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## Multiple Suppliers in Permeable Spaces. Ethnographic Collecting at the End of the Nineteenth Century

### ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is on collectors of naturalia who also gathered “ethnographic” objects alongside their main interest that lay in botany, zoology, mineralogy etc., providing collections to zoological gardens and museums of natural history. Carl Hagenbeck, Johann Umlauff and Otto Staudinger are only the most prominent names from the turn of century. They were the principals for many collecting projects. The permeability of scientific spaces in the nineteenth century is more visible in collections gathered by commercial expeditions with an orientation towards natural sciences than in ethnological and archaeological expeditions. Another aspect

of this scholarly permeability was the popularization of science in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ernst Ule was a typical representative of this movement. The permeability between “scientific” and “commercial” interests and the necessary networks, programmatic in the “science of humanity” in the late nineteenth century, is visible in the close interrelation between disciplines. The fact that the focus of these scholars was not the study of people in the first place but the collection of botanical or zoological specimens, where the knowledge of indigenous experts was indispensable, shaped not only the collection but also the relationship between the collectors and the communities involved.

### Introduction

“Ethnographic” collections have come about through many actors over the two hundred years since the beginning of intensive collecting in the early nineteenth century. Initially objects were collected as curiosities, then, in the heyday of collecting at the end of the nineteenth century, the aim was to create archives that would preserve the material culture of “endangered” peoples. This “rescue paradigm” (*Rettungsparadigma*) and

the “preservation fetishism” (*Bewahrungsfetischismus*), as Rebekka Habermas aptly put it, were the predominant motives. At that time, however, interest in “rescuing” was not only focused on the foreign, what has been called “salvage anthropology” but also on archaeological, natural historical, geological, paleontological, and physical anthropological collections, which were also created to the same extent.<sup>1</sup> Adolf Bastian, the founding director, never tired of repeating the importance of gathering “ethnic originals” for the then Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Royal Museum for Ethnology) in Berlin:

Every generation tackles the workload that has fallen to it, and ours is imperiously charged with the duty to secure and preserve the ethnic originals, so as not to be hit by the tribunal of history with the reproach that through the fault of negligence the most precious documents of human history have perished, which later no power in the world will be able to bring back, because it will then be “too late”.<sup>2</sup>

## Contexts of collecting at the end of the nineteenth century

Germany, as an empire, had entered the circle of “colonial powers” relatively late in 1884, so it is not surprising that the director of the then Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Adolf Bastian, pragmatically argued for a “division of labor” concerning ethnographic collecting by the European colonial nations.

Here, of course, a division of labor will be necessary, and Germany will probably be able to dispense with the duty of taking care of India or Indonesia, which can be left to England and Holland, while as far as East Asia is concerned, its own interest might suggest that the monopoly that has so far fallen to Paris should not be left unchallenged for too long.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Rebekka Habermas, Rettungspradigma und Bewahrungsfetischismus: Oder was die Restitutionsdebatte mit der europäischen Moderne zu tun hat, in Thomas Sandkühler, Angelika Epple, Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *Geschichtskultur durch Restitution? Ein Kunst-Historikerstreit* (Wien/Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2021), 79.
  - 2 “Eine jede Generation arbeitet an dem Pensum, das ihr zugefallen ist, und der unserigen ist gebiet-erisch die Pflicht auferlegt, die ethnischen Originale zu sichern und zu bewahren, um nicht von dem Geschichts-Tribunal mit dem Vorwurfe getroffen zu werden, dass durch die Schuld säumiger Nachlässigkeit kostbarste Dokumente der Menschheitsgeschichte zu Grunde gegangen seien, die später keine Macht der Welt zurückzubringen vermag, weil es dann eben ‘zu spät’ ist.” Adolf Bastian, *Controversen in der Ethnologie vol.1. Die Geographischen Provinzen in ihren culturgeschichtlichen Berührungspunkten* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1893-1894), 518.
  - 3 “Hier freilich wird es einer Theilung der Arbeit bedürfen, und Deutschland voraussichtlich sich der Pflicht entledigen können, für Indien oder Indonesien zu sorgen, was England und Holland überlassen bleiben kann, während betreffs Ostasiens das eigene Interesse vielleicht anrathen möchte, das bisher auf Paris anfallende Monopol nicht allzu lange mehr unbeanstandet zu lassen” (Adolf Bastian, *Betrachtungen über zeitgemäße Förderung der Ethnologie und die darauf bezüglichen Sammlungen der Museen* (Berlin, 1887), 6.)

