

Adolf Bastian and the Sequel: Five Companions and Successors as Collectors for Berlin's Royal Museum of Ethnology

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Abstract: In the following contribution attention is focused upon five outstanding contemporaries of Adolf Bastian: pupils, co-workers, colleagues and delegates.¹ It views the collecting activities and bequests that Bastian personally stimulated, instigated and sometimes even provided financial means for during his life. Contemplated here are the activities whose traces can still be found today, not only in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin but far beyond in the world abroad. Drawing upon the rather diverse biographies of the different collectors as example, the course of achieving and the reasons for the acquisition of the most important collections in the Museum will be examined, which in spite of their great diversity all display one common feature, namely in the criteria mass and class, that is, quantity and quality.

What significance did these extraordinary accomplishments hold in the world at that time? The species 'ethnological museum' had just been founded everywhere and, according to Douglas Cole, had caused a "scramble" for objects to an extent that would never be repeated (Cole 1985). As we shall see, during that founding phase Berlin assumed a leading role both nationally and internationally, gaining the envy as well as criticism of contemporaries.

Three of the collectors to be presented here were members of the scientific founding staff of the Royal Museum of Ethnology (*Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde*) under Adolf Bastian and worked there after his death. At the opening of the Museum in 1886 there were four assistants at director Bastian's side: Albert Grünwedel who was responsible for the sections on India and Asia, Wilhelm Grube for East Asian, Felix von Luschan for Africa and Oceania, Albert Voss for prehistoric Europe. Conspicuously, no one was assigned to both American continents. Yet, since this collection with 21,000 objects was the largest from the very beginning (followed by the Asian collection with 12,500 objects), it is quite possible that Bastian himself attended to it. The specialist on American studies, Eduard Seler, could first take responsibility for this section in 1904, only one year before Bastian's death. Prior to that (as of 1884)

Seler was scientific helper and then directorial assistant (as of 1892). Karl von den Steinen was also one of the scientific helpers at the time. Following Bastian's death in 1905 the four former assistants were promoted to departmental heads. In 1921 came the separation of the prehistoric section from the Museum and in 1931 the transformation into an independent "State Museum of Pre- and Early History" (*Staatliches Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte*). Strong controversy over the independence of the Asia section with its integral areas of East Asian, Islamic and Near Eastern art culminated in opposing basic concepts of history-art-culture, on one side, and non-historical, uncultured and without-art, on the other. Only six years after Bastian's death the general director Wilhelm von Bode issued an appraisal, which not only demoted the Museum of Ethnology to a museum of strictly "natural" ethnological aspects, but also limited its acquisition policies:

"A museum of ethnology must limit itself accordingly to the collection of products of natural peoples, if it is not to degenerate into a monstrous universal museum, that is, to a disorderly, completely overlaid and useless collection of jumble... In general, the progressive development of the Ethnological Museum will depend not only upon the increment of its holdings, but far more in their rational limitation and purposeful arrangement... First the ethnographical departments must be freed from the burden of duplicates, through sale, exchange or, if there is no other possibility, simply donation."

(„Ein Museum für Völkerkunde muss sich demgemäß auf das Sammeln von Erzeugnissen der Naturvölker beschränken, wenn es nicht zu dem

¹ The present article is the revised version of the main speech at the conference „Adolf Bastians Erbe im Ethnologischen Museum Berlin – ein universales Archiv der Menschheit?“ It was held on February 25, 2005, at the opening of the commemorative exhibition „Adolf Bastian: Reisen und Sammeln für das Königliche Museum für Völkerkunde“.

Monstrum eines Universal-Museums, d.h. zu einem wüsten, völlig unübersehbaren und unbrauchbaren Sammelsurium ausarten soll.“

„Überhaupt wird die gedeihliche Entwicklung des Völkerkunde-Museums nicht nur von der Vermehrung seiner Bestände, sondern viel mehr noch von ihrer vernünftigen Beschränkung und zweckmäßigen Anordnung abhängen Die Ethnographischen Abtheilungen müssen zunächst – durch Verkauf, Tausch, oder, wenn es nicht anders geht, auch durch einfache Abgabe – von der Last der Dubletten befreit werden.“ (Ernst Grosse, 16.9.1911; cp. Westphal-Hellbusch 1973: 27).

During the following decades this liberation from the “burden of duplicates” led to activities that are hardly imaginable today, explainable at most by the enormity of collections accumulated during Bastian's lifetime: complete collections were torn asunder and distributed throughout the museums in Europe.

In the following outstanding collector personalities will be presented, who were engaged as scientists in the Royal Museum of Ethnology during Bastian's lifetime: Felix von Luschan, Karl von den Steinen and Eduard Seler. The Norwegian “Captain” Johan Adrian Jacobsen collected under contract for Bastian, while the textiles merchant Theodor Wilhelm Gretzer from Hannover established an enormous private collection from Peru on his own initiative.

Felix von Luschan

Felix von Luschan was of Austrian origin, born on August 11, 1854, in Hollabrunn near Vienna. Like Bastian, he was educated in medicine and later at the age of 24 took part in the occupation of Bosnia as military physician. In 1882 he attained the *habilitation* in anthropology and physical ethnography at the University of Vienna and in 1888 likewise the *habilitation* in anthropology at the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin. Von Luschan became known through the five excavations at Zinçirli in Turkey, which he directed between 1888 and 1903. These formed the foundation of his interest in the Orient, which he maintained throughout his life. Von Luschan spent a total of seven years in the Orient (Melk-Koch 1989:25).

As early as the year 1885 Adolf Bastian appointed von Luschan as directorial assistant in the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. There von Luschan proved himself through his special adeptness at organisation and eventually became head of the Africa-Oceania department. It was only after von Luschan's death that this department was



Fig. 1. Knight Felix von Luschan.

divided into two. Von Luschan is often referred to in literature as vice-director to Bastian. Unlike his director Bastian, von Luschan appears to have been a sociable and affable person. According to accounts, on Sundays he would instruct his students on archery and throwing boomerangs, and he entertained colleagues and important contact persons from at home and abroad on sociable evenings at his home (Melk-Koch 1989:25).

