

On the Trail of the Collectors: Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim (RPM) and its Collections

When the Hildesheim Museum was founded in 1844, it was initially named "City Museum" ("Städtisches Museum"). After the death of its co-founder Hermann Roemer (1816–1894) it was first renamed "Roemer-Museum". It got its current name, "Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum", in 1911 when the Roemer-Museum became complemented by the Pelizaeus-Museum which has a focus on antiquity (mainly Egypt but also, though to a much lesser extent, the Roman and Greek empires). Today, the exhibitions of these "twin museums" are united under one roof.

From the very beginning, the Roemer-Museum was laid out as a multi-disciplinary museum with collections from natural history including palaeontology and geology, city history, and ethnography. While the ethnographic collection comprises about 12.000 objects from all continents today, it consisted of no more than 28 objects when the museum was founded. Its subsequent growth was not least due to the efforts of Hermann Roemer who placed importance on enlarging all collections from the various disciplines. Particularly Hildesheim-born people living overseas were called upon to contribute to the growth of the ethnographic collection; and they did.

In addition, Hermann Roemer, who was a deputy in the Reichstag in Berlin and one of the co-founders of the "Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des äquatorialen Afrika" ("German Society for the Exploration

of Equatorial Africa“), used his political connections to enlarge the museum's collections. An important role in that respect was also played by Ludwig "Louis" Gottfried Dyes (1831–1903), a native of Hildesheim who was a cousin of Hermann Roemer's. He contributed to the growth of various collections including the ethnographic holdings. Being a merchant and Imperial and Royal Consul General of Austria in Bremen, he used his business connections and networks to present the museum with important collections from Oceania (Zembsch collection), Namibia (Hoepfner collection), and other places. However, other gifts (e. g., from the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin but also from individuals) as well as purchases (e. g., from "Naturalienhandlungen“, that is, companies specialized in the sale of ethnographic and natural history specimens) also contributed to the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Scope of the Project and Sources Used

As mentioned above, the ethnographic collection of the museum comprises a total of ca. 12.000 objects. It was thus necessary to select a limited number of objects for research. The choice fell on 420 objects from Africa, the Americas, India, Indonesia, and Oceania, which came from the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, today: Ethnologisches Museum/Ethnological Museum) in Berlin to the Städtisches Museum/Roemer-Museum at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. The majority of these objects were collected in colonial contexts. The project aimed at shedding light on the circumstances under which the objects in question were collected. Another focus was on the compilation of collectors' biographies. Results of that project, illustrated by selected objects, were first presented at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum as part of the special exhibition "Mit 80 Objekten um die Welt" ("Around the World with 80 Objects“, 11 February 2017–31 March 2019). After that, these objects were given a special exhibition of their own, "Den Sammlern auf der Spur" ("On the Trail of the Collectors“, 31 May 2019–12 January 2020).¹

The sources used were both archival documents and published works. The Hildesheim City Archives have numerous documents related to the ethnographic collection of the Roemer-Museum, including a comprehensive file (Bestand 741, Nr. 242) entitled "Tausch und Erwerbungen von Exponaten aus dem Königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin" ("Exchanges

with and acquisitions from the Royal Museum of Ethnology Berlin“). Information on collectors and collections as well as on the bureaucracy involved in sending ethnographic and natural history collections from the colonies to Berlin is also found in the Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives). However, the richest collection of documents is kept in the archives of the Ethnological Museum Berlin, the successor institution of the Royal Museum of Ethnology. Documents include lists of objects sent to Berlin, correspondence with collectors in the German colonies (some of whose letters reveal the circumstances under which objects had been acquired or – in the case of so-called “punitive expeditions“ – seized), exchange of letters related to the “Catalogues of available doublets from the scientific collections sent from the German Protectorates“ (see below), etc. Published sources include accounts of expeditions, whose authors (e.g., Johan Adrian Jacobsen, Karl von den Steinen, Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg) specify how they collected ethnographic objects.

Soon after the project had started a problem arose with regard to accessibility of the documents in the Ethnological Museum Berlin: The museum’s archives closed due to contamination, and remained closed for the duration of the Hildesheim project. Nor was it possible to access the microfilms on which many documents of the archives are available. This meant that the project had to be continued without access to the most prolific collection of documents related to objects from the Royal Museum of Ethnology. The researchers decided to consult other archives and to use published sources such as the travel accounts mentioned above; in addition, special emphasis was placed on collectors’ biographies which can be compiled without using archival material of the Ethnological Museum Berlin. The results presented in this publication are, therefore, preliminary. It is planned to resume research and to complete the study at a later point in time.

