

This article contains names and information about deceased people, which might cause distress for some readers.

Hermann Klaatsch and His Collection of Human Remains from (North)West Australia

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While travelling Australia between 1904 and 1907, Hermann Klaatsch was very much interested in Indigenous cultural heritage, notably artefacts in daily use, which often had profane meaning, as well as other kinds of sociocultural expression such as local Indigenous languages, names, and stories. However, he was also greatly interested in totemism, and eager to learn more about Indigenous religion and the use of sacred artefacts in dances and ceremonies.¹

This was a new field of research, at least in German anthropology at the turn of the twentieth century. Discussions about the meaning of secret-sacred artefacts like the “Churinga”, as Klaatsch and his correspondents at the Museum of Ethnology in Cologne spelled it, had only just begun. New terms like “Seelenholz” were invented, and museum staff prided themselves on being alone in Germany in having a deeper interest in and knowledge about such artefacts from Indigenous Australia.²

As a medical doctor, physical anthropologist and comparative anatomist, Hermann Klaatsch also researched the anatomy of Indigenous people. He made anthropometric measurements, took photos of individuals and whole groups, and also made drawings of individuals – sometimes their faces, sometimes their whole bodies. Klaatsch – and his colleague and friend Otto Schoetensack in Heidelberg – were both Darwinists who believed that humankind was another species that evolved from the animal realm by natural selection.

Darwin had proven his ground-breaking theory through the key method of comparative anatomy, and Klaatsch was eager to use the same method in order to demonstrate similarities or differences between Aborigines and prehistoric humans (like the Neanderthal man or the Pithecanthropus). Apart from Darwin’s

- 1 The authors would like to thank Paul Turnbull for very helpful comments on a previous version of this chapter.
- 2 See letter Nr. 1, p. 6, from Klaatsch to Foy from 10. May 1905.

publication *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859), Thomas Huxley's book *Man's Place in Nature* (1863) also influenced Klaatsch and Schoetensack. Huxley had travelled around the world, including Australia. He drew particular attention to the skull, which may be one of the reasons why Klaatsch seemed more interested in skulls than whole skeletons. Klaatsch's aim was to seek evidence for the hypothesis that Australia was the very place where the anthropogenesis had taken place in prehistoric times, which sums up Schoetensack's "Out of Australia" theory.

In the course of his research, Klaatsch visited Aboriginal mission stations in Queensland and Western Australia. Missionaries brought him into contact with whole groups of Indigenous people easily. If stations were staffed with German missionaries, like, for instance, the Moravians on the Western Cape York Peninsula or the Pallottines at Beagle Bay, Klaatsch was able to gain even in-depth information, due to the missionaries' acquaintance with local languages and Indigenous cultural life in general. Missionaries acted as intermediators and/or translators. They were active partners for Klaatsch and other (travelling) collectors. Many Indigenous people at mission stations had converted to Christianity. Thus, it was relatively easy for missionaries to get people to hand over artefacts of religious significance.

At the Pallottine mission station Beagle Bay, this provided sufficient means for Klaatsch to collect secret-sacred artefacts likely to have been used in ceremonies and dances. During his first stay at Beagle Bay, he recorded in a diary entry for Sunday 26th November 1905 his having secured a "plentiful harvest" (= "reiche Ernte") of artefacts including secret-sacred objects.³ The harvest metaphor here is noteworthy. It invites the inference that he derived satisfaction not merely from furthering his scientific interests, but also because of the quantity of artefacts he obtained as a collector.

To review in detail the whole range of (secret-sacred) artefacts that Klaatsch collected is clearly beyond the scope of this article. This would require further substantial research. Rather, the aim of this article is to present in a concise manner, and for the first time, the information available in Hermann Klaatsch's diaries, notebooks and letters on the human remains that he collected in (North) Western Australia. In doing so, our goal is to establish the necessary means for further, more in-depth collaborative work towards their possible repatriation.

