

International Conference
Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts.
Principles, Approaches, Challenges

21 - 23 June 2021

The last decade has witnessed a growing debate about the handling and restitution of collections from colonial contexts in European museums. Numerous research projects and publications have outlined the dynamic field of postcolonial provenance research, in which the international conference held by the PAESE joint project is located.

The conference is inspired by research conducted in the PAESE sub-projects, and its focus will be on principles, challenges and approaches of provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. What is postcolonial provenance research? What moral and ethical principles (should) guide us in our work? Which methodological approaches can be profitably used for this kind of work? How can historical, ethnological and regional studies as well as legal and other approaches be reconciled? How can we take account of the polyphony of historical sources, both from the so-called societies of origin and from European perspectives? What challenges arise in a multidisciplinary approach or in a dialogue with representatives of the so-called countries of origin? How can cooperative provenance research be arranged? What norms, procedures and negotiation processes are used to assess the legal status of colonial collections? How can hard and soft law be further developed in the field of tension between law and intercultural justice? What principles do we wish to establish both for future cooperative work with the objects and for their future handling? And what challenges are involved in dealing with the collections in the future?

The PAESE project is a network of six collections and nine sub-projects that have been jointly conducting basic research on the origins and acquisition paths of ethnological collections in Lower Saxony at museums and universities since 2018. The focus is on networking and cooperation with representatives of the so-called societies of origin in Namibia, Cameroon, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea and Australia as well as on creating transparency and opening a dialogue about the objects and their future handling.

The conference language is English. Simultaneous translation from English into French will be provided for most part of the conference.

The conference will be held online. There will be no recording of the event. If you would like to attend, please register under info@postcolonial-provenance-research.com with your name, institution and email address to receive further information. Participation is free of charge.

<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/conference/>



@PPRC2021

Monday, 21 June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

Welcome Panel*Björn Thümler*, Minister for Science and Culture Lower Saxony*Katja Lembke*, Spokeswomen PAESE Joint Project*Adelheid Wessler*, Head of Team Societal Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation*Volker Epping*, President of the Leibniz University Hannover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

Opening Session by Syowia Kyambi

Nairobi based Artist

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. (CET)

Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (CET)

Dialogues between Theory and Practice. Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research

Chair: Brigitte Reinwald

*Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe: The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects**Sara Müller: Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North**Bianca Bauman: What is it all about? Attempts to Interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

Comments: Alexis Th. von Poser & Oswald Masebo

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. (CET)

Coffee Break

3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. (CET)

Collecting Strategies and Collectors' Networks in European Colonies

Chair: Jennifer Tadge

*Nzodo Awono: Colonial Collecting Strategies**Jamie Dau: On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks**Olaf Geerken: Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914**Sabine Lang: The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

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Tuesday, 22 June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections

Chair: Hannah Stieglitz

Tommy Yaulin Buga: *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

Katharina Nowak: *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou: *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

Martin Nadarzinski: *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation. Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CET)

Coffee Break

11:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET)

Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts

Chair: Sabine Lang

Nelson Adebo Abiti: *Ethnography and Natural History: Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

Katja Kaiser: *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Jennifer Tadge: *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines. Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Miranda Lowe: *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

12:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. (CET)

Lunch Break

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. (CET)

Cases of Restitution

Chair: Larissa Förster

Nzila M. Libanda-Mubusisi & Claudia Andratschke: *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

Rainer Hatoum: *Towards Restitution and Beyond – Reflections on a Multi-layered Dialogue Regarding the Cartridge Belt of Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum*

Werner Hillebrecht & Fredrick Nguvauva: *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

Sylvie Njobati: *A People's Identity in Captive – The Continuous Ruins of German Colonial Rule in Present Day on the Nso People*

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (CET)

Coffee Break

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4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET)

Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives

Chair: Thomas Laely

Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome & Karin Guggeis: *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*
 Rachel Mariembe & Isabella Bozsa: *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*
 Silvia Forni & Hervé Youmbi: *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Wednesday, 23 June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation

Chair: Mareike Späth

Michael Pickering: *First Principles*
 Iain Johnson & Shaun Angelis: *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*
 Ngitir Victor Bayena: *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums. Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CET)

Coffee Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET)

Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance

Chair: Christoph-Eric Mecke

Chief Charles A. Taku: *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*
 Evelien Campfens: *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*
 Naazima Kamardeen: *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*
 Matthias Goldmann: *Imperial Law's Ambiguity*

12:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. (CET)

Lunch Break

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. (CET)

Closing Session

Chair: **Richard Tsogang Fossi**

Flower Manase (National Museum Tanzania)
Nzila M. Libanda-Mubusisi (National Museum of Namibia, Windhoek)
Albert Gouaffo (University Dschang)
Tommy Yaulin Buga (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)

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