For the time being, provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is being continued in the context of the joint project “Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnography in Lower Saxony“ (PAESE), which is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. The focus of the Hildesheim subproject is on the collectors’ networks of museum co-founder Hermann Roemer, as well as on selected ethnographic collections from Oceania (Museum Godeffroy, Hamburg), Namibia (Carl Hoepfner collection), and Indonesia/the Dutch East Indies (Hermann Muhlert collection).

The Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin and its "Doublets"

The establishment of the German colonies from 1884 onward first in Africa (Togo, Cameroon, German Southwest Africa, German East Africa), then in Oceania (German New Guinea and Micronesia, German Samoa) and China (Kiauchou) led to an immense increase in the holdings of the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. In 1889 and 1896, the Federal Council of the German Empire issued two decisions according to which all ethnographic and natural history collections compiled not only by colonial staff but also by expeditions dispatched to the colonies were to be sent to Berlin. Members of the colonial protection force ("Schutztruppen") were encouraged to collect ethnographic objects by the first director of the Royal Museum of Ethnology, Adolf Bastian (1826–1905), and by Felix von Luschan (1854–1924) who worked at the museum, where he was mainly in charge of the Africa department, from 1885 until 1910. Von Luschan even wrote a "Manual for Ethnographic Observations and Collecting in Africa and Oceania", of which several editions were published from 1899 onward and which was distributed to members of the "Schutztruppen" in the colonies.

Ethnographic objects came in from the German colonies in huge numbers. While the Berlin museum kept most of them, some classes of objects were represented by so many specimens that it was decided to distribute surplus objects – so-called "doublets" ("Dubletten") – to museums and other institutions with ethnographic collections in the German Empire.² In some cases this was done by sale; in others, objects (as well as natural history specimens) were given away for free. This was done, for example, by means of the "Verzeichnisse der abgebbaren Dubletten der aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten eingegangenen wissenschaftlichen Sendungen" ("Catalogues of available doublets from the scientific collections sent from the German Protectorates"), which were printed and distributed from 1889 until 1903 and may be best characterized as being mail-order catalogues featuring ethnographic and natural history doublets. Museums and other institutions throughout the German Empire could order doublets and got them for free; the only costs incurred were for packaging and shipping. One of those who ordered from these catalogues was Achilles Andreae, who was director of the Roemer-Museum from 1894 until his death in 1905. However, the Hildesheim museum also acquired doublets from Berlin by means of exchange and purchase.

The Role of Edgar Walden (1876–1914), an Ethnologist from Berlin

When director Achilles Andreae died in 1905, a successor was quickly found: geologist Rudolf Hauthal. However, Hauthal, who at the time was employed at the museum and university of La Plata (Argentina), was just about to embark on a long-planned expedition to the Andes that would take until mid-1906. An interim director was thus needed, and the choice – upon recommendation of none less than Ferdinand von Richthofen, the famous Asian explorer – fell on 28-year old Edgar Walden who was trained in Geography, Geology, Philology, and History and employed at the Royal Museum of Ethnology as a "scientific assistant". As soon as Walden had taken up his post in Hildesheim, he set to work to enlarge the ethnographic collection of the Roemer-Museum, using – among other things – his connections to the Berlin museum and his knowledge of its collections. That way, he provided the Roemer-Museum with a considerable number of doublets from Asia and Africa. In 1907 he left Germany for what was then German New Guinea as a member of the "German Navy Expedition". After his return in 1910 he became again employed at the Royal Museum of Ethnology but also continued his work as curator of the ethnographic collection in Hildesheim. Provided with financial funding by Rudolph Hauthal, Walden continued to purchase doublets in Berlin, including a substantial collection of objects from West Africa (1913) and objects from Asia.

When World War I broke out, Edgar Walden became a war volunteer. He fell in battle near Cernay, Alsace, in December 1914. It is striking that no more objects came to Hildesheim from the Royal Museum of Ethnology after his death.

The Objects and Collectors

The following objects came from the Royal Museum of Ethnology to the Roemer-Museum between 1883 and 1914: 50 objects from North America; 22 objects from South America; 151 objects from India and Indonesia; 193 objects from Africa; and 4 objects from Oceania – that is, a total of 420 objects. Some were gifts whereas others were given in exchange for objects from the Roemer-Museum, or bought by the latter.