3 Tagebuch (4) 1905, 26. November 1905

Klaatsch and human remains

During his three-year journey around Australia Klaatsch obtained numerous human remains: Skulls, brains, skeletal parts or whole skeletons of Indigenous people. He never sent any of these human remains to Museums of Ethnology in Germany. Instead, he kept most for his personal study and research purposes. The only institution in Germany to which he sent human remains was the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin and its leading anatomist Wilhelm Waldeyer (1836-1921). The reason for this was that financial support he received from the Academy was in part given on the understanding that it would receive anthropological material in return.⁴

In 1907, Klaatsch was appointed Professor of Anatomy at Breslau University. He took his personal collection of human remains with him (together with his personal collection of cultural artefacts), which formed the basis of the ethnographical-anatomical museum within the Institute of Anthropology (Fig. 1 and 2). The Indigenous Australian human remains he obtained have remained in Wrocław (Breslau), despite two world wars and many changes in staff members and the organisational structure of the university.⁵ Today, his collection belongs to the Department of Human Biology (formerly: the Anatomical Institute) of the University of Wrocław and is considered official property of the Polish State.

In the course of her project on Hermann Klaatsch at the Museum of Ethnology in Cologne (2004-2007), Corinna Erckenbrecht conducted a research trip to Wrocław in 2006 and visited the Anatomical Institute, where she gained an overview of the collection of human remains from Australia collected by Klaatsch. It consists of up to 70 skulls from all over Australia.

Klaatsch recorded the provenance of his anatomical acquisitions in Western Australia quite well in his diaries, notebooks and letters. But how was he able to obtain these and other human remains during his time in Australia? The Indigenous population did not seem numerous in the places he visited, which were mostly along the Australian coast (he never visited the interior of the continent). It was difficult to find traditional burial places, which were only identifiable if one knew where to look. Exceptions were graves of those who had converted to Christianity and who were buried in clearly marked consecrated ground.

Klaatsch had to use other methods to find what he was looking for. First, he identified settlers, pastoralists, church officials, lay

4 The most prominent case was the mummy of King Na:tja from the Atherton Tablelands. Klaatsch sent it to Berlin in December 1904. The mummy was returned to its descendants in an official handover ceremony in Berlin in March 2017.

5 His ethnographic collection, however, was first transferred to the new Institute of Ethnology in Breslau in 1932 and then to the Museum of Ethnology in Warsaw in 1953 (see von Eickstedt 1935, Erckenbrecht 2016).

Fig. 1: Interior of Klaatsch's Anthropological Institute at Breslau University (between 1914 and 1916) with skulls (cupboard), photographs from Australia, boomerangs and spearthrowers (back of the next room). The person in the front right is Hermann Klaatsch's daughter Elisabeth. Private archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.



men, as well as jail or hospital staff who were willing to point him in the direction of Indigenous graves in the bush, or adjacent to churches, jails and hospitals. Klaatsch knew well enough that taking human remains from these sites was not only unethical but officially illegal in all states and a misdemeanour under common law. Nevertheless, he pursued his interests, sometimes secretly, sometimes with the help of churchwardens and jail staff, sometimes with Indigenous helpers of different tribal affiliations (see below).

Fig. 2: Anthropological institute of the University in Breslau (1914-1945). From: von Eickstedt 1935: 95.



In his letters to Schoetensack, his diaries, notebooks and listings “of my osteological collection”, as he called it, Klaatsch numbered the skulls, brains and skeletal material he obtained. He also used his initial “K” to indicate that he had (personally) collected these human remains and/or that they were his property now. The entire collection originally amounted to 95 individuals, as Klaatsch noted in a letter he wrote to Schoetensack in February 1907.⁶

Klaatsch’s collection of human remains from Northwest Australia

The remainder of this article documents, as best can be done by examining Klaatsch’s diaries, notebooks and letters, the provenance of the human remains that he obtained in Western Australia, mostly in the vicinity of the town of Broome and at Beagle Bay in the state’s Kimberley region.

The story of Klaatsch’s collecting begins on Rottnest Island (*Wadjemup*, to use its Indigenous name), located 18 km west of Fremantle. Klaatsch had arrived in Australia via Fremantle in March 1904, but he did not return until 1st October 1905. On 2nd October 1905, the chief warden of the Perth Lunatic Asylum, Mr. Fannigan, told Klaatsch that he would be able to find hundreds of Indigenous skeletons on Rottnest Island. At this time, the island served as a prison for Indigenous people from all over West Australia. Klaatsch had to make a considerable effort to obtain permission to visit Rottnest, which he did from 7th to 17th October 1905. But despite what he had been told, he achieved only “minor results” because the graves were not marked and situated directly beside the prison wall. However, the first skeletal remains in what he termed his “West Australian Collection” were from Rottnest Island. In his diary he added that one skeleton was that of an Indigenous man named “Old Governor”, while the other was that of a man from the Broome district called “Wangabiddy”.⁷ [Please refer to endnote 1 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

