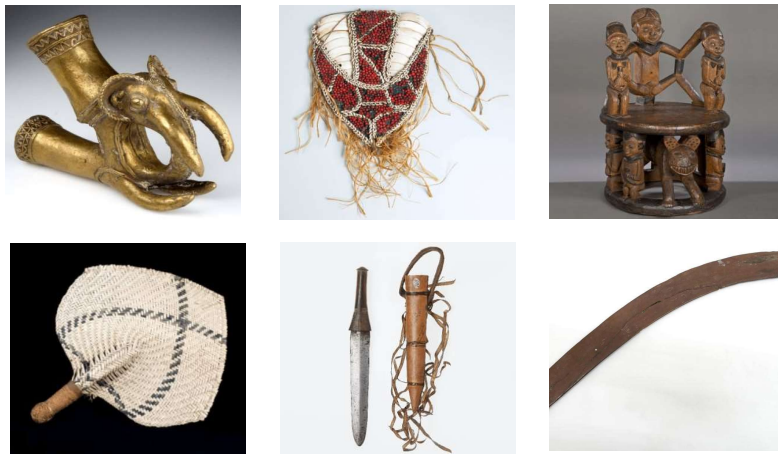


International Conference

## Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts - Principles, Approaches, Challenges

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

## Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts Principles, Approaches, Challenges

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 parts of the conference.*

## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*Lost Objects, Missing Documentation. Challenges of Provenance Research in the  
Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical  
Agriculture, Witzzenhausen*

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**





**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.





**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus).

Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.

## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.



## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonso*“ campaign.

**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.





**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

### **Panel “Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation”**

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.

**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.





Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) “The Exercise of International Public Authority”, [Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS).

His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

***The objectives of the PAESE-project are***

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

***The PAESE-database***

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

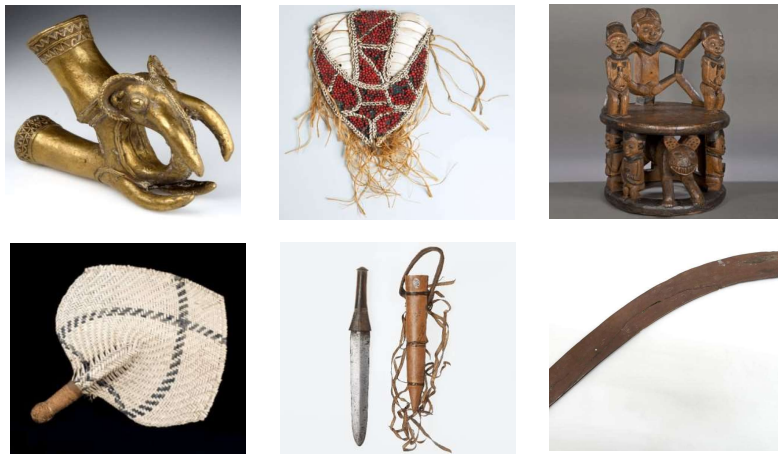
Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)

International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).



## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

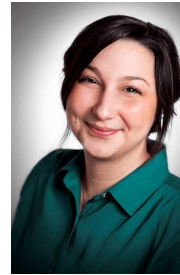
**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.



## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

Chair: Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.



**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

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

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.



**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) "The Exercise of International Public Authority", [Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders"](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS).

His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

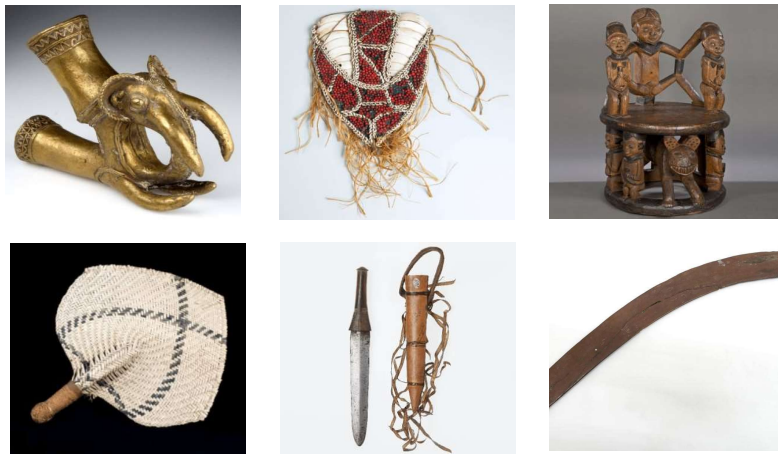
Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)



International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** **Sabine Lang**, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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**, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** **Mareike Späth**, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**





**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).



## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.

## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.

This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.

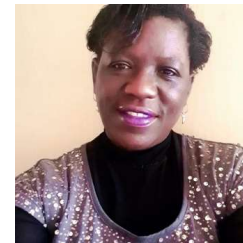


**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.



In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonso*“ campaign.

**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.



**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniale"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.





**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

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

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.



**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.

**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.



**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.





Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *"Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?"* published in 2016, and *"Biopiracy's Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka"* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law's Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) "The Exercise of International Public Authority", [Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders"](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-



## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

***The objectives of the PAESE-project are***

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

***The PAESE-database***

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

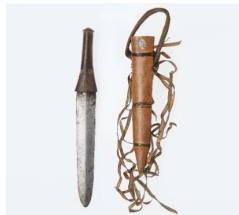
Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)

International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*

Funded by



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

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## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*Lost Objects, Missing Documentation. Challenges of Provenance Research in the  
Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical  
Agriculture, Witzzenhausen*

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** **Sabine Lang**, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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**, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** **Mareike Späth**, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break



11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.