The items from the Royal Museum of Ethnology at the Roemer-Museum do not include any human remains dug up or otherwise collected by Europeans for purposes of "studies of race" in physical anthropology. The only human bones are two skulls attached to a large drum made by the Ewe of Anfeu in the northern part of the German colony of Togo and collected by Julius Smend, an officer in the colonial forces, in the early 20th century (on Smend and the drum see below). The skulls were fastened to the drum by the Ewe; the use of such drums, decorated with the skulls of slain enemies, in royal parades has been described by traveller Heinrich Klose (1899).

In some cases the names of the collectors mentioned either in the inventory books of the Roemer-Museum or in other sources. A list of these 30 collectors is found in Fig. 5 of the present book (above at the beginning of the chapter "Die Objekte und Sammler"). In cases where the names of collectors could not be established, any further provenance research is basically impossible. However, some of the objects collected by these as yet nameless collectors bear inventory numbers, or rather "doublet numbers", of the Royal Museum of Ethnology, so further research in documents at the Berlin museum may reveal the identity of at least some of these collectors.

North America

The only objects from North America that came to Hildesheim from Berlin are from the Johan Adrian Jacobsen collection. Provided with very generous funding by the "Ethnologisches Hilfskomitee für die Vermehrung der ethnologischen Sammlungen der Königlichen Museen in Berlin" ("Ethnological Support Committee for the Enlargement of the Ethnological Collections of the Royal Museums in Berlin"), he embarked on an expedition to the Northwest Coast of the U.S. and to Alaska in 1881. In 1883, he returned to Berlin with about 7.000 ethnographic objects, including about 4.000 from Alaska. 50 of the latter were sent to the Roemer-Museum, probably soon after Jacobsen's return. According to the inventory book, this transaction was an "exchange", but we do not know what the Roemer-Museum gave in exchange for the Jacobsen objects.

As far as the circumstances of acquisition are concerned, Jacobsen notes in his travel account (Jacobsen 1884, 1924, 1977a)³ that prior to departing for the interior of Alaska he supplied himself with trade goods coveted by the indigenous population: white and coloured cotton cloth, gunpowder, lead and

primers, tobacco, matches, needles, knives, and beads. These he traded for ethnographic objects. Whenever he set up camp in a village, he dispatched messengers to neighbouring villages to announce that a European had arrived who wished to acquire ethnographic objects for the Berlin museum. Soon his quarters began to fill with people carrying all kinds of items which they bartered for the goods brought along by Jacobsen.

The 50 objects in Hildesheim are mainly from the Yup'ik, and an excellent representation not only of everyday life (women's and men's knives, scrapers for cleansing hides, and other utensils). By including various hunting implements, they also illustrate food gathering on land and at sea. Even religious life is represented by four face masks and one pair of the small "finger masks" used by women. While such masks were charged with spiritual power when worn in the winter ceremonies of the Yup'ik, they lost that power afterwards and were usually discarded or even destroyed, and new masks were made for the next cycle of ceremonies. There was apparently no problem selling such discarded masks to non-indigenous visitors; Jacobsen mentions that one of his indigenous guides sold him "several good dance masks he owned" (Jacobsen 1924: 145).

South America

South America is represented by 22 objects from the collection compiled by Karl von den Steinen on his second Xingú expedition 1887/1888. They are from various ethnic groups along the *Río Kulisehu* in Brazil, as well as from the Bororó, and came to Hildesheim in 1889 in exchange for a "gold ring", about which no further information could be found, from the collection of the Roemer-Museum.

Like Johan Adrian Jacobsen, Karl von den Steinen published an account of his expedition in which he, too, specifies the circumstances under which the objects were acquired. From Germany the expedition brought along knives, axes, scissors, "cow chains for the chiefs to adorn themselves", 75 kg beads, shirts, handkerchiefs, mirrors, mouth-organs, whistles, and other goods. These were bartered for ethnographic objects. Particularly the iron axes, being convenient tools to clear the woodland for horticulture, were much coveted by the indigenous men, while the women preferred beads and other items of adornment. In return, von den Steinen got not only items of everyday use but also dance masks and bark-fibre costumes worn at ceremonies.

From a modern perspective, an exchange of an elaborate feather head-dress or dance costume for an iron knife may seem an unfair deal. In the 1880s, however, it was much easier for people in Amazonia to use the still abundant birds of the rain forest to make new feather costumes than to acquire iron tools. We may thus assume that both parties were pleased with such deals.