In this worldwide colonial “division of labor”, Bastian proposed that Latin America seemed a suitable field for German scholars. There were, in the first place, the pioneering research trips to the Americas by Alexander von Humboldt (1799-1804) who was in many respects a model for Adolf Bastian.<sup>4</sup> A large part of Humboldt’s ethnographic American collections, first hosted in the *Kunstkammer*, had been transferred to the “*Ethnographische Sammlung*” and later to the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde*, forming the bedrock for further collections. Another favorable point was the fact that the former Spanish colonies had been independent since the early nineteenth century and allowed German research to take place in America without coming into conflict with other colonial nations. A third aspect that made America a particularly promising research area from Bastian’s point of view, was the supposed “seclusion” (*Abgeschlossenheit*) of the continent. Based on the assumption that “elementary thoughts” (*Elementargedanken*) were shared by all human beings,<sup>5</sup> the effect of “geographical provinces” on human communities could be tested. These geographical conditions to which people adapted were according to Bastian not only “the physiological half of the organism” but also the psychological part “dependent on the legalities which manifest themselves in the effect of the ‘geographical province’” and promoted the development of the “thoughts of peoples” (*Völkergedanken*).<sup>6</sup>

## The influence of nature on culture

A “geographical province” in the Americas that was considered particularly suited for the study of human history was the upper Xingú in Brazil. Protected by rapids, this refuge area prevented navigation and thus colonization upstream before the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> The four major linguistic groups of Brazil are present in this area and made this “geographic province” a good space to test the theory. In the scholarly expeditions organized by the *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* since 1884 to the river Xingú<sup>8</sup> and other regions of Brazil, about a quarter of its South American ethnographic collection was collected. The larger part, however, came about through a broad spectrum of suppliers with different backgrounds: scholarly travelers and explorers from various disciplines, merchants, and settlers who had emigrated to America, especially to Brazil, Argentina,

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4 Adolf Bastian, *Alexander von Humboldt. Festrede bei der von den naturwissenschaftlichen Vereinen Berlins veranstalteten Humboldt-Feier* (Berlin: Verlag von Wiegandt & Hempel, 1869).

5 Adolf Bastian, *Ethnische Elementargedanken in der Lehre vom Menschen* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1895).

6 Adolf Bastian, *Controversen in der Ethnologie*, 17; Marie-France Chevron, *Anpassung und Entwicklung in Evolution und Kulturwandel. Erkenntnisse aus der Wissenschaftsgeschichte für die Forschung der Gegenwart und eine Erinnerung an das Werk A. Bastians* (Wien: LIT, 2004), 105.

7 Mark Münzel, *Die ethnologische Erforschung des Alto Xingú*, in Michael Kraus, ed., *Theodor Koch-Grünberg. Die Xingú-Expedition (1898-1900). Ein Forschertagebuch* (Köln: Böhlau, 2004), 435-436.

8 Michael Kraus, *Bildungsbürger im Urwald. Die deutsche ethnologische Amazonienforschung (1884-1929)* (Marburg: Curupira, 2004), 93-96.

and Chile, in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> In their specific ways, these very diverse suppliers contributed to the emergent “science of humanity” (*Wissenschaft vom Menschen*).