Von Luschan's actual subject area was Africa. Although after giving up his excavations in Turkey he did not carry out his own fieldwork in Africa, he nonetheless developed productive activities of acquisition and publication that substituted for his lack of field research and collecting trips. Von Luschan undertook only one study trip to South Africa in 1905.

In every respect von Luschan was an enhancement for the Museum, walking a thin line in thought and bearings with or against the *zeitgeist*. Thus, like Bastian he considered collecting ethnographic material world wide as an essential task, before it was inundated forever by the waves of homogeneous modernism from Europe and North America. Yet, he was critical of Bastian's collecting frenzy, of filling closets full with objects from all spheres of life without an accompanying documentation. Von Luschan viewed field work as fundamental for research purposes, as can be recognised in his efforts for the realisation, finance,

equipping and guidance of the field research of his scientific colleague Richard Thurnwald in Oceania in 1905–1906. Thurnwald's assignment was not only to collect ethnographic objects. Von Luschan was far more interested in the gathering of anthropological data as well as recording music with the phonograph, the latter which he as the first of ethnologists had already made in Turkey (Melk-Koch 1989:54–60).

On the opposite, von Luschan openly condemned – one occasion being at the seventh international conference on geography (*VII. Internationaler Geographenkongress*) in Berlin in 1899 – the mentality and actions of members of the colonial administration, as he called them “white savages” (*„weiße Wilde“*), whom he regarded as the result of misguided colonial politics. In his criticism he specified the exact institution and persons with whom he in any case maintained connections for his museum in order to partake in the exploitation in the German colonies. Von Luschan was also well aware of the dubious methods of acquisitions practised by some collectors in the German protectorates. Thus a letter to Felix von Luschan, dated October 19, 1897, from a certain Richard Kandt, resident in German Ruanda and traveller in Africa (Essner 1986:77):

“It is in general very difficult to obtain an object without using at least some force. I believe that half of your museum was stolen.” (*„Überhaupt ist es sehr schwer, einen Gegenstand zu erhalten, ohne zum mindesten etwas Gewalt anzuwenden. Ich glaube, dass die Hälfte Ihres Museums gestohlen ist.“*).

However, it was not a collection from the so-called German protectorates in Africa that brought von Luschan international renown, instead a completely unusual assemblage which he was able to achieve for his Museum: the Benin collection. Kurt Krieger, Africa specialist and museum director, describes the course of acquisition as follows:

“When the first newspaper reports appeared in 1897 about the conquest of the city of Benin² and soon thereafter about the appearance of rare, for Africa highly unusual ivory carvings and cast bronzes, he immediately recognised their great significance for the cultural history of West Africa and hurried to London in the middle of the same year to acquire as many objects as possible for the department.

From this trip he brought back, among others, the rare ivory vessel in the form of an antelope head. Since the means at disposal for further acquisitions were in no way sufficient, he borrowed

5000 marks from his brother-in-law and went to London again when 50 carved ivory tusks were to be auctioned, thirteen of which he bought. In the time following until 1908 he accumulated what was at that time the best and most comprehensive collection of art works from Benin for the Berlin Museum through his initiative, foresight and adeptness; he bought at auctions – whereby \$40.– for a bronze seemed too exorbitant –, from dealers as well as from the German consul in Lagos; he acquired some objects through exchange and, moreover, many objects were donated to him. He sold some objects, so that a separate Benin-account came into being from which further acquisitions could be paid. [...] In 1919 the Africa department possessed 580 of the 2400 pieces known at that time from Benin.”

(*„Als 1897 die ersten Zeitungsnachrichten über die Eroberung der Stadt Benin (es handelt sich um die berüchtigte brutale Strafexpedition, Anm. Verf.) und bald darauf über das Auftauchen seltsamer, für Afrika höchst ungewöhnlicher Elfenbeinschnitzereien und Bronzegüsse erschienen, erkannte er sofort deren große Bedeutung für die Kulturgeschichte Westafrikas und eilte schon Mitte des gleichen Jahres nach London, um dort möglichst viele Objekte für die Abteilung zu erwerben.“*

Von dieser Reise brachte er u. a. das seltene Elfenbeingefäß in Gestalt eines Antilopenkopfes mit. Da die verfügbaren Mittel für weitere Erwerbungen bei weitem nicht ausreichten, ließ er sich kurzerhand von seinem Schwager 5000 Mark und fuhr wieder nach London, wo gerade 50 beschnittene Elfenbeinzähne auktioniert werden sollten, von denen er dreizehn kaufte. In der Folgezeit bis 1908 brachte er mit viel Initiative, Voraussicht und Geschick die in damaliger Zeit beste und umfangreichste Sammlung von Kunstwerken aus Benin für das Berliner Museum zusammen; er kaufte auf Auktionen – wobei ihm \$ 40,-- für eine Bronze geradezu „exorbitant“ zu sein schienen –, bei Händlern sowie beim deutschen Konsul in Lagos, erwarb einige Gegenstände im Austausch und ließ sich darüber hinaus noch viele Stücke schenken. Einzelne Objekte verkaufte er wieder, so dass ein gesondertes Benin-Konto entstand, aus dem weitere Erwerbungen bezahlt werden konnten. [...] 1919 besaß die Abteilung Afrika von den damals bekannten etwa 2400 Beninstücken 580.“) (Krieger 1973:117 f.).

Thereby, no mention was made of the astonishing ignorance on the part of the British; the soldiers were not hindered in selling the looted Benin pieces, and so these arrived in the hands of dealers in ivory and antiques. The British government itself sold bronze and ivory works in order to finance the new protectorate in Africa (Penny

² The notorious punitive expedition to Benin city by the British in 1897.

