistige Kultur'), before developing tentative hypotheses on the origins of art: Of 'curiosities we have already more than enough', von Luschan stated, he further advised that in order to obtain the cultural facts and to learn at least one local language, they would need 'to establish a friendly and honest relationship with the native population'; all in all this would take at least one year to accomplish.⁶⁶ One may doubt whether the head of the Sepik Expedition, the geologist and mining expert Artur Stollé, understood what von Luschan was advising the members of the expedition to do.⁶⁷ For all that the outbreak of World War I brought an abrupt end to the project. Richard Thurnwald, who was still in the Sepik area, got separated from the collections he had assembled; he was eventually permitted to leave New Guinea and make his way to the United States where he moved into social anthropology. Adolf Roesicke, the principal ethnographer, was called up for military service, survived the war, but died quite suddenly in early 1919, only months after the war and his military service had ended. As early as 1919, perhaps even earlier, the Berlin museum began selling some of its Sepik artworks, including some quite significant pieces!⁶⁸ So much for the long-term aims of this repository of world ethnology and art; it appears they were soon overthrown by institutional practice.

⁶⁶ Felix von Luschan, 'Zur Ethnographie des Kaiserin-Augusta-Flusses', *Baessler-Archiv*, 1, no.1, 1910, 103-117, here esp. 115-7. We may find an indirect echo of von Luschan's appeal in Otto Reche, *Der Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss*, in: G.Thilenius, ed, *Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908-1910*, vol II: A,1, Hamburg: L. Friederichsen & Co., 1913. Reche concludes his text (on pages 453-467) with a discussion of figurative art and its motifs, suggesting the existence of four style provinces in the Sepik area.

⁶⁷ Markus Schindlbeck, 'Unterwegs mit der Kolonialgesellschaft. Eine Expedition des Museums für Völkerkunde Berlin', in: M. Schindlbeck, ed, *Expeditionen in die Südsee. Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung und Geschichte der Südsee-Sammlung des Ethnologischen Museums*. Veröffentlichungen des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, N.F. 74. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and D. Reimer, 2007, 65-90.

⁶⁸ Markus Schindlbeck, *Gefunden und verloren. Arthur Speyer, die Dreissiger Jahre und die Verluste der Sammlung Südsee des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin*. Veröffentlichungen des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, N.F. 79. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2012, 95-187. Up to 1939 important objects were deaccessioned for different reasons, and many of these items have since been acquired bona fide and have thus resurfaced in private and public collections, for examples see Gilles Bounoure, 'La question des « doublons » océaniques au musée de Berlin et ailleurs, d'après le livre récent de Markus Schindlbeck, *Gefunden und Verloren*', *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, 135, 2012, 257-264 .

A gap between teaching and collecting with major implications

While field collectors and the few people specializing in the study of art seem to have enjoyed a fruitful dialogue, sadly a gap seems to have opened up early on between anthropological teaching and the objects collected. On the one hand one could mention here that in 1890 Hjalmar Stolpe talks of positive contacts with museum staff at various places, while, at a quite different level, we also have Alois Riegl's report on his exchange with the collector Rieschek on Maori ornaments in Vienna.⁶⁹ On the other, Karl von den Steinen left his earlier position as professor for anthropology at the University of Marburg in 1894 because he was not authorised by his superiors to create an ethnographic collection, which he considered indispensable with regard to modern teaching methods.⁷⁰ Furthermore, even Ernst Grosse's initiative to establish a museum collection at his university as a tool for teaching anthropology with a focus on art was only partly successful. Following this he preferred to continue his career as a student and collector of art in Japan rather than as a professor.⁷¹ With the separation of university teaching from museum collections, students became intruders in the museum, not always welcomed. This also becomes evident in the case of the Pacific, the American Indian and the African collections in Berlin from about 1911 onwards, mentioned above. Only Augustin Krämer's teaching at the University of Tübingen seems to have had a more long lasting effect on the anthropology of art in German-speaking countries, including the development of collections.⁷²

⁶⁹ Alois Riegl, 'Neuseeländische Ornamentik', *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 20, 84-87; translation by Karl Johns in this volume. I thank Wilfried van Damme for drawing my attention to this document.