European Enlightenment at the end of the eighteenth century considered the human being a complex “physical, moral and spiritual being”. Therefore, the human body, language, and its community, as well as its historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) were central issues in this field.<sup>10</sup> These questions were discussed in the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory (Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, BGAEU) founded as a forum for scholarly exchange in 1869, almost at the same time as the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, founded in 1873.<sup>11</sup> In the monthly sessions there were not only talks, the presentation of books and collections, reports from travelers. In these sessions indigenous peoples originally exposed in the “Völkerschauen” (anthropological displays) were also presented and discussed by the members as well as people with physical anomalies.<sup>12</sup>

## A program for collecting

Within the “science of humanity”, the fields were fluid and permeable. This was also the case for the providers of museum collections. Cultural anthropological collections from the German colonies were for example shaped by explorers, colonial administrators, the military, and missionaries.<sup>13</sup> In Latin America, other actors and concerns prevailed. For the “archive of humanity” in Berlin which Adolf Bastian had in mind, the focus and the procedures should be the following: “Germany should concentrate on the obvious, on its special focus, this are the natural tribes, and in addition, on the antiquities of the pre-Columbian America”.<sup>14</sup>

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9 Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2006), 238.

10 Hans Erich Bödeker, Philippe Büttgen and Michel Espagne, eds., *Die Wissenschaft vom Menschen in Göttingen um 1800* (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, vol. 237, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage, 2008), 12-13.

11 Annette Lewerentz, Les premières années de la Société berlinoise d'anthropologie, d'ethnologie et de préhistoire et son intégration dans le paysage scientifique berlinois. in Céline Trautmann-Waller, ed., *Quand Berlin pensait les peuples. Anthropologie, ethnologie et psychologie (1850-1890)* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2013), 41-57.

12 Anja Laukötter, *Von der “Kultur” zur “Rasse” vom Objekt zum Körper? Völkerkundemuseen und ihre Wissenschaften zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bielefeld: Transkript Verlag, 2007).

13 Kurt Krieger, Hundert Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin. Abteilung Afrika, in *Baessler-Archiv XXI* (1973), 113.

14 “Deutschland soll sich auf das ihnen Nächstliegende sich zunächst concintrieren, dorthin, wo ihr eigentlicher Schwerpunkt liegt, auf die Naturstämme nämlich, und neben ihnen auf die Alterthümer des vor-columbischen America.” Bastian, *Betrachtungen über zeitgemäße Förderung der Ethnologie und die darauf bezüglichen Sammlungen der Museen*, 6.

This programmatic statement, to all appearances, was not only wishful thinking but also oriented towards the possibilities of collecting. Bastian himself had gathered archaeological collections only during his travels to America in 1875/76 and shortly before his death in the Antilles in 1905.<sup>15</sup> The “antiquities of pre-Columbian America” were otherwise almost exclusively purchased by private collectors: Germans who had emigrated to Latin America, supported by German diplomats and trading houses with their respective networks, more rarely by Latin American collectors.<sup>16</sup>

The overlapping layers of globalization Jürgen Renn and Malcom D. Hyman describe for the globalization of knowledge<sup>17</sup> by consequence apply to archives of material culture as well. The various aspects of global developments in the late nineteenth century also influenced the collections of the then *Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde* in Berlin. The “rescue paradigm” is present in the same way in ethnology, archaeology, geography, natural history, and other disciplines. It was therefore common for researchers from different disciplines to gather ethnographic collections, especially when active in regions less frequented by Western travelers. The economically different regions in Latin America put forth another type of supplier: in regions with mineral resources, there were engineers e.g. in Peru related to the extraction of Guano, in Chile related to the extraction of saltpeter; in regions with a dense European colonization like Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay, there were German settlers; in regions with a plantation economy, German land owners would send archaeological collections, like those from the sugar plantations in coastal Peru.<sup>18</sup>

At what was now the *Ethnologisches Museum* (Ethnological Museum)<sup>19</sup> in Berlin most of these collections date from the heyday of collecting, i.e., from the late nineteenth and

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15 Manuela Fischer, Peter Bolz and Susan Kamel, eds., *Adolf Bastian and his Universal Archive of Humanity. The Origins of German Anthropology* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms-Verlag, 2007).