2002:75). However, although the prices were incredibly low in the beginning, they did rise, and it is thanks to von Luschan's tactics in purchasing, selling, exchanging and purchasing anew that a great number of art works from Benin could be acquired for the Museum of Ethnology. The climax of the Benin enthusiasm („*Benin-Rausch*“) was followed ten years later by its decline: „Benin had been consumed“ (Penny 2002:79). Although according to European concepts the objects were legally acquired, there is still bitterness; the British punitive expedition and expropriations remain an injustice to this day.

Von Luschan became professor *emeritus* in 1892 and retired from the Museum in 1911; he died in 1924 (Melk-Koch 1989:261).

Eduard Georg Seler

Eduard Georg Seler was born on December 5, 1849, in Crossen on the Oder river (today Krosno Odrzańskie, in Poland). The thirteen-year old, highly gifted pupil received a scholarship to attend the *gymnasium* in Berlin, which he completed with the *abitur* in 1869. Seler's close friendship with Immanuel Hoffmann stems from that time and continued throughout his life. It also introduced

him into the circle of wealthy Jewish families in Berlin, among others the Hoffmanns, Bleichröder and Sachs. During his student years Seler worked as a private teacher in the home of the banker Gerson von Bleichröder. In 1875 Seler completed examinations for secondary school teaching and began instructing at a *gymnasium*. However, only four years later in April 1879, he was forced to apply for his dismissal due to a severe and lengthy stomach ailment (Anders 1967:2). But again Seler profited from his excellent contacts, for his physician was the well-known Hermann Jacob Sachs, father of Seler's future wife Caecilie Sachs (Fig. 3). Dr. Sachs prescribed a strict diet and recommended that Seler recuperate for awhile in a warmer climate. During his stay in Trieste Seler was inspired to further his knowledge more extensively, not just in the familiar sphere of natural sciences, but above all in languages. Through this he discovered the scarcely researched study of American languages and ancient history, which would ultimately become his life's work, a sphere of interest which Alexander von Humboldt had initiated some eighty years before. In 1885 Seler and Caecilie Sachs were married, an event that would become as significant in his life as his employment one year prior in the Royal Museum of Ethnology as scientific helper under Adolf Bastian or the completion of the doctoral degree with the theme „*Das*

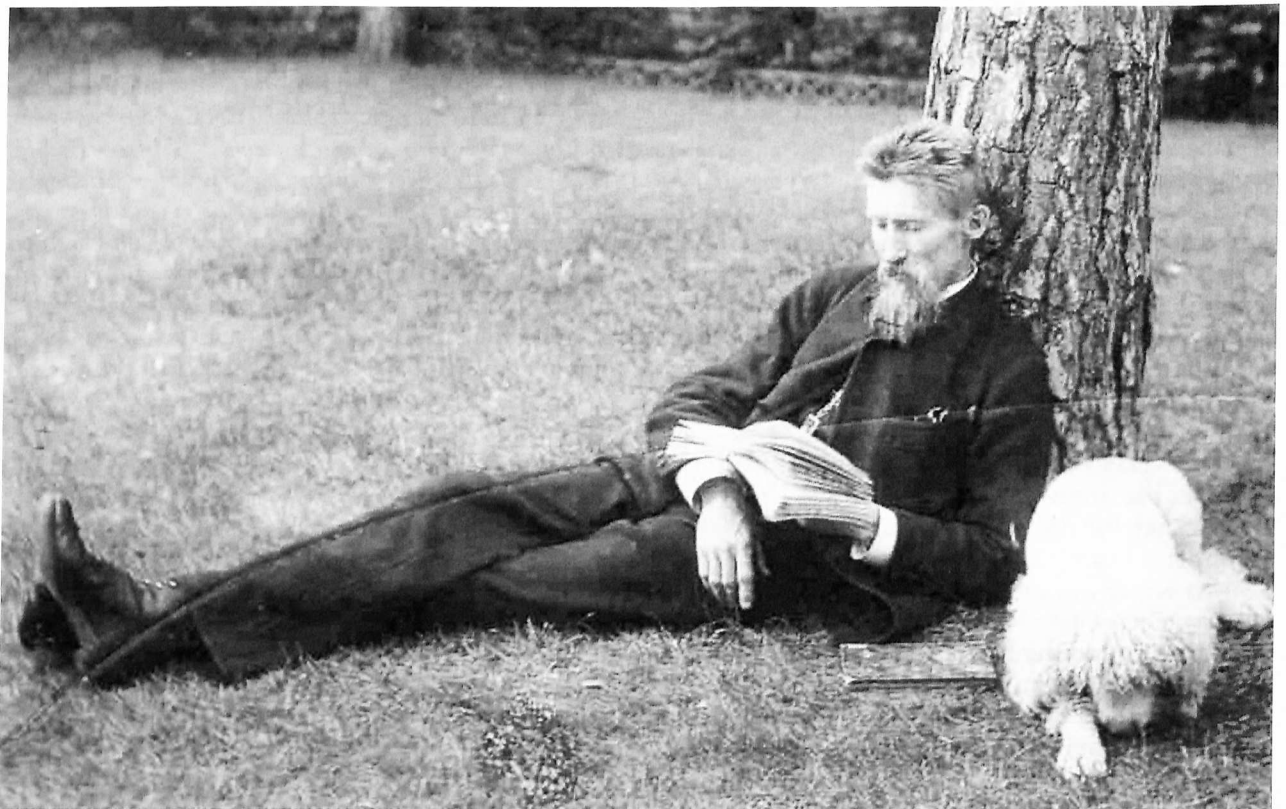


Fig. 2. Eduard Seler in his garden (Fichteberg, Berlin-Steglitz).



Fig. 3. Caecilie Seler Sachs in her house (Berlin-Steglitz).

Konjugationssystem der Maya-Sprachen“ (“The Conjugation System of the Mayan Languages”) at the University in Leipzig two years later.