After his visit to Rottnest Island, Klaatsch travelled by steamer up the Western Australian coast, stopping at Geraldton, Carnarvon, Onslow, Roeburne, and Cossack. At Carnarvon, on 22nd October 1905, he witnessed a corroboree for the first time and was deeply impressed by it. He wrote a detailed description of the ceremony and also produced a drawing of the dancers with their extraordinary decorations rhythmically advancing to the fire. The corroboree

6 Letter Nr. 34 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 11, 6. February 1907.

7 Wangabiddy (age unknown) was the convicted murderer of Charles Redfern. He was sentenced to death at Perth on 18th January 1883 and hanged at Rottnest Island on 18th June 1883. Source: <http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/aus1900.html> (Date retrieved: 30th November 2017). For further information, see also the Parliamentary Debates of 21st September 1882, accessible via the URL: [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard%5Chan-sard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/18820921_Council.pdf/\\$File/18820921_Council.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard%5Chan-sard1870to1995.nsf/vwMainBackground/18820921_Council.pdf/$File/18820921_Council.pdf) (Date retrieved: 30th November 2017).

ree left him intrigued and eager to witness as many ceremonies as he could during his subsequent visit to Beagle Bay, where he attended further corroborees, one of which included the performance of the dugong dance, which had the strongest impression on him.⁸

Klaatsch obtained the artefacts used in the corroboree at Carnarvon, which unfortunately no longer exist. According to his diary, he also obtained a skull or a skeleton at Carnarvon. This seems confirmed by the sign “K 67” in his diary entries for 22nd October 1905, written when he was still in Carnarvon.⁹ The two skeletal remains from Rottnest Island mentioned above were numbered “K 65” and “K 66”. Thus, “K 67” strongly suggests that Klaatsch acquired a skull or skeleton at Carnarvon, which, however, he does not mention in his subsequent letters to Schoetensack.

During his first visits to Broome and Beagle Bay in November and December 1905, Klaatsch continued searching for human remains. While Indigenous graves in consecrated ground of the church were inviolate, he discovered that two children had been buried outside of the church graveyard and he was able to obtain their bones. Additionally, together with missionaries, he undertook what he described as a long and troublesome journey to an Indigenous grave in the bush, returning with another skeleton in his possession. So great was the heat and the depth of the grave that he was to describe his obtaining these remains as one of his, “most unpleasant grave desecrations in Australia” [please refer to endnote 2 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph]. No further details can be gained from Klaatsch’s diaries or letters about the remains of these two children and, presumably, an adult skeleton.

While Klaatsch was in Beagle Bay in November 1905, a 14-year old girl died of syphilis, a disease that according to his notes had been introduced by Malayans. Remarkably, the missionaries allowed Klaatsch to cut off the head, hands and feet of the deceased girl. Klaatsch wrote of being astonished and grateful for this “liberality” of the Catholic Fathers. No Protestant missionary would have allowed him to do this, he commented in a letter to Schoetensack, adding jokingly that such was his gratitude he had been prepared to turn Catholic, for at least a few days.

Klaatsch sent these body parts to Fremantle in a box that was officially listed as containing goanna and frog specimens. They were to be forwarded to Germany, with the intention of passing

8 See Erckenbrecht 2018

9 Klaatsch’s diary (4) 1905, 22. October 1905. There is no text describing this case, only the number.

them on to Max Fürbringer (1846-1920), at this time the director of the Institute of Anatomy at Heidelberg University.¹⁰ During the burial in Beagle Bay, the body of the girl was covered in paperbark and prepared in a way so that the funeral party could not notice the missing head, feet and hands. [Please refer to endnote 3 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

December 1905, Klaatsch was back in Broome, where he obtained two more skulls, one male and one female, from a Trappist Father. It is very likely that the priest in question was Nicholas Emo (1849-1915), as Klaatsch had previously written about his meetings with a Spanish monk in Broome named Father Nicholas, who had provided him with local ethnographic artefacts and also items from his former mission station at New Norcia. Consequently, it is unclear whether the skulls that Klaatsch obtained from Emo were from the Broome area or acquired elsewhere, perhaps in the vicinity of New Norcia. In Klaatsch's diary the numbers K 71 and K 72 appear in entries for the days that he spent in Broome and most likely refer to these skulls. Nr. 72 is also mentioned in a letter to Schoetensack, so it can be surmised that these were the skulls that Klaatsch received from Emo.¹¹ [Please refer to endnote 4 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

From Broome, Klaatsch travelled to Java and his records from this time show that he also collected human remains there (at Batavia and at a place at the south coast he called "Tjelatjap").¹² The skulls, brains and fossil remains he collected on Java were sent to Berlin, as he informed Schoetensack.¹³ Klaatsch returned to Broome half a year later in May 1906 suffering from malaria. He had to stay in the Broome hospital, during which time two Indigenous men from the Fitzroy River area, who had been prisoners at the local jail, died at the hospital.