16 Beatrix Hoffmann, *Das Museumsobjekt als Tausch- und Handelsgegenstand: zum Bedeutungswandel musealer Objekte im Kontext der Veräußerungen aus dem Sammlungsbestand des Museums für Völkerkunde Berlin* (Berlin, Münster: LIT, 2012); Manuela Fischer, The Inca Collection at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin. Genesis and Contexts, in Monica Barnes, Inés de Castro Javier Flores Espinoza, Doris Kurella, and Karoline Noack, eds., *Tribus-Sonderband Perspectives on the Inca* (Stuttgart: Linden-Museum, 2015), 24-37; Manuela Fischer, La colección Macedo: Los inicios de la investigación de la sociedad Recuay en el contexto de la Guerra del Pacífico y la competencia entre los museos europeos (1880-1882), in Jorge Gamboa and George Lau, eds., *Paisaje, Identidad y Memoria. La sociedad Recuay (100-800 dC) y los Andes Norcentrales del Perú* (Lima: IFEA, 2021), 77-94..

17 Jürgen Renn and Malcom D. Hyman. Introduction, in Jürgen Renn, ed., *The Globalization of Knowledge in History* (Berlin: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften, 2012) (<https://www.mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/1/toc.html>), 29.

18 Beatrix Hoffmann, *Das Museumsobjekt als Tausch- und Handelsgegenstand*.

19 The Ethnologisches Museum is part of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (State Museums) within the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Foundation of the Prussian Patrimony).

early twentieth centuries, a period characterized by colonialism, industrialization, and emigration.<sup>20</sup>

## The dealers of naturalia

A hitherto little noticed group of providers of ethnographic collections from Latin-American countries are dealers of naturalia (*Naturalienhändler*) whose field of activity overlapped with those of cultural anthropologists. In tropical and subtropical Latin America, travelers with natural scientific interests encountered indigenous communities and were often supported by indigenous guides.

The focus of this paper is on collectors of naturalia who also gathered “ethnographic” objects alongside their main interest that lay in botany, zoology, mineralogy etc., providing collections to zoological gardens and museums of natural history. This group of collectors active in South America often worked on behalf of “education, science, the possibility that the collections could become centers of the environmental and animal protection movement, and a basic human need for nature in the midst of urban concentration”.<sup>21</sup> The most prominent dealer of naturalia in the German Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century was the Hamburg-based Carl Hagenbeck (1844-1913).<sup>22</sup> He imported exotic animals for zoological gardens, circuses, and private collectors. Hagenbeck also innovated the concept of zoological gardens with a panoramic display of animals in an “exotic” architecture.<sup>23</sup> The people in the “Völkerschauen“ (people exhibitions) he organized since 1874/75 were displayed in the same way, creating “exotic contexts”.<sup>24</sup> Objects which had formed part of the staging of the people exhibitions were later purchased by museums. The Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin bought items from Inuit

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20 Jürgen Kocka, *Das lange 19. Jahrhundert. Arbeit, Nation und bürgerliche Gesellschaft*. Gebhardt. Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, Bd. 13. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2001), XII.

21 Nigel T. Rothfels, *Bring'em back alive: Carl Hagenbeck and exotic animal and people trades in Germany, 1848-1914* (Harvard University ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 1994), 14.

22 Hilke Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig um die Welt. Die Hagenbeck'schen Völkerschauen* (Frankfurt a.M. u.a.: Campus Verlag, 1989); Hilke Thode-Arora, Die Familie Umlauff und ihre Firmen. Ethnographica-Händler in Hamburg, in *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg*, N. F. 22 (1992), 143-158.

23 Rothfels, *Bring'em back alive*.

24 For a comprehensive list of the people exhibitions see Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig um die Welt*, 168-169. For a critical discussion about “people exhibitions” only a short selection is listed here, see e. g. Gabi Eissenberger, *Entführt, verspottet und gestorben – Lateinamerikanische Völkerschauen in deutschen Zoos* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1996); Lothar Dittrich and Annelore Rieke-Müller, *Carl Hagenbeck (1844-1913). Tierhandel und Schaustellungen im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1998); Sierra Ann Bruckner, *The Tingle-Tangle of modernity: Popular anthropology and the cultural politics of identity in imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Diss Service, 2000); Pascal Blanchard, *Human zoos: science and spectacle in the age of colonial empires* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008); Hilke Thode-Arora, *From Samoa with Love? Samoan travelers in Germany 1895-1911: retracing the footsteps* (München: Hirmer, 2014).

communities from Canada in 1878 at Hagenbeck's,<sup>25</sup> from communities from Tierra del Fuego in 1882,<sup>26</sup> as well as from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Europe.