Today the work of the couple Eduard and Caecilie Seler is highly esteemed by the scholastic community, an honour that is long over-due. For without the companionship of Caecilie on his travels, her complementary and supportive research in botany, among other subjects, her indispensable photographic work and her posthumous edition of Seler's writings, the immensity of Seler's scientific works would not have been imaginable. In addition, her financial dowry as sole heiress to the fortune of the banker Löbl Guttentag together with the generous support of the patron Duc du Loubat contributed essentially to the Selers' life as independent research scientists. This was enhanced by their villa in Steglitz, a retreat with its excellent library and conditions most conducive for work and rest. Seler's career developed straightforward, based on his study of ancient cultures in the Americas, foremost Mexico and Mesoamerica. As of 1892 he was directorial assistant to Adolf Bastian in the Museum, and as of 1903 head of the America department; from 1904 until his retirement from the Museum in 1920 Seler was director of the department (Fischer/Gaida 1993:26). In June 1894 Seler achieved the *habilitation* with the annotated edition about „*Die mexikanischen Bilderhandschriften Alexander von Humboldts in der Königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin*“ (Alexander von Humboldt's Mexican pictorials in the Royal Library in Berlin). Special studies on the pictorials of ancient Mexico appear every year, augmented by comparative iconographic studies on polychrome ceramics, frescoes and artefacts from Seler's and other public as well as private collections. Seler's recognitions, prere-

quisite for his analysis and interpretation of the images, are complemented essentially through the “rediscovery” of original Aztec texts in the work of Bernardino de Sahagún. Seler's work on the source of Sahagún “captivated, accompanied and led him” („*bat Seler gefesselt, begleitet und geleitet*“) (Anders 1967:4). He received numerous distinctions, honourable memberships as well as the honorary professorship, which was made possible by the repeated financial furtherance by Duc du Loubat, a wealthy American residing in Paris.

Through his inexhaustible research that stimulated international attention Seler helped in gaining acknowledgement of ancient American studies as a serious field of study in Germany. Seler's scientific works – a list of 275 titles – summarised in a five-volume edition entitled „*Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur amerikanischen Sprach- und Alterthumskunde 1902–1915*“ (Collection of treatises on the study of American languages and ancient history 1902–1915), also include comments on the achievements of his extensive collecting activities. Between 1887 and 1911 the Selers made a total of six research trips to Mexico and Guatemala, constantly collecting and carrying out studies. The collections accumulated during these travels either by the Selers themselves or initiated by them came as a whole into the possession of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, amounting there to some 13,000 individual numbers. Yet Seler was critical about collecting objects without making a documentation:

“Much has been collected in México, but almost nowhere has one taken the trouble of noting exactly where the objects came from or researching the origin of the pieces when this was doubtful.”

(„*Es ist viel in México gesammelt worden, aber fast nirgends hat man sich die Mühe genommen, genau zu notieren, wo die Stücke hergekommen sind, oder die Herkunft der Stücke zu erforschen, wo diese zweifelhaft war.*“) (Seler II, 1960:289).

In contrast to his colleague Karl von den Steinen, the Selers' travels were not a venture into the uncertainty to investigate unknown areas on the map. Instead with predetermined aims and prearranged contacts they travelled with all of the inconveniences nonetheless that overland journeys to distant areas of Mexico included at the end of the 19th century. As a rule they were received at their destination by Germans or persons of German origin and assisted further. Moreover, the small community of scientists was well organised. Although Seler seldom participated in excavations, he devoted his attention to his own and other collections as well as to archaeological sites that were accessible, making descriptions, interpretations, drawings, photographs and plaster impressions. In the process he always drew upon

comparisons with other archaeological, historic and ethnographic material. The results of the collecting trips can be read in the works of both Selers, whereby especially Caecilie Seler's writings render a very illustrative impression of the conditions under which acquisitions were made. They inform about the country and the people, customs and practices, environment, fauna and flora in Mexico in the 19th century, as well as providing informative details about the development of the collections. Letters of recommendation were indispensable, not only from the president of the Republic of Mexico, Porfirio Díaz, personally, but even more important letters from the Church, for example, from the archbishop of Oaxaca, Monsignor Gillow, when visiting Indian communities. Caecilie's report on their stay in Nochistlan in the Mixteca Alta is most instructive, not only with respect to the origin of finds but also her account of the typical circumstances which their experienced when bargaining for artefacts:

"...It was as usual: to the first question about such 'antiquities', first a surprised shaking of the head, then the standing answer: we do not have anything like that. After repeated, more pressing questioning: yes, we can find the same, but the children are playing with it, throwing it around, breaking it. Then one of the members of the family remembers that this and that object must still be lying in this or that corner; finally some things appear, one acquires something for a few centavos and receives the promise: we will look for it and bring it. That is the general course with variations in all of the houses. A bit of practice and patience is indeed necessary in this business. But the people keep their word, and on this evening the following days our room was overrun by women, men, children, who brought things, good and bad, whole and broken, fine and coarse."

(„...Es war wie gewöhnlich: auf die erste Frage nach solchen ‚Altertümern‘ zuerst ein verwundertes Kopfschütteln, dann die stehende Antwort: so was haben wir nicht. Auf wiederholte, dringendere Nachfrage: ja, dergleichen finden wir wohl, aber die Kinder spielen damit, werfen es fort, zerbrechen es. Darauf besinnt sich irgendein Familienmitglied, daß in dieser oder jener Ecke noch dies und jenes liegen müsse; schließlich kommt einiges zum Vorschein, man erwirbt es für wenige Centavos und erlangt das Versprechen: wir werden suchen und es bringen. Das ist mit geringen Variationen der Verlauf in allen Hütten. Es gehört schon ein wenig Übung und Geduld zu diesem Geschäft. Aber die Leute hielten Wort, und an diesem Abend und dem folgenden Tage war unser Zimmer belagert von Frauen, Männern, Kindern, die Sachen brachten, gute und schlechte, ganze und zerbrochene, feine und grobe.“) (Seler 1900:40 ff.).