This was the background to Klaatsch describing to Schoetensack how the two and other Indigenous men had come to be imprisoned. They were accused of spearing cattle, but in fact cattle station owners wanted the original inhabitants out of their way. The police was paid per head and day for those they arrested. Thus, the police brought in as many Indigenous people as possible, regardless of whether they had speared any cattle or not. Prisoners were then chained together and forced to do hard work such as road construction.¹⁴

The two men from the Fitzroy River area apparently died in Broome from Beri-Beri, a disease which, according to Klaatsch's

10 Klaatsch might have seen this as the best possibility to keep them safe during his absence.

11 When Klaatsch wrote about this to Schoetensack, he also mentioned tree graves for the Broome area. Klaatsch considered those the reminiscences of a life of Aboriginals in tree huts, just like "their pithecanthopoid ancestors". However, those original burial rites, according to him, were gradually disappearing.

12 Today spelled Cilacap.

13 Letter Nr. 26 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, pp. 23 and 27, 10.-20. March 1906 and letter Nr. 27 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 2, from 25.-31. March 1906. As this contains no relevant information for the situation in Australia, the original German quotes are not included here.

14 This corresponds to accounts provided by Walter Roth (1861-1933), at the time chief protector of Aboriginals in Queensland about similar conditions and practices in other parts of the Kimberley. See for instance Roth's contribution "More of the Black North-West" to the Perth Sunday Times, where he reports his observations in Halls Creek (30th July 1905, page 7), for further examples. Accessible via <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-articles7204129> (Date retrieved: 30th November 2017)

notes, had recently been introduced (“eingeschleppt”) by Asians. Klaatsch asked the police magistrate openly if the two dead bodies could be handed over to him. The police magistrate was shocked and refused Klaatsch’s request, telling him that their relatives would surely discover any mutilation of the bodies. This would cause a terrible uproar and increase the already existing distrust of the hospital amongst local Aboriginal people. However, the local police magistrate allowed Klaatsch to remove those bodily structures that would not be seen to be missing after the men’s bodies were prepared for burial. Thus, Klaatsch was able to obtain their brains at the Broome hospital. According to his letter to Schoetensack, Klaatsch planned to send them to the Academy of Science in Berlin, because the brains very much met their “special requests”. However, it is unclear whether he did so or not. [Please refer to endnote 5 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

Klaatsch returned to Beagle Bay for his second stay in June 1906 to find that the Pallottine Fathers had already secretly excavated graves to obtain two skeletons for him, one male, one female, as Klaatsch wrote to Schoetensack. In his diary, Klaatsch numbered these remains K 73 and 74. From his letters we find that he kept the “typical skulls”, but sent the post-cranial remains to some unknown German destination. [Please refer to endnote 6 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

From Beagle Bay Klaatsch continued his travels to Derby and Wyndham in July 1906. Although he stayed in Derby only for a few hours on 9th July 1906 his letters disclose that two Indigenous skulls had already been reserved for him (but not who had obtained them). Also at Derby he found an Indigenous man who was ready to take him out bush not far away from town where Klaatsch saw a tree grave for the first time. Bones had partly fallen to the ground and Klaatsch climbed the tree in order to retrieve the rest of the body, while his Indigenous companion did not dare to touch anything, even though, as Klaatsch wrote, he was “domesticated in the police service”. [Please refer to endnote 7 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

Continuing his trip to Wyndham, Klaatsch stayed there for two months from 12th July to 11th September 1906, during which time he quickly became particularly aware of hostility between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population, caused by the cruel treatment of the region’s traditional owners by pastoralists, station

owners and police, who had no hesitation in arbitrarily imprisoning men who challenged white authority (see above).

Klaatsch studied more than 70 Indigenous men at the local jail. But efforts at ethnographical and anatomical collecting were impossible because of the “tense situation”, as the local doctor J. Molony explained to Klaatsch. Molony was also the police magistrate, mayor and protector of Aborigines at Wyndham.