Another important dealer of naturalia was Johann Friedrich Gustav Umlauff (1833-1889) later followed by his son Heinrich (1868-1925) who obtained his goods from sailors in the ports but also commissioned scholars with specific collecting orders.<sup>27</sup> The Ethnologisches Museum has 1153 objects registered in association with the names of the father Heinrich and son Gustav Umlauff (1889-1943).

The third dealer of naturalia relevant in this paper is Otto Staudinger (1830-1900), a lepidopterologist from Dresden, who provided museums of natural history with butterflies from different parts of the world. He was followed by his son Paul Staudinger (1859-1933) who made collections mainly in Africa. A total of 402 objects are registered with the name of the Staudinger at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin.

Carl Hagenbeck, Johann Umlauff and Otto Staudinger are only the most prominent names from the turn of century. They were the principals for many collecting projects, and more detailed research would be necessary to determine e. g. all the agents related to their enterprises. The permeability of scientific spaces in the nineteenth century is more visible in collections gathered by commercial expeditions with an orientation towards natural sciences than in ethnological and archaeological expeditions. In the latter, zoological or botanical specimens were not always prepared professionally, so they did not always meet the standards of the respective disciplines. In the case of ethnographic objects gathered by scholars of other disciplines, the usual documentation applied to geological or biological specimens was also applicable to ethnographic objects: e. g. the description of the place of acquisition, classification (including indigenous terminology) and additional documentation with photographs. The then well-known handbook by Georg von Neumayer, first published in 1875, *Anleitung zu wissenschaftlichen Beobachtungen auf Reisen* (Instructions for scholarly observations on voyages), initially intended to serve the navy, was revised and reedited several times. It gave a broad introduction to nearly every research field, from astronomy to physical anthropological measurements and was intended to be useful to scholars of different disciplines.

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25 From the expeditions of captain Adrian Jacobsen in 1877 and 1878, Thode-Arora, *Für fünfzig Pfennig um die Welt*, 168

26 Tierra del Fuego, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inventory numbers V C 281-298 (1882). 1879 "Patagonier", Chile, impresarios: Schweres/Jacobsen, exhibitions in Hamburg, Dresden Hamburg, 1881/82 "Feuerländer", Chile?, impresario: Schweeres, exhibitions: Paris, Berlin, Leipzig, southern Germany, Switzerland.

27 Britta Lange, *Echt. Unecht. Lebensecht. Menschenbilder im Umlauf* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2006).

## Switching between institutions

On behalf of Carl Hagenbeck in Hamburg and the Museum für Naturkunde (Museum of Natural History) in Berlin, Richard Rohde (1855-?) covered a wide range of collecting areas. He collected birds and ethnographic objects for the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin and physical anthropological data for the pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902). In South America, he was building up mainly ornithological collections for Hagenbeck.<sup>28</sup>

Recommended by the German ambassador in Buenos Aires, Theodor von Holleben, Rohde also undertook several trips to the border region between Paraguay and Brazil for the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, where he gathered 976 ethnographic objects between 1882-1886.<sup>29</sup> The letters he wrote during his journey to the north, up the Rio Paraguay to the southern part of the Mato Grosso province, from September 1883 to January 1884, were of great interest for future travelers to this region, an area still hardly known at that time to scholars in Berlin.<sup>30</sup> Travel correspondence of interest was usually presented at the monthly meetings of the BGAEU and then published in the *Verhandlungen* (proceedings).<sup>31</sup> In his letters Rohde described in detail the living conditions he encountered in the Terena villages, the composition of the population, their physiognomies, ways of life, houses, agriculture, the production of goods (bags, ceramics, etc.). Rohde's description is probably the first one of the Terena in the Mato Grosso (Brazil) after they had migrated from the Bolivian Chaco at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the first collection from the Terena for the Königliches Museum in Berlin.