Eduard Seler died on November 23, 1922. His wife Caecilie survived him for 13 years, although her work received no acknowledgement after her death in 1935. Nevertheless, the Selers' scientific work has endured including anecdotes as well, for example, the doubly autographed portrait of Caecilie's father, Hermann Sachs, the first portrait by the painter Max Liebermann (missing today) and the Zapotecan Leonarda Luna, who at the age of twenty-five years went to Berlin with the Selers as nurse to their adopted children and for forty years forth marked Steglitz' image as an exotic figure (Estate Caecilie Sachs, Iberoamerkanisches Institut PK).

Karl von den Steinen

Karl von den Steinen, who was probably closest to his teacher Adolf Bastian, held an obituary for him in 1905 (Hartmann 1986:13). He mentioned the decisive experience that he encountered in Honolulu on Hawaii early in 1880 during a trip around the world, which would bring a turn of fate in his life: in the guest book of the hotel he read the



Fig. 4. Karl von den Steinen.

name Bastian, the former colleague who had likewise studied medicine. It was Bastian who motivated von den Steinen to devote himself to the study of foreign peoples, which he immediately set into action. He went to Samoa where he began with collecting ethnographic objects (Hermannstädter in Haas et al. 2002:67). Upon his return to Germany he spent 2½ years ambitiously preparing for his future career as researcher. With Bastian's support von den Steinen took part in a state-organised expedition to the South Pole in 1882–1883 as physician and natural scientist. The return trip ended in Montevideo for von den Steinen. In 1884, together with the physicist Otto Claus and his cousin Wilhelm von den Steinen, he set out from Buenos Aires on a private exploratory trip into the unknown: the source of the Rio Xingú in the Amazon region (Hermannstädter in Haas et al. 2002:68 f.).

Two further important journeys were made into this area, which until then had never been traversed by any white persons. Moreover, von den Steinen explored and carried out research in quite diverse regions of the earth, in particular the Marquesas Islands in the South Seas and also North America.

From the very beginning Karl von den Steinen was exceptional. Born on March 7, 1855, as the son of a physician in Mülheim on the Ruhr river, he finished his schooling with the *abitur* at the early age of sixteen. After studying medicine in Zürich, Bonn and Strassburg, he attained his doctoral degree with a focus on psychiatry in 1877. At the age of twenty-two he was thus the youngest person with a doctor's degree and for one year the youngest physician in Prussia. From 1878 to 1879 he worked as medical assistant at the Charité hospital in Berlin (Hermannstädter in Haas et al. 2002: 66 f.).

In his obituary to Karl von den Steinen, Hans Virchow notes:

"His special subject was psychiatry, which was of advantage to him on encounters with natural peoples. For his profession he had to learn to read into the soul, and that was good schooling for perceiving the psyche of foreign peoples." (*„Sein Spezialfach wurde Psychiatrie, was ihm zugute kam bei dem Verkehr mit den Naturvölkern. Er hat von Berufs wegen gelernt, in Seelen zu lesen, und das war eine gute Schule für die Einfühlung in die Psyche fremder Völker.“*) (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 61, 1930:401 f.).

Von den Steinen's first expedition into the Amazonas still had an adventurous character, stimulated by a combination of daring and a striving for fame and recognition:

"You want to attempt something, that no one has done before you." (*„Du willst etwas ver-*

suchen, was keiner vor dir getan hat.“) (von den Steinen 1886:8).

At the time when the three explorers set off, it was reported that the French explorer Jules Crevaux was missing; in fact, Crevaux and his companions had been murdered by Indians in 1882 in the area of the Rio Pilcomayo, the river border between Argentina and Paraguay, the exact area that von den Steinen wished to explore. However, a lack of funds as well as French competitors searching for the missing Frenchmen caused a change in von den Steinen's plans. He decided to explore the likewise unknown source area of the Rio Xingú. For five months long he and his companions travelled the river from its sources to its mouth into the Amazon river; they were the first white men to explore, survey and plot this white space on the map and to present their results to the public in a comprehensive publication.

Wilhelm von den Steinen illustrated the three-month river journey in a self-made bark canoe in drawings, including the beauty of the landscape as well as the dangers of the rapids (von den Steinen 1886). To their surprise and despite all their privations and dangers the explorers experienced positive encounters with the Indians. Sometimes friendly, otherwise reticent, they confronted one another, ultimately resulting in a successful and bountiful exchange: the acquisition of ethnographic articles in change with axes, knives and glass beads. The main aim, however, was to reach the place where the three rivers united to form the 500-metre wide Xingú.

The results were augmented by the study of languages as well as a resultant new theory on the history of settlement on the South American continent. It was the fact that Indians encountered lived in primeval conditions that caused the Berlin scholars, in particular Rudolf Virchow, to call for a continuation of the expedition. Following three years of tedious preparations, the second Xingú expedition finally set forth in 1887. It now had a solely ethnological purpose and was especially well equipped for exchanging: 75 kilograms of glass beads and also Solingen metalwork such as knives, scissors, axes etc. The intake from exchange was equally as abundant: the expedition group began its return with a collection of 1,235 objects. Linguistic studies were successfully continued and – a special request by Virchow – photographs of the Indians and anthropological measurements, "mandatory" at that time, were made. Yet, underlying all of these achievements were great physical hardships including hunger, illness etc.