All Indigenous prisoners who had died in jail were buried in a churchyard close to the prison. Any attempt to disturb the peace of the graveyard would have added to already circulating rumours about the excavation activities of Klaatsch and Molony. However, a prisoner released from Broome, who had come to Wyndham on the same ship as Klaatsch, had also died of Beri-Beri. Molony allowed Klaatsch to keep his skull and Klaatsch preserved the brain with formol. He did so despite of severe pains in his “ileocoecal region” stemming from the resurgence of his malaria, which prompted Molony to remark that “indeed you sacrifice your life for science”. A pumpkin was used to replace the head of the man for the funeral ceremony and his body was wrapped carefully with paperbark. Klaatsch considered sending the total of three brains he had acquired to Waldeyer in Berlin, together with the two brains from Broome. But again, sources are unclear as to whether he did so or not. What we do know is that he regretted that he was not able to obtain more human remains during his two months in Wyndham because those were thus “lost for science”. [Please refer to endnote 8 for the original German quotations relevant for this paragraph.]

In mid-September 1906, Klaatsch continued his trip to Darwin and Melville Island where he obtained further skulls: two from Melville Island (one male and one female) and eleven from near Darwin, the majority of which were female. After this time in the Northern Territory, Klaatsch returned to Sydney and Tasmania. He interrupted his stay in Tasmania in February 1907 to attend the conference of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in Adelaide. There he caused controversy by showing his photographs from Northwest Australia of Indigenous people chained around the neck, which publicly proved Roth’s allegations to be true (see above).

While in Adelaide, Klaatsch received the remains of one individual from University of Adelaide Professor of Anatomy, Archibald Watson (1849-1940). Francis Gillen (1855-1912), the friend and an-

15 This case has been researched by Andreas Winkelmann from the Charité Human Remains Project in Berlin and Corinna Erckenbrecht (Erckenbrecht 2010: 173, Winkelmann & Teßmann 2013). The human remains were returned to Australia in April 2013.

thropological co-worker of Baldwin Spencer (1860-1829) severely protested against the human remains to be taken out of the country by Klaatsch. But for unknown reasons, Watson owed a favour to Waldeyer, so the body was sent to Berlin.¹⁵

Klaatsch left Australia shortly after to return to Germany, across the Pacific, via Canada and the United States. He arrived in Bremerhaven, Germany, on 3rd April 1907.

Conclusion

The above presents in detail all those human remains that Hermann Klaatsch took from Northwest Australia and sent to Europe, as well as their sources. Since he was generally meticulous in recording the provenance of items he collected, the individual numbers he gave them should make it possible, at least to some extent, to identify their places of origin, though it cannot be said with certainty, if and where all of them have survived. The analysis of Klaatsch's notes, diary entries and letters, moreover, provides a graphic account of the active network of scientists, pastoralists, missionaries, jail and hospital staff members, politicians, medical doctors, and police magistrates who worked together "in the name of science", to help him obtain these human remains.

This network allowed Klaatsch to take deceased Indigenous people away from their homes, families and descendants, their burial traditions and spirit places, into European medico-scientific institutions and museums, where their remains became objects of study. Today, provenance research and repatriation involves the difficult task of reversing this process and re-humanising what had been wrongly "objectified".

A network of researchers, anthropologists, museum curators, translators, politicians and diplomats, in collaboration with Indigenous descendants and authorities can now actively seek to restore justice, to the extent that this is possible. Only then, and only in this collaborative form, might the assessment of Hermann Klaatsch's collection of human remains lead further towards reconciliation.

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- Letter Nr. 24 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, 16. November 1905 from Broome. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.
- Letter Nr. 25 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, 22.–31. December 1905 from East-Java, Tenggergebirge, Tosari, at the Bromo. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.
- Letter Nr. 29 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, 23. May 1906 from the hospital in Broome. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.
- Letter Nr. 31 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, 12. July 1906 on board the S.S. Bullara, north coast of Western Australia on the way to Wyndham. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.
- Letter Nr. 32 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, 5.–10. September 1906 from Wyndham. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.

Diary (4) 1905. Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.

Diary (8) Private Archive of the Klaatsch family, USA.