During his last trip on behalf of Carl Hagenbeck, Richard Rohde also provided Rudolf Virchow with data on physical anthropology. He took hair samples and measurements of six individuals of the Payaguá (autodenomination: Evueví), as well as outline drawings of the hands and feet of Payaguá in the northern Chaco in Paraguay. The results were published by Rudolf Virchow in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (1886).

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28 The ornithologist Hans von Berlepsch (1850-1915) obtained birds from Hagenbeck, who also received birds from South America and from Hermann von Ihering at the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro. The collection of bird skins Rohde gathered in Paraguay were published by Berlepsch, then acquired largely by the Königliches Zoologisches Museum in Berlin (today: Museum für Naturkunde), Graf Hans von Berlepsch, Systematisches Verzeichniss der von Herrn Ricardo Rohde in Paraguay gesammelten Vögel und Appendix, in *Journal für Ornithologie* 35 (177): (1887), 1-37. 113-134. pl. 1.; 12 (1885); 2 (1886), 229.

29 From his original collection of 976 object at the Ethnologisches Museum 882 objects remain after losses during World War II.

30 Adolf Bastian, Erwerbungen des Königlichen Museums, namentlich Masken und Wurf Bretter aus Südamerika, in *Verhandlungen der BGAEU in Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 16 (1884), 203; Adolf Bastian, Süd-Amerika, in *Original-Mittheilungen aus der Ethnologischen Abtheilung der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin* (1885-1886a), 11-16.

31 Adolf Bastian, Süd-Amerika, in *Original-Mittheilungen aus der Ethnologischen Abtheilung der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin* (1885-1886 a), 11.





Fig. 1: Purse made of armadillo carapace from the Payaguá, collected by Richard Rohde, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, V C 959, photographer: Claudia Obrocki.

The permeability of scholarly endeavor in the field of “science of humanity” permitted that these scholars were employed by dealers of naturalia as well as by museums. During his stay in Germany in 1885, for example, Rohde became an assistant (“Hilfsarbeiter”) at the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin for six months and participated in the activities of the BGAEU. After his return to Paraguay (1885) Rohde again worked for Hagenbeck. After his return from South America in August 1886, Rohde was appointed “auxiliary employee” at the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde between November 1886 and March 1887.<sup>32</sup>

## The popularization of science

Another aspect of this scholarly permeability was the popularization of science in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ernst Ule (1854-1915) was a typical representative

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32 Anita Herrmannstädter, *Symbole kollektiven Denkens. Adolf Bastians Theorie der Dinge*, in: Anita Herrmannstädter, ed., *Deutsche am Amazonas. Forscher oder Abenteurer?* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2005), 50-55.

of this movement as he was born into a family of naturalists.<sup>33</sup> His father Otto Ule (1820-1876) was a teacher, a politically liberal scientist, and the author of several popular books on natural history. Otto Ule was also – together with the famous bryologist Karl Müller and Emil Adolf Roßmäßler – the founder of the journal *Die Natur* in 1852 and its editor for several years.<sup>34</sup> *Die Natur* aimed to be a popular “journal for the dissemination of scientific knowledge for readers of all classes”<sup>35</sup> and was part of the post-Humboldtian popularization of natural history by the “Deutsche Humboldt-Vereine” (1868-1896), where Emil Adolf Roßmäßler (1806-1867) was a well-known figure at that time.<sup>36</sup> In 1913 Ernst Ule sold a collection of 254 objects including 60 photographs still held by the Ethnological Museum in Berlin.



Fig. 2: Jaguar hide, Mato Grosso, Brazil, collected by Richard Rohde, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, V B 1324, A, B, photographer: Claudia Obrocki.

What we know about the life of Ernst Ule is mainly based on an extensive bio-bibliography by Hermann Harms (1870-1942), a botanist at the botanical garden in Berlin. Ernst Ule got a botanical education in horticultural courses in Proskau in Southern Silesia (1874-1876), before he worked in the botanical garden in Halle and later in Berlin in the

33 His younger brother Wilhelm Ule (1861-11940) was professor (Privatdozent) of geography in Halle (1882-1887) and Rostock (1907-1933) and editor of *Die Natur* in 1897-1900.