Asia

In 1905, Edgar Walden arranged an exchange of objects from the Roemer-Museum in return for 131 objects from the Royal Museum of Ethnology. The majority of the latter objects were from various parts of India, a few from what is today Indonesia. From the Roemer-Museum, the Royal Museum of Ethnology got one original carved figure from the Minahasa region in Sulawesi, as well as casts of three more such figures. They had been collected by Dr. med. Hermann Muhlert (1816–1870), a native of Hildesheim who had become an army doctor in Dutch service in the Dutch East Indies around 1840. He was first stationed in Surabaya (Java), then, from 1855 onward, in Menado (Sulawesi/Celebes). When he retired and returned to Hildesheim in the early 1860s, he donated a collection of ethnographic objects to what was then the Städtisches Museum, including the figures coveted by the Berlin museum.

Basically nothing is known about the collectors of these 131 objects from Berlin. However, in the Hildesheim City Archives exists a list of these objects, each with a "doublet number" of the Royal Museum of Ethnology. Further research on the collectors' identities may thus be using archival material of the Ethnologisches Museum. Some of the objects from India have identical paste-on labels, one of them imprinted with "Expedition Riebeck". It is thus likely that the collector was Emil Riebeck (1853–1885).

As to additional doublets from Asia that came to Hildesheim after that 1905 transaction, there is also complete lack of information on the collectors, with one exception: two bows from the Mentawai Islands near Sumatra. They were collected by Alfred Maass (1863–1946) who visited these islands in 1897 and subsequently published an account of his expedition (Maas 1902). Like Jacobsen and von den Steinen, Maass was well equipped with goods to be used for bartering: cloth of various colours, brass thread in different strengths (for making needles and bracelets), tin mirrors, bells, shirt-like jackets, trousers, iron tools and lance points, glass beads, matches, candles, motile toys

("elephants walking"), spectacles, mouth-organs, balls of yarn, stoneware soup tureens, and Chinese gongs (Maass 1902: 156). He also describes the bows, called rau-rau, used mainly for hunting in the Mentawai Islands. We can assume that he got these, like all ethnographic objects he collected, in return for some of the goods he had brought along with him.

Africa

As to the objects from the German colonies in Africa, 23 collectors could be identified. The majority of objects were ordered by director Achilles Andrae from the above mentioned "Catalogues of available doublets from the scientific collections sent from the German Protectorates". Due to the limited time frame of the project it turned out to be impossible to conduct thorough research on all collectors and on the circumstances under which they acquired ethnographic objects. Another impediment in research was the inaccessibility of archival material of the Ethnographic Museum Berlin. Nevertheless, biographical sketches, some of them quite detailed, were compiled of a number of collectors.

In the following, the results of the provenance research on the objects from Africa will be summarized by way of representative examples.

In some cases the circumstances of acquisition are obvious. This applies, for example, to 30 objects that were "booty" from the Maji-Maji War (1905–1907) in Tanzania. The "war booty", mainly consisting of weapons, was first collected in a storehouse in Dar es Salaam. Part of it was then sent to the Royal Museum of Ethnology. Felix von Luschan was disappointed with the weapons because they did not come up to his idea of ethnographic "authenticity". Without further ado he ordered most of the objects to be burned. The remainder was distributed for free among museums and other institutions throughout the German Empire. The Roemer-Museum got its "share" in 1913; the transaction had been arranged by Edgar Walden.

A connection to acts of war also suggests itself in the case of objects sent from Togo to Berlin by Valentin von Massow, Gaston Thierry, and Dr. Hermann Kersting. From the mid-1890s onward, the three men were in charge of "pacifying" northern Togo, and there is a striking proximity of time between battles and the arrival of objects at the Royal Museum of Ethnology Berlin. The online database of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin (<http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus>) contains an entry according to which

von Massow in 1899" reported on a collection largely consisting of war booty", "gathered in Kabure at the same time as the Kersting collection". Objects collected by von Massow – four bows and six quivers with poisoned arrows from the Kabure or Bassari – were given the Roemer-Museum by his mother after his death, in a transaction arranged by the Berlin museum. In 1898 von Massow had undertaken a military expedition against the Kabure (Kabiye), and he notes in his diary that "the war booty, consisting of weapons and curios, was abundant" (Massow 2014: 541). It is possible that his "booty" included the weapons that eventually ended up in the Roemer-Museum.