⁷⁰ Ulrich Von den Steinen, *Expeditionsreisen am Amazonas. Der Ethnologe Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929)*, Köln: Böhlau, 2010, 94.

⁷¹ To which position he returned towards the end of his life.

⁷² For the post World War I period a few German-speaking anthropologists publishing on art should be remembered here: Hans Himmelheber was a PhD student of Augustin Krämer at the University of Tübingen, but first went to do fieldwork in West Africa and then among the Inuit, but never held an institutional position, see Eberhard Fischer, 2003. 'Die Hersteller afrikanischer Kunst. Zum Tod des Kunstethnologen Hans Himmelheber', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 9.12.2003, <http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/startseite/article99Y4Z-1.341697>, consulted on October 16, 2014; Eckart von Sydow taught at Berlin's Humboldt University until his premature death in 1942, his student Werner Münsterberger left for a PhD in Basel under Felix Speiser on eastern Indonesian mythology, and managed to publish in 1940 his groundbreaking study on the universality of art anonymously in the Netherlands, and in 1947 emigrated to the United States, becoming a psychiatrist of renown, see Anonymus, *Primitieve kunst en cultuur*, 4 volumes, Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1940, and Münsterberger, W. 1955, *Primitieve Kunst uit West- en Midden-Afrika, Indonesië, Melanesië, Polynesië en Noordwest-Amerika*, Amsterdam, Contact, as well as Lisa Zeitz, 'Werner Münsterberger 1913-2011', *Art in America*, [<http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/werner-muensterberger-obituary/> consulted on October 16, 2014]; Ernst Vatter lost his university position at Frankfurt/Main to Leo Frobenius's disciple Adolf Jensen, and emigrated to Chile, dying there in 1946 as a chicken farmer, see Ruth Barnes, *Ostindonesien im 20. Jahrhundert : Auf den Spuren von Ernst Vatter*, Frankfurt: Museum der Weltkulturen, 2004.; and Leonhard Adam, a lawyer-cum-anthropologist of art, who having had to leave

One reason for this certainly lay in the fact that approaching works of art, either for study purposes or for the pleasure of enjoying their temporary company, is much more complex than following a lecture or reading about them. Ernst Grosse rightly insisted on first establishing an interpretation of what he called earlier or less complex works of art in their original context, based on documents and facts, similar to the practice in the (natural) sciences.

One comes to appreciate this self-imposed methodological restriction when dealing with the numerous, simplifying theories offered for all forms of art which often seems at odds with one's own traditional views. For Grosse, limiting his approach to societies of gatherers and hunters living close to their natural environment and keeping their equipment to a minimum, also offered the opportunity to integrate poetics and dance into his view of art. He had obviously read Haddon and especially also Boas' early Inuit report. While adhering to an evolutionary orientation, Grosse drew conclusions opposite to vulgar Social Darwinism: Grosse maintained that art was essential for survival given the fact that populations practising art had not been eliminated in the process of natural selection. If art was of no use, a gratuitous pursuit, and nobody had earnestly engage with it, art would have disappeared.⁷³

Conclusion

Generally one could say that it was fieldworkers trained as botanists, zoologists, geologists, geographers, even missionaries, and numerous medical doctors who contributed significantly to our knowledge on Pacific art. Having in common an open eye for the aesthetically attractive in natural forms they followed in the wake of Alfred Russell Wallace. By applying zoological methods of observation to the products of human enterprise they strived to collect types of objects and their variant forms, rather than amassing random items. In small steps their publications helped to create an inventory of artistic forms. Early collecting was encouraged by traders such as Johan Cesar VI Godeffroy who, by 1861, saw a chance to combine a personal interest in science with his company's commercial activities. Godeffroy employed trained zoologists and art-minded collectors such as Schmeltz, J. S. Kubary and Richard Parkinson to acquire collections for his museum, which also served as a selling point. From 1888 onwards, during and after zoological fieldwork, Alfred Cort Haddon developed a deep interest in the art of southern New Guinea