The expedition group was back in Berlin in 1888, and in the following year von den Steinen completed his *habilitation* with the theme *„Ent-*

wicklungsgeschichte des Völkergedankens“ (“The history of the development of peoples’ ideas”). After an interval as professor at the University in Marburg, von den Steinen became a member of the scientific staff of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin in 1893, then in 1904 director of the South America department. His great tome *„Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens“* (“Among the natural peoples of central Brazil”) appeared in 1894. Noteworthy in all of von den Steinen’s works are his new theories and methods as well as his extremely critical stand towards current clichés about Indians, who were placed at the lowest level of mankind, comparable with hunters and gatherers of the Stone Age. Although von den Steinen may have created an overly harmonious picture of the Indians whom he visited, it is nevertheless his acknowledgement of their cultural and especially artistic accomplishments as well as his critical view of his own society with its Eurocentric, markedly Christian moral concepts that are of significance:

“...the culture of the savages is on the average much higher, that of ours much lower than generally estimated.” (*„...die Kultur der Wilden ist im Durchschnitt viel höher, die unsrige viel niedriger als sie gemeinhin geschätzt wird.“*) (von den Steinen 1897:VIII).

Von den Steinen’s ability to gain such profound insight into the Indian cultures of central Brazil was due to his specific methods, referred to today as “participating observation” (*„teilnehmende Beobachtung“*). In interviews he presented himself in the manner of simply an interested person towards those whom he questioned and had no problem in becoming an object of examination himself. It was presumably this bearing that helped him and his companions to survive their travels. In this way von den Steinen gained valuable information pertaining to the acquired objects:

“Never would we have explained these schemes through deliberation, one must learn from the people themselves, what they mean or do without. I myself have become exceedingly moderate in interpreting, yet on the other hand [I] consider it as very superficial to dismiss figures which we do not understand as superfluous ornament.” (*„Niemals würden wir diese Schemata durch Überlegung richtig erklären, man muss von den Leuten selbst erfahren, was sie bedeuten oder ruhig verzichten. Ich meinerseits bin ausserordentlich bescheiden im Deuten geworden, halte es aber auf der andern Seite für sehr oberflächlich Figuren, die wir nicht verstehen, als Schnörkel abzufertigen.“*) (von den Steinen 1894:26).

Von den Steinen did not continue his research in Brazil, but returned to the beginnings of his studies: the South Seas. Well versed and furthermore on commission by the Berlin Museum he con-

ducted research on the language, culture and art of the Marquesans in Polynesia in 1897–1898, which resulted in a richly illustrated work (von den Steinen 1925, 1969). Travels in the search for comparable objects led him throughout the wide world, which brought valuable objects from North America to the Museum.

In 1906, only two years after his appointment as head of the department, von den Steinen retired from this office and the Museum at the age of 51, and was active thereafter as a private scholar. He died 23 years later, on January 4, 1929, in Kronberg in the Taunus mountains.

Johan Adrian Jacobsen

It was not only academicians who contributed towards the qualitative increment of the holdings of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. A supplier internationally known today was Johan Adrian Jacobsen, a mariner whose homeland was Norway and who also worked under commission by Adolf Bastian. The Museum owes no less than 11,000 objects to his collecting activities, 7000 of which he brought back from the American Northwest coast and Alaska, thus representing the largest collection from that region. In addition he procured 4000 objects from Indonesia, forming the second largest collection in the subject area of South and

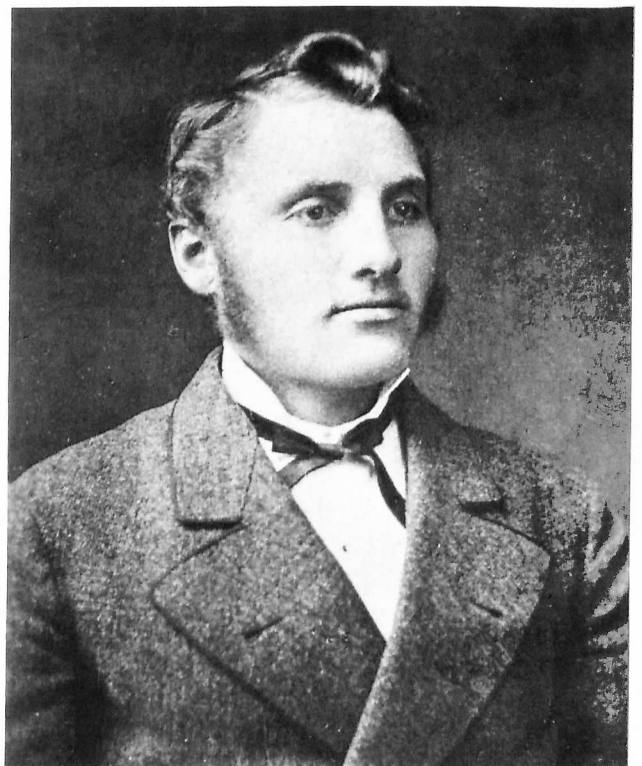


Fig. 5. Johan Adrian Jacobsen.

Southeast Asia. The quality of objects in both cases is beyond any doubt.

Jacobsen was born on October 9, 1853, on the island of Risö near Tromsø in northern Norway. He came from an ordinary fisherman's family and did not receive any proper school education. After visiting the school of navigation in Tromsø, Jacobsen at the age of 16 assumed command of a fishing boat. In 1874 he travelled to Hamburg, where his brother had his own business. Soon thereafter Jacobsen undertook his first long voyage to Valparaiso, Chile. Upon returning to Hamburg in 1877 he acquired an ethnographic collection from Greenland for Carl Hagenbeck. In 1878 Jacobsen travelled to Berlin with this collection as well as with several inhabitants from Lapland and three persons from Patagonia. The following tour was together with one of the popular "folk shows" (*„Völkerschau“*) including eight Labrador Eskimos; it, however, ended in disaster, as the Eskimos were not vaccinated and died one after the other from smallpox. Shocked by this experience, Hagenbeck and Jacobsen ceased conducting any further tours with exotic peoples for a time (Haberland 1987:337).