As to the object from Thierry – five carnelian beads from northern Togo, strung on a piece of cotton thread –, which was ordered by director Andreae from the "Sixth Catalogue of available doublets from the scientific collections sent from the German Protectorates" (1903), it is difficult to make any statement on its acquisition. While it is possible that Thierry seized the beads on a military expedition, it is just as possible that he acquired them by means of barter. In 1899, he sent a large collection of objects from Togo to the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. The archives of the Ethnological Museum Berlin have numerous documents related to Thierry and his collection(s). Further research into these documents may give clues on the manner in which he acquired the beads.

The same applies to objects collected by Hermann Kersting; from the "Catalogues of available doublets" director Andreae ordered a "lance-like iron implement used in the big dance feast before the rainfalls begin" from East Kabure/Lama (1899 catalogue, sent to Berlin by Kersting as part of a larger collection in 1898) as well as a "woven cover for the penis" (Tamberma) and several stone-axe heads (1901 catalogue) from various parts of northern Togo. There is, again, proximity of time between military expeditions undertaken by Kersting and the arrival of collections in Berlin. Nevertheless, it is known that he – like von Massow and Thierry – also purchased ethnographic objects. As in the case of Thierry, further research on documents in the archives of the Ethnological Museum Berlin is needed to shed light on the circumstances of acquisition.

Another object that is very likely "war booty" is a Benin commemorative bronze head of a ruler that came to Hildesheim from Berlin in 1913. Like many other transactions, this, too, had been arranged by Edgar Walden. The Roemer-Museum paid 450 Reichsmark for the head – a large sum at the time. The Royal Museum of Ethnology, in turn, had acquired a considerable collection of Benin bronzes, including the head in question, via the international art trade.

Proximity of time between military operations and shipping of objects to Berlin suggests "war booty" in other cases as well, but solid evidence is lacking due to the inaccessibility of possibly relevant documents in the archives of the Ethnological Museum in 2017/18. Examples include:

- A knitted "fetish" dress and cap from the Ngolo in Cameroon, collected by Franz Karl Guse and ordered by director Andreae from the 1901 "Catalogue of available doublets". It is difficult to say whether the Ngolo would have given such a dress – which was worn in certain rituals – to Guse out of their own will. Gustav Conrau, a German colonial agent who sent a similar dress of the Bangwa to the Royal Museum of Ethnology, mentions that he had received it from a chief in an exchange of gifts. However, in the case of the "fetish" dress and cap collected by Guse it is interesting to note that he had led military operations against the Ngolo (and Bakundu) in the Cross River region in 1901.
- A crossbow (Bule, Cameroon) collected by Gustav Adolf Wilhelm Laasch, ordered by director Andreae from the 1903 "Catalogue of available doublets". In 1900, Laasch became head of the Ebolowa station which was situated in the territory of the Bule, with whom Laasch and his troops were involved in several armed conflicts. As to the Bule's weapons, he mentions rifles, arrows, and spears but no crossbows. Still, it is possible that crossbows – of which he sent two to the Royal Museum of Ethnology, together with a warrior's feather headdress and a harp – were among "booty" seized by Laasch and his men in the Bule villages. It may be worth mentioning that he also sent two complete Bule skeletons to the Royal Museum of Ethnology in 1902. Nevertheless, it is possible that he acquired the crossbows in some regular way outside armed encounters.
- Two "rattling anklets or bracelets" (Ngolo, Cameroon, Rio del Rey) collected by Oltwig von Kamptz, sent by him to Berlin in 1897, and ordered by director Andreae from the 1899 "Catalogue of available doublets". Von Kamptz had conducted military expeditions against the Ekoi and Ngolo in the Rio del Rey region in 1897.
- A "headdress made of black feathers, Wambungwa", collected by Eduard von Liebert and sent to Berlin in 1898. The headdress was ordered by Achilles Andreae from the 1901 "Catalogue of available doublets". From 1897 until 1901, Liebert was governor of German East Africa. From July until September 1897 he actively took part in a military operation against the Hehe, which lasted from February 1897 until July 1898. Ac-

ording to the inventory book of the Roemer-Museum, Wambungwa was situated south of Uhehe, the region inhabited by the Hehe people. Due to the proximity of time between the armed conflict and the time Liebert sent this and other objects to Berlin, it is possible that they were collected in the course of the Hehe war.