Endnotes

[1] Letter Nr. 24 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 4 // 5, 16. November 1905 from Broome: „Meine Ausbeute an Skeleten war leider gering. Die Schwierigkeiten waren zu gross, da die Graeber nicht markirt und unmitelbar an der Gefaengnismauer gelegen, dazu bis 5 Fuss tief, ein schlechtes Arbeitsfeld - bei Mondschein und Laterne darboten. Immerhin erbeutete // ich die beiden ersten westaustral. Objecte meiner Collection, die Schaedel aeusserst typisch, und das Sacrum des einen mit vollstaendig offenen Canal.“

Diary (4) 1905, 2. October 1905: „Fahre Fremantle. Consul Ratazzi hilft freundlich. Nehme ihn mit Perth. Hotel Beinahe Premier Rason. < Kingsmill > Brief von Sir John Forrest. (...) Fahre mit n. Fremantle. Unterwegs steigt Dr. Montgomery vom Lunatic Asylum ein. Mit diesem dorthin. Chief-Warden Fannigan behauptet, auf Rottnest Island koennte ich hunderte von Schaedeln bekommen.“

Diary (4) 1905, 10. October 1905: „Nachm. führt mich der Mr. Fawkin an die Grabstelle des Aboriginal: ‚Old Governor‘. Der Sohn Fawkins erkennt die Stelle wieder. Abends mit Mr. Wulf hin, Grab 6 Fuss tief. Elende Schinderei. Schaedel und einige Knochen, die aber grossen Theils ganz (...?) und durchwachsen sind.“

Diary (4) 1905, 14. October 1905: „Nach Abend Ausgrabung des Aboriginal Wangabiddy von Broome Distrikt.“

[2] Letter Nr. 25 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 49 // 50, 22. – 31. December 1905 from East-Java, Tenggergebirge, Tosari, at the Bromo: „Die einzige Enttaeuschung für mich war, dass die Ausbeute an Skeleten diesmal // recht klein war. Die in geweihter Erde bestatteten Schwarzen waren natürlich nicht zu bekommen, mit Ausnahme von 2 Kindern, die zufaellig wo anders begraben lagen. Dann machten die Missionare und ich eine recht weite und mühsame Fahrt, um ein mitten im Busch gelegenes Grab auszubuddeln, was bei der Tiefe desselben und der Sonnenglut einer meiner unangenehmsten Grabschaendereien in Australien wurde.“

[3] Letter Nr. 25 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 52 // 53, 22. – 31. December 1905 from East-Java, Tenggergebirge, Tosari, at the Bromo: „Ein merkwürdiger Glückszufall war es, dass kurz vor meiner Abreise von Beagle-Bay ein c. 14 jaehr. Maedchen, das schon laengere Zeit ein Opfer der von Malayen eingeschleppten Syphilis war, starb – eine noch grossere Glücksfügung, dass der leitende Missionar mir heimlichst gestattete, den Kopf, die Haende und Füsse der Leiche abzuschneiden. Eine solche Liberalitaet hat wirklich meine Achtung von den kathol. Priestern verstaerkt. Kein protest. Missionar waere eines so // grossen Dienstes für die Wissenschaft faehig gewesen. Ich waere aus Dankbarkeit, beinahe auf ein paar Tage katholisch geworden.“

Letter Nr. 25 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 52 // 53, 22. – 31. December 1905 from East-Java, Tenggergebirge, Tosari, at the Bromo: „Ich erhielt die Leiche 12 Stunden nach dem Tode und versuchte durch Injection von Formalin soviel vom Gehirn zu retten, als moeglich. Ohne alle Assistenz, in kleiner Kammer beim Kerzenschein in solcher Luft- und Hitze, es war ein saures Stück Arbeit bis ich glücklich die Leichentheile in einem von den Brüdern für meine ‚Eidechsen‘ und ‚Froesche‘ angefertigten Cylinder aus Wellblech hatte. Hoffentlich bleibt die Conservirung leidlich. Die betr. Kiste ist mit nach Freemantle gegangen und ich gedenke sie sobald als moeglich nach Heidelberg zu expediren, wo Fürbringer sich gewiss der Sache freundlich annehmen wird. – Am Nachmittag fand das // Begrabnis der Leiche statt, welche von Paperbark zugedeckt einen künstlichen Kopfvorsprung zeigte!“

- [4] Letter Nr. 25 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 50, 22. – 31. December 1905 from East-Java, Tenggergebirge, Tosari, at the Bromo: „In Broome erhielt ich vom Trappisten Pater 2 ausgezeichnete Schaedel, ein (weibl) und ein (männl), deren letzterer eine so vorzügliche pithecanthropoide Combination von Characteren aufweist, wie ich sie von den hiesigen Aboriginal erwarten durfte. Das ist No. 72 meiner Collection! – Die Begrabnis=Sitten der Schwarzen verlieren hier leider jetzt alles Ursprüngliche. – Dies bestand in Baumbestattung, und zwar genau wie in Central-austr. wurde der Koerper in ein ‚Nest‘ gebettet. Diese Sitte halte ich für das Primitive und deute es als eine Erinnerung an die Baumwohnungen der Pithecanthropoiden Vorfahren. (Ich weiss nicht ob diese Idee neu ist?).“