In 1881 Jacobsen seized the opportunity to carry out a collecting trip along the Northwest coast of America under commission by Adolf Bastian for the Museum in Berlin. Namely, one year prior to this during his return voyage from Polynesia via North America, Bastian had quickly recognised that the indigenous cultures of northwestern America, who had come into closer contact with Europeans only as late as the end of the 18th century, were already on the brink of extinction. Their complex social structure together with their art style that was unique in North America and based upon highly developed ornamental motifs and perfection in carving moved Bastian to raise almost 25,000 marks to finance Jacobsen's two-year-long collecting trip.

Departing from San Francisco Jacobsen travelled throughout all of the Canadian northwest coast and Alaska; he purchased objects from the Kwakiutl, the Haida Gwaii, the Tlingit etc.; and he acquired further objects from the Eskimos in the far North and the Athabascans in the interior. Stays at places on his journeys could last one hour or several weeks; thereby he acquired a collection from local artists themselves or their patrons, from their successors or from local dealers. These objects were soon viewed as representative, even unique, so that before long critical voices arose in the United States and Canada against this "selling off" to a European (Cole 1985:37).

One must credit Jacobsen for not only possessing the right view in the choice of aesthetic criteria, but also a farsighted judgement of contempo-

rary products in general, with which he was surrounded. He took the opportunity and stood witness to probably one of the most important epochs in the transformation of the Indians of the Northwest coast. Jacobsen competed with travellers in search of curios as well as with the Indians themselves, who still made the objects for their own use:

"Unfortunately a scientific collector must take these circumstances into account and console himself with the fact that in the future the objects will become much more expensive."

(*„Diesem Umstande muss ein wissenschaftlicher Sammler leider Rechnung tragen und sich mit der Tatsache trösten, dass die Gegenstände in Zukunft sicherlich noch viel theurer werden werden“*) (Jacobsen in A. Woldt 1884:27).

"A certain difference among the poles is also present on Queen Charlotte Islands, insofar as the poles, the older [they are] are all the more beautifully and artistically made. This indicates that the artistic sense is gradually beginning to decrease. This is not at all surprising, for the Haida Indians are standing on a balance with extinction for more than one reason. One does not meet one boat or one trading post on the coast without encountering Haida Indians; it is even worse with the Haida girls and women, who in order to earn money actually engulf Victoria and there lay the foundation of the wealth, with whose help their Indian husbands later pay for the production of a costly pole with the family crest and rank as chieftain, to which he elevates himself with a splendid feast."

(*„Ein gewisser Unterschied der Pfähle unter einander besteht auch auf den Königin Charlotte Inseln insofern, als die Pfähle, je älter, auch um so schöner und kunstfertiger hergestellt sind. Es beweist dies, dass der Kunstsinn allmählich abzunehmen beginnt. Zu verwundern ist dies keineswegs, denn die Haida-Indianer stehen aus mehr als einem Grunde auf dem Aussterbeetat. Man kann kein Schiff und keine Niederlassung an der Küste treffen, ohne auf Haida-Indianer zu stossen; noch schlimmer verhält es sich mit den Haida-Mädchen und Frauen, welche zum Zwecke des Geldverdienens, namentlich Victoria überschwemmen und dort gewöhnlich den Grund zu dem Vermögen legen, mit dessen Hilfe ihr indianischer Gatte späterhin die Herstellung seines kostbaren Hauswappenpfahles und die Häuptlingswürde, zu der er sich durch ein splendides Fest selbst erhebt, bezahlt.“*) (Jacobsen in A. Woldt 1884:28).

Johan Adrian Jacobsen's documentation of objects acquired there left much to be desired. Only with the later acquisitions from Indonesia did he maintain a reliable documentation that was complimented on all sides. After the great collecting trip for Berlin, he remained active for years, trav-

elling again to North America and to Siberia. Later he returned to 'folk shows' and Carl Hagenbeck.³ Jacobsen died in Norway on January 18, 1947.

Christian Theodor Wilhelm Gretzer

The collector Christian Theodor Wilhelm Gretzer was never employed at the Museum of Ethnology; furthermore, he was never commissioned by the Museum, and, finally, he gathered his immense collection for himself. Gretzer was a collector with the financial and logistically technical possibilities for pursuing his interests in a bountiful land at the right time.

It was through Arthur Baessler, scholar of American studies and patron of the Royal Museum of Ethnology, that the first part of Gretzer's collection could be acquired in 1898. During his travels in Peru Baessler bought this collection and then sold it together with his own collection to Bastian, that is, to the Museum. Gretzer brought the second and larger part of his collection to Germany upon his return in 1903. With the acquisition of this collection in 1907 – for which the financial means of more than 100,000 marks were provided by Julius van den Zypen – and a smaller convolute in 1924, the Berlin Museum of Ethnology could acquire one of the most comprehensive collections from Peru (almost 39,000 objects) that had ever arrived in Europe and one of the largest private collections in general (Eisleb 1973:182, Fig. 13).

Christian Theodor Wilhelm Gretzer was born on April 17, 1847, in Hannover as the second eldest son of a merchant. The father maintained a „*Hofmaterialienhandlung*“ (business of materials for the court), supposedly the largest colonial wares' store in the town. Under paternal pressure Gretzer had to learn the trade of merchant, although he would rather have become a farmer in a foreign country. In 1871 he accepted the offer of a firm in Montevideo, which, however, went bankrupt shortly after his arrival. Gretzer returned to Germany. His second attempt was successful: he accepted the offer of a firm in Lima and became established there as cloth merchant as of 1872. Gretzer remained in Lima for 33 years, as a successful businessman and above all as a collector of ancient Peruvian artefacts from all regions of the country. He also collected plants and animals, which he himself conserved. Gretzer's extensive photographic archive, now preserved in the Nie-



Fig. 6. Christian Theodor Wilhelm Gretzer.

dersächsisches Landesmuseum in Hannover, attests his broad collecting activities (Raddatz 1985).