34 Andreas Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert: Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit, 1848–1914* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998), 513.

35 *Zeitschrift zur Verbreitung naturwissenschaftlicher Kenntniss und Naturanschauung für Leser aller Stände.*

36 Daum, *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert*, 507-508).

city parks department. After an unspecified illness, he decided to go to Brazil in 1883, where he moved from Santa Catarina to Rio de Janeiro when he got a position in 1891 as a “Naturalista viajante” (travelling naturalist). As a deputy director at the botanical department at the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (1895-1900) Ule realized several expeditions where he gathered botanical collections of in total 17,000 specimens.<sup>37</sup> Of his nearly ninety-five essays, most are devoted to his main interest, the cryptogams, fungi and mosses. Ule had also a special interest in symbioses between animals and plants (e.g., ant trees).

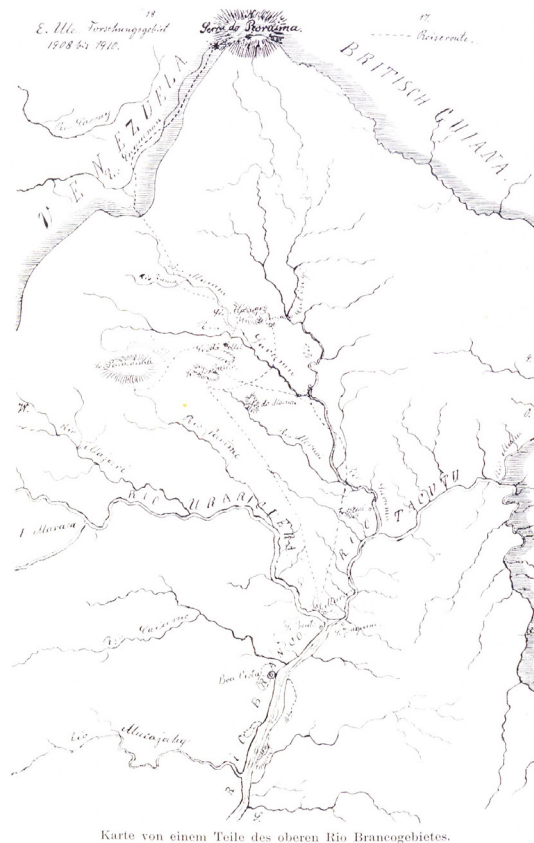


Fig. 3: Map of the research area of Ernst Ule at the rio Branco, Brazil (Ernst Ule, *Unter den Indianern am Rio Branco in Nordbrasilien*, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 45 (1913), 280).

His last trip in South America in 1908 led Ernst Ule to the Rio Branco in the extreme north of Brazil, where he stayed several months, and was supported by the indigenous people in his botanical studies. “So, I lived among these Indians for many months and had the best opportunity to get to know them and make many an observation”.<sup>38</sup> Ule applied the principle of sedentary research for his botanical as well as to the anthropological studies.

At the Serra de Pracaú Ule was at first “distressed by the many Indians who constantly besieged me.” Particularly in the dry season, between twenty and one hundred people from different communities gathered at Ule’s place, as the territories of the Wapishana, Macushi und Arecuna abut at the close by Serra do Mel.<sup>39</sup> Ule used the calm afternoons to take photographs and

to barter. Since word had spread that “um bom Inglez” (a good Englishman) had brought many goods, Ule exchanged 500 meters of cloth, matches, knives, gun powder, lead,

37 Hermann Harms, Ernst Ule. Nachruf. Mit Bildnis, in *Verhandlungen des Botanischen Vereins der Provinz Brandenburg*, LVII/1915 (1916), 150-184.

38 Ernst Ule, *Unter den Indianern am Rio Branco in Nordbrasilien*, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 45 (1913), 278.