Diary (4) 1905, 10. December 1905: „(...) Erhalte 2 Schaedel. 71 ♀ 72 ♂(...) Ethnogr. überreiche Sammlung. Catalog steigt v 480 – 670, grosser Zuwachs. (...) F.[ather] N.[icholas] guter Mann (...) Einpacken der Sammlung. (...) Rapport Western Mail. Lange Sitzung mit Father B.“

- [5] Letter Nr. 29 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 2 // 3, 23. May 1906 from the hospital in Broome: „Die zeit meines Hospitalaufenthaltes war wissenschaftlich keineswegs verloren, ich bin vielmehr gerade durch denselben zu einer überaus wichtigen Erwerbung gelangt, die mir sonst vielleicht entgangen waere: Ich bin nun endlich in den Besitz // von 2 ganz frischen Gehirnen von Eingeborenen gelangt.“

p. 3: „Im hiesigen Gefaengnis starben kurz hintereinander zwei Eingeborene von der Gegend des Fitzroy-River, nordoestlich von hier, vom Hinterland von Derby. Es waren zwei prachtvolle Kerle, aeusserst stramm und musculoos von c. 1720 u 1650 mm Koerperhoehe. – Sie stammen aus einer Gegend, die noch wenig von Colonisten betreten wird. Die Polizei macht dort Streifzüge und nimmt ganze Staemme gefangen wegen angeblichen Speerens von Rindern -, in Wahrheit aber, um moeglichst grosse Transport-Spesen zu erzielen, da pro Kopf gezahlt wird. Die armen Kerle müssen dann hier aneinander angekettet schwere Arbeit verrichten – wie ich es wohl von Roeburne geschildert habe. Neuerdings scheint Beri-Beri, von Asiaten eingeschleppt, die Reihen der Gefangenen zu lichten.“

p. 4: „[...] schon bei meiner vorigen Anwesenheit den Empfehlungsbrief der Regierung abgeliefert hatte. Ich trug dem Herrn P.M. (Police-Magistrate) ganz frei meinen Wunsch vor, die ganze Leiche oder wenigstens Theile derselben aufheben zu dürfen und setzte die wissenschaftliche Bedeutung der Sache auseinander. Der Herr P.M. kam in die groesste Verlegenheit, ich glaube er war erstaunt und entsetzt, über solche Absichten. Das Resultat war, dass er die Ausführung solches Vorhabens fuer ganz unmöglich erklarte mit Rücksicht auf die schwarze Bevoelkerung der Gegend, die jede grobe Verstümmelung bei der Beerdigung bemerken würde, wodurch eine furchtbare Erregung hervorgerufen und die schon jetzt starke Abneigung gegen das Hospital noch vermehrt werden würde. Hingegen gestattete er mir die Entnahme von Theilen, die sich verbergen lasse, wie des Gehirnes.“

p. 6: „Die Gehirne werde ich wohl bei erster gelegenheit Waldeyer zu stellen, da diese Objecte ja den ganz speciellen Wünschen der Akademie entsprechen.“

- [6] Letter Nr. 31 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, pp. 6 // 7, 12. July 1906 on board the S.S. Bullara, north coast of Western Australia on the way to Wyndham: „Von Eingeborenen Skeletmaterial habe ich diesmal an der Beagle-Bay Theile von 2 // alten Individuen erhalten ♂ u. ♀, welche einige der Brüder heimlich für mich ausgegraben haben. Diese sehr typischen Schaedel habe ich noch einstweilen hier behalten, die Skeletknochen befinden sich in der mit E bezeichneten Kiste, die ich von Broome absandte.“

Diary (8), page 99: „Beagle Bay. Osteol. Coll. K 73. ♀ alt. Schaedel u. Skelet. fast vollstaendig. Decomposition theilweise stark. In d. Naeh der Mission ausgegr. (Bruder . -) K74 ♂ alt, Schaedel u. Skelet. fast vollst. (mehr u. besser erhalten als 73. Nähe d. Station)“