Gretzer's interest in the natural sciences as well as his growing knowledge about ancient Peruvian cultures are apparent in his house that was filled with artefacts and preserved animals, as well as in the large garden with tropical trees and plants. His knowledge is especially displayed in the number and quality in his collection of pre-Columbian textiles, a collection whose value Gretzer was the first to recognise and which is certainly reflective of his profession in textiles.

In 1900 Gretzer was married to Erna Wilhelmine Maria Abel, who was twenty-five years younger than he. She at first banned his "lane of 32 standing mummies" („32 *Spalier stehende Mumien*“) as "uncomfortable contemporaries" („*nicht angenehme Zeitgenossen*“) from their residence to a depository, then however assumed an essential part in collecting, ordering, photographing, drawing and preserving the archive.⁴

"The [process of] collecting went as follows: already since 1874 your grandfather had excavations carried out by the indigenous, there were mostly 3 to 4 persons, who had pledged to dig only for the grandfather, and this went on until the year 1904. The places at which they dug were shown to them

³ One example is the dubious tour with nine Bella Coola Indians through Germany, performing among other places in 'Kroll's establishment' in Berlin. Haberland 1987:362.

⁴ Cp. the family chronicle from 1955.

by the grandfather – these were in all possible areas of Peru –, and when they had searched the places completely, they brought everything to Lima to the grandfather, who paid them for the time of work and then sent them directly to new work.

Then the excavated things were sorted by us at home; the largest part was often worthless and thrown away, only the really beautiful and artistic things were ordered into the collection, after they had been conserved, that is, the clay vessels were washed, as they were mostly covered with a layer of saltpetre, – the earth in Peru contains considerable amounts of saltpetre; the textiles were laid upon a firm support and carefully beaten in order to remove the dust, then they were sprayed with poison, so that no moths would enter them, and then they were kept behind glass or only with the greatest care in a chest, [dependent upon] whether or not the textiles were well preserved or already brittle. Sometimes the excavators also brought the whole mummy...”

(„Das Sammeln ging nun folgendermaßen vor sich: Schon seit 1874 ließ Dein Großvater Ausgrabungen machen durch Eingeborene, es waren meist 3 bis 4 Leute, die sich verpflichtet hatten, nur für den Großvater zu graben, und das geschah bis zum Jahre 1904. Die Plätze, an welchen sie gruben wurden ihnen von Großvater bezeichnet, – es war in allen möglichen Gegenden Perus, – und wenn sie die Plätze vollständig durchsucht hatten, brachten sie alles nach Lima zum Großvater, der sie für die Zeit ihrer Arbeit entlohnte und sie gleich wieder zu neuer Arbeit fortschickte.

Dann wurden bei uns im Hause die ausgegrabenen Sachen sortiert; der größte Teil war oft wertlos und wurde fortgeworfen, nur die wirklich schönen und kunstvollen Sachen wurden in die Sammlung eingereiht, nachdem sie vorher präpariert wurden, d.h. die Tongefäße wurden abgewaschen, da sie meist mit einer Salpeter-Schicht bedeckt waren, – die Erde in Peru ist sehr salpeterhaltig; – die Gewebe wurden auf eine feste Unterlage gelegt und vorsichtig geklopft, damit der Staub entfernt wurde, dann wurden sie mit Gift bespritzt, damit keine Motten hineinkommen, und dann zwischen Glas gelegt oder auch nur sorgfältig in großen Truhen aufbewahrt, je nachdem ob die Gewebe noch gut erhalten oder schon brüchig waren. Manchmal brachten die Ausgräber auch die ganze Mumie mit...” (Gretzer 1955).

Photographs and texts are eloquent expressions of Gretzer's methods of acquisition, which today would be designated as grave robbery. In Gretzer's day this was nothing unusual. At that time the quantity and systematic of acquisition were at most remarkable. It is possible that Gretzer conducted his own excavations, for only then could he

obtain the pre-Columbian textiles (in which mummies were often wrapped) that were of special interest to him and frequently well-preserved. However, countless graves and original find contexts were irreplaceably destroyed through similar plunder by indigenous *huaqueros*.

In 1903 Gretzer returned to remain in Hannover with his enormous collection. The sale of this second largest contingent of the collection in 1907 bestowed Gretzer with another unforgettable event. The scientific staff of the Berlin Museum requested that he should travel to Berlin. There he was asked to install his collection as a special exhibition in the inner court of the at that time museum of applied arts, today the Martin-Gropius-Bau. The reason for this was that Emperor Wilhelm II wished to visit the exhibition. The Emperor spent two hours viewing the collection, asking only Gretzer questions. He (Emperor) was so impressed by Gretzer's knowledge on the subject that he recommended him for a professorship. This was, however, rejected by general director Bode (Deimel and Dohrmann 1999:47).

Yet, Gretzer's collecting activities had their consequence in Peru. Shortly after the family had left the country, the Peruvian government passed a law that prohibited grave robbery and the export of antiquities. All of the objects did not remain in Berlin. Due to the vast size of the collection a so-called exchange of duplicates was undertaken, in which 200 duplicates alone were sent by Seler to Göteborg. Other exchange partners included the British Museum in London and several ethnological museums in Germany.

Wilhelm Gretzer died on February 12, 1926. His fortune had decreased considerably; the remaining portion in Peru was lost through World War I, and the rest was consumed by inflation. Nevertheless Gretzer's collections, his library and his knowledge of the subject still serve as a basis for archaeological research on ancient Peru. In spite of national jurisdiction in Peru and international conventions grave robbing and destruction are still a matter of fact there today.

Closing remarks

Adolf Bastian is often portrayed as an odd person who was shy of people. With this background it is indeed astonishing that he was able to convince and gain such distinguished and thereby such exceptional and efficacious persons as co-workers. The discovery, choice and furtherance of each individual must be seen as Bastian's special merit and deemed unquestionably as his work. For these persons carried forth the work of Bastian, the

Museum's founder, in a direct sequence and with success. The Museum and the field of ethnology still profit from this today.

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