- A "war drum with skulls" from the Ewe people of Anfeu, Togo, collected by Julius Smend, a member of the "police troop", prior to 1903 when the drum was offered in the sixth "Catalogue of available doublets" and ordered by director Andreae. Smend had led a military expedition against Anfeu in 1900. On the other hand, he became active as an early ethnomusicologist, encouraged and instructed by Felix von Luschan. However, there is evidence of that activity only from 1904 onward when Smend collected musical instruments and made wax-cylinder recordings in northern Togo for the Royal Museum of Ethnology. Nevertheless, it is possible that his interest in music predated his official ethnomusicological work; he came from a pastor's family in which home concerts were cherished. While the drum may be "booty" from Smend's military operations in 1900, he may as well have acquired it by non-violent means. Among the Ewe such drums, adorned with skulls of slain enemies, were used in royal processions.

However, there are also cases in which it can be assumed that objects were acquired in non-violent ways. Objects from the Adolf Friedrich von Mecklenburg collection are an example. For the symbolic price of one Reichsmark, the Roemer-Museum bought 26 objects collected by the Duke on his "German Expedition to Central Africa" in 1907/08. Most of these objects are items of everyday use; there are also some weapons, but given the nature of the expedition it is unlikely that they were collected in the context of any military conflict. Once more, the transaction, which took place in 1912, had been arranged by Edgar Walden. Like Jacobsen and von den Steinen, Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg published a detailed account of his expedition (Mecklenburg 1909) which had been generously funded both by individuals and institutions including the Royal Museum of Ethnology Berlin. And like Jacobsen and von den Steinen, the Duke's expedition was well supplied with goods to be used for bartering. There were huge loads of various kinds of cloth, woollen blankets, beads, wire, caps, knives, and mirrors, which had been purchased by one of the members of the expedition, Lieutenant von Wiese, in Entebbe, Uganda. While members of the expedition illicitly

"helped themselves" with regard to procuring the human remains that were so much coveted by Felix von Luschan, Mecklenburg's report as well as other documents suggest that this was not the case with ethnographic objects, which were acquired in exchange for the goods mentioned above.

Another such case is a decorative comb worn by Wayao (Yao) women, collected "in the hinterland of Lindi" in German East Africa by "chief customs officer" Bernhard Carl Ewerbeck. He had sent the comb as well as other items of women's and girls' personal adornment to Berlin in 1898. The comb was then ordered by director Andreae from the 1899 "Catalogue of available doublets". The Yao had surrendered to the German colonial troops in the early 1890s. There is no evidence of any armed conflict at the time Ewerbeck collected the objects. It is very likely that he purchased them or acquired them by way of barter.

The same possibly applies to ethnographic objects sent to Berlin by Georg August Zenker. A gardener by profession, he was head of the Yaounde research station in Cameroon from 1889 until 1895 when Yaounde became transformed into a military station under the command of Hans Dominik. In 1896, Zenker settled as a planter in Bipindi where he lived until his death in 1922. Zenker is said to have placed importance on peaceful interaction with the indigenous population, based on compromise rather than confrontation. This approach included a network with local rulers and polygynous relationships with women of the local elite. Given these circumstances, it seems unlikely that Zenker acquired ethnographic objects by force. As a collector, his main interest was in natural history, as becomes apparent from documents in the German Federal Archives. In 1894, he sent twelve crates with plants and prepped animals to Berlin. Beginning in 1897 he repeatedly sent ethnographic objects as well. One of these, offered in the 1897 "Catalogue of available doublets" and ordered by director Andreae, was a "cuff made of animal fur" from Yaounde.

As has been mentioned above, there is as yet no clue to the circumstances of acquisition with regard to other collections and collectors. If the name of a collector is mentioned neither in the inventory book of the Roemer-Museum nor in other documents, provenance research is impossible. While information on some collections may be slumbering in the archives of the Ethnological Museum Berlin (or elsewhere), it is also possible that no documents whatsoever have survived on others.

Oceania

Only four objects from Oceania came to Hildesheim from Berlin. They had been collected by a lieutenant commander named Schack (a mussel-shell knife from the St. Matthias Islands) and Landeshauptmann Schmiele (a spear and two necklaces from New Guinea), and were ordered by director Andreae from the 1900 and 1901 "Catalogues", respectively. Not much could as yet be established about the circumstances under which these objects were collected.

- 1 <http://www.rpmuseum.de/ausstellungen/archiv/den-sammlern-auf-der-spur.html> (last accessed 08.09.2020).
- 2 For a description and discussion of the doublets policy of the Royal Museum of Ethnology see Hoffmann 2012.
- 3 References are only occasionally given in this summary, e. g., in the case of quotes. For detailed references see the German text.