Germany for England, was forcibly removed in 1940 from the United Kingdom to Australia, where he obtained a position at the University of Melbourne; in 1943 Adam curated the first ever *Primitive Art* show (including Aboriginal art) at the National Art Gallery of Victoria, see Benjamin Thomas, 'Daryl Lindsay and the appreciation of indigenous art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in the 1940's: "No mere collection of interesting curiosities"', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 4, June, 2011, 1-32, here pp.4, 7-13, <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/thomas-on-daryl-lindsay1.pdf>, consulted 18 September 2014. Adam published *Primitive Art*, London, Penguin, and contributed the chapters on law and on art to L. Adam and H. Trimborn (eds.), *Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde*, 3rd. edition, Stuttgart, Enke Verlag 1958.

⁷³ Grosse, *Anfänge der Kunst*, 1894, 52.

and the adjacent Torres Strait islands. By that time state museums, mainly in Germany, had started to obtain collections commissioned from field collectors. Karl von den Steinen and his expedition partners studied American Indians in the Xingu River area of Brazil and their ways of producing and performing different forms of art. Around the turn of the century von den Steinen went on to apply his knowledge to study the art of the Marquesas islanders in the details of transformation of forms and contents. Through him and people like Felix von Luschan, Berlin became a centre of collecting and studying non-European art. Collecting became fashionable, as the museum collections established during the same period by learned and missionary societies go to show which helped to substantiate views about non-Christian religious practices rather than to document their new followers' approach to aesthetics. As far as teaching around 1900 was concerned, Ernst Grosse at the University of Freiburg i. Br. and Franz Boas at Columbia University, New York, played equally important roles in the development of the anthropology of art, not least on the strength of the scholars they trained. Like Haddon, Boas and von den Steinen, Augustin Krämer at the University of Tübingen was one of the very few in this early generation who based his teaching on own field research with artists working in their specific social environment. While Grosse stresses the value of art and works of art as a positive element in the process of natural selection, and thus in social evolution, Boas and von den Steinen underline the importance for the individual artist to be able to find the right form more or less free of constraint, permitting him or her to convey more than a prescribed basic message. Emil Stephan would certainly have contributed considerably to this debate if his life had not been cut short.

When looking back on the period of 1873 to 1910, that is, the age of early collecting, and considering the many visually attractive objects collected – from a predominantly European perspective the works of sophisticated artisans, some of whom were already esteemed as artists – as well as the pioneering published studies dealing with these art traditions, we are inclined to ask why did these studies did not produce a larger and more far-reaching echo? Had the humanities already lost against colonial propaganda by 1910? Were the younger leading anthropologists of their time caught between their training in physical anthropology (and no longer zoology) and their classical education? It seems hard to answer these questions in a general way. This would require a whole set of chapters in quite a different book with regard to, for example, Franz Boas, his teachings and his students, to Aby Warburg and his commitment to art, and to A.C. Haddon and the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge where the results of the Torres Strait Expedition were published. It would also include the scholars of the next generation trained in Berlin towards the end of our period, among them Felix Speiser who later encouraged detailed research on Melanesian art and culture.

The museums may have fallen prey to their own success in collecting artworks as part of their original approach to considering them as a single category of ethnographica. The sheer size and complexity of managing large collections in museums such as Berlin or Dresden has helped to create a barrier between the works locked up in overcrowded showcases or crates and interested museum visitors keen to view these treasures. In this light, the urge of young artists wishing to have unmediated access becomes plausible. Emil Nolde was allowed to draw

objects he spotted in the Berlin collection in 1910/11 prior to the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition in Munich. It was only after World War I had ended that a new period of collecting and appreciating non-European art began, despite the continuance of colonialism, which is yet another story. Nevertheless, through ethnographic documentation and collecting early fieldwork had established a basis for reflecting on the importance of visually effective human activities we have come to globally call art, even if some anthropologists would prefer to focus on these activities' economic or religious significance than on their aesthetic impact. It is by stimulating this process of reflection and debate that museum collections and the contextual references embodied in the objects they hold may continue to serve as a core asset to the humanities, the discourse they engender, and beyond.

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