39 Ule, *Unter den Indianern am Rio Branco in Nordbrasilien*, 286-288.

primers, fishhooks, fishing lines, threads, needles, mirrors, and combs for food (fish, game etc.) and other items with the Wapishana, Macushi und Arecuna.<sup>40</sup> The numerous objects Ule gathered there supplied the museum in Berlin as well as the Grassi Museum in Leipzig.<sup>41</sup> The list Ule sent with the collection is quite precise as it also indicates the designation of the object in the corresponding indigenous languages.<sup>42</sup>



Fig. 4: Visiting Arecuna and Wapishana at Ernst Ule´s place near Serra de Pracaúá, 26. 2. 1909, Ethnologisches Museum, SMB, VIII E 2868.

Other collections from Brazil also related to the collecting of naturalia were expeditions on behalf of the lepidopterologist Otto Staudinger (1830-1900) in Dresden. Staudinger was specialized in butterflies and did research within Europe around the Mediterranean. He was a well-known scholar who published his results in the leading journals, the *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift Isis* and various coedited manuals on European and Asian butterflies. Staudinger would send his employees to other parts of the world: the

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40 Ibid., 282-285.

41 A collection of photographs is held at the Ibero-American Institute, SPK, Berlin, Michael Kraus, *Von Pflanzen und Menschen. Ein Botaniker dokumentiert das Amazonasgebiet*, in Gregor Wolff, ed., *Forscher und Unternehmer mit Kamera: Geschichten von Bildern und Fotografen aus der Fotothek des Ibero-Amerikanischen Instituts* (2014), 106-115.

42 The objects in the list are marked with letters to I indicate the community who produced it: A=Arecuna=Taulipang; M=Makuši; W=Wapišana; J=Jerikuna der Serikuna=Seregóng.

scholars Otto Michael (?-?), Otto Garlepp (1864-1959), his brother Gustav Garlepp (1862-1907), and Paul Hahnel (1843-1887) to different parts of America. However, Staudinger maintained the correspondence with the museums and published the information provided by his employees also in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* and in other relevant journals.

Paul Hahnel made two expeditions to South America. The first one took place in 1879-1884 and a second one a year later in 1885-1887, together with his wife and Otto Michael who published a description of the journey.<sup>43</sup> This would be his final trip as Paul Hahnel would die of malaria in 1887 in Manicore (Hahnel 1890, Michael 1923). From the ethnographic objects he collected within the Ticuna at the border of Brazil/Colombia/Peru, fourteen were lost in World War II.

## Some final thoughts

The permeability between “scientific” and “commercial” interests and the necessary networks, programmatic in the “science of humanity” in the late nineteenth century, is visible in the close interrelation between disciplines. The Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, where cultural and physical anthropology as well as prehistory were connected, also nurtured the relationship of scholars from all over the world as corresponding members in a close-knit network, where publications and collections were exchanged and where the members in the different countries served as reference points for their peers and entrepreneurs with a clearly commercial interest as – among others - Carl Hagenbeck, Johann Umlauff, and Otto Staudinger.

## Service for science

These principals were the references for the institutions, so, collections sent by their agents often appear under their names. Specimens collected by the agents were regularly published by specialized scholars (see above: Virchow, Berlepsch among others). The contribution of these scholars is possibly not sufficiently taken into account.

## Pioneer exploration

Collectors with a zoological, botanical, geological or other focus at the end of the nineteenth century travelled in regions that were not yet or little known by anthropologists. The exploratory aspect of these journeys made the documentation of practical information on itineraries and local conditions extremely valuable also for scientists of other disciplines, especially for anthropologists. About some of these collectors, relatively little is known, as they were employees of commercial entrepreneurs, who managed most of the transactions, correspondence and even the publications of their collections.

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43 Otto Michael, *Der Schmetterlingsjäger vom Amazonasstrom* (Dresden: Deutsche Buchwerkstätten, 1923).

## Perspectives on indigenous people

An aspect which should be further explored is how the “other gaze” by natural scientists establishing collateral ethnographic collections influenced the relationship they had with indigenous communities. The fact that the focus of these scholars was not the study of people in the first place but the collection of botanical or zoological specimens, where the knowledge of indigenous experts was indispensable, shaped the relationship between the collectors and the communities involved. Another aspect which should be investigated more deeply is how the choice of “ethnological” objects is influenced by the natural scientist’s gaze above and beyond the commercial object.

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