- [7] Letter Nr. 31 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 18, 12. July 1906 on board the S.S. Bullara, north coast of Western Australia on the way to Wyndham: „Der nur kurze Aufenthalt weniger (!) verschaffte mir doch einiges Material, dessen Beschaffung ich schon brieflich vorbereitet hatte. Zwei Schaedel waren für mich reservirt. Ein Schwarzer begleitete mich in den Busch, wo ich ganz nahe beim Ort das erste richtige Baumgrab eines Eingeborenen zu sehen bekam. Die Knochen waren schon z. th. herabgefallen, ich holte die anderen herunter, die der Schwarze, obwohl im Dienste der Polizei domesticirt, nicht anzufassen wagte.“

- [8] Letter Nr. 32 from Klaatsch to Schoetensack, p. 6, 5. –10. September 1906 from Wyndham: „Er [Dr. Moloney] berichtete mir, dass einer der Schwarzen, der aus dem Gefaengnis in Broome entlassen mit demselben Schiff nach Wyndham gekommen und hier an Beri-Beri (vergleiche die anderen Faelle in Broome, – von denen ich zwei Gehirne gewann) erkrankt war, gestorben sei. Er wolle mir gestatten, den Kopf aufzubewahren. Ich muss einschalten, dass in diesem gottverlassenen Nest, wie in anderen Nord=Westaustraliens der Doctor zugleich die hoechste Civilbehoerde repraesentirt – er ist Magistrat, Bürgermeister, Protector der Aborigines – alles in einer Person und mein Freund Dr. Moloney fühlte

sich nicht wenig in dieser Würde. So lag es in seiner Hand, mir die Entnahme von Leichentheilen zu gestatten.“

p. 7: „[Moloney] selbst konnte mir nicht thaetlich helfen, da er einen Geburtsfall zu beobachten hatte. So blieb nicht übrig, als dass ich mich aufraffte und mit Schmerzen in der // Ileocoecalgegend, die mir fast Stehn unmöglich machten die Injection des Kopfes mit Formol durchzuführen. Der Doctor, der meine Situation nur zu gut kannte, sagte: ‚In deed you sacrifice your life for science‘. Nachdem der kostbare Schatz glücklich geborgen und an Stelle des Kopfes ein maechtiger “Pumpkin” dem Rumpf angefügt war, alles dicht mit Decken umhüllt, damit die Gefangenen bei der Beerdigung nichts merken sollten, brach (ich) in der That complet zusammen [wg. eines Rückfalls seiner Malaria-Erkrankung] und machte mich auf Schlimmes gefasst.“

p. 16 // 17: „Diese gespannten Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Rassen machen es begreiflich, dass mit der Erbeutung von Skeleten u. Ethnographicis hier sehr schlecht bestellt ist. In der That habe ich nichts von Skeleten hier erhalten koennen – der erste Aufenthalt mit absolut negativem Ergebnis. – Graeber im Busch aufzuspüren ist sehr schwer und wenn sie gefunden würden, so waere die Ausbuddelung derselben hier ein ganz gefaehrliches Wagnis, nicht nur den Schwarzen gegenüber, sondern auch bezüglich der Weissen, unter denen schlechte Elemente die Sache ausbeuten würden. Bildete doch trotz aller Geheimhaltung die Conservirung der Leichentheile den gegenstand solchen schlechten Geredes // gegen Dr. Moloney und mich.“

p. 17: „Es ist ein Jammer, dass das grossartige Skeletmaterial der Gefangenen, die im Lauf der letzten Jahre hier gestorben sind, der Wissenschaft verloren ist, aber sie sind alle officiell auf einem in der Naeh des Gefaengnis befindlichen Kirchhof beerdigt. Den ernstlich erwogenen Plan, in einer Mondnacht diese heilige Staette zu entweihen, mussten Dr. Moloney und ich nach einiger Ueberlegung als wahnwitzig aufgeben.“

p. 18: „Ich habe die 3 Gehirne (2 von Broome 1 v Wyndham) nun gemeinsam in einem Metallgefaess verwahrt und ich erwaege die Frage, ob ich dasselbe sobald als moeglich an Waldeyer senden soll. Die Beschaffung von Gehirnen bildet den Hauptpunkt meiner Verhandlungen mit der Akademie. Selbst bearbeiten kann ich ja garnicht all das Material, so ist es doch wohl das beste, ich entledige mich dieser theuren Beute mit der directen Bitte an Waldeyer, die Untersuchung sogleich vornehmen zu lassen.“