**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.

## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.

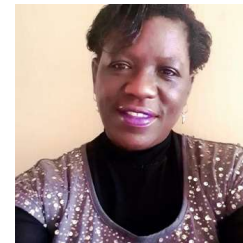


**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.



## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.

**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.





**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

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

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.

**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.





Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) “The Exercise of International Public Authority”, [Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS).

His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

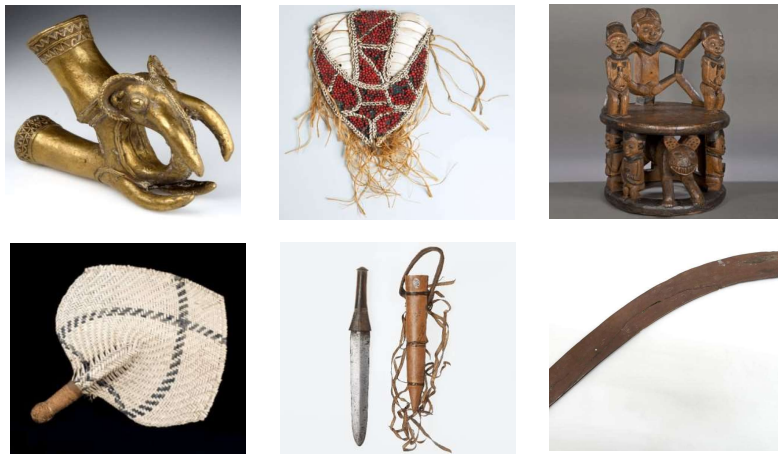
Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)

International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).



## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

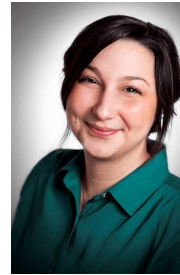
**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.



## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.



**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

### **Panel “Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation”**

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.



**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *"Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?"* published in 2016, and *"Biopiracy's Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka"* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law's Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) "The Exercise of International Public Authority", [Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders"](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

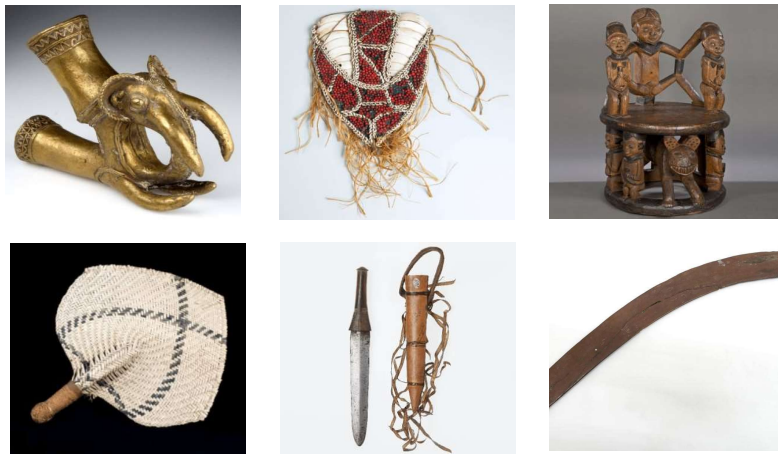
Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)



International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** **Sabine Lang**, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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**, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** **Mareike Späth**, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.



**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.



**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.



## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.

This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) – this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.



**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.



**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

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

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.



**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.



**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) “The Exercise of International Public Authority”, [Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS).

His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

***The objectives of the PAESE-project are***

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

***The PAESE-database***

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

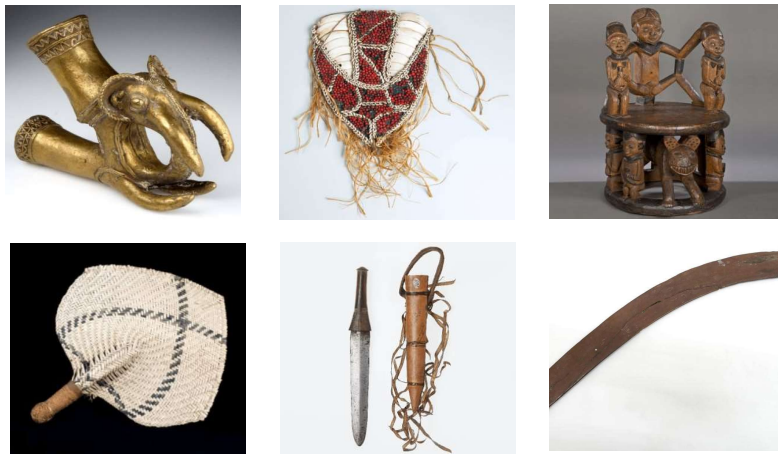
Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)



International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*

## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**





**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.



**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.

## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.

This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) – this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.



In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.



This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.

**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.



**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

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

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.



**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.

**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.



**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *"Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?"* published in 2016, and *"Biopiracy's Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka"* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law's Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) "The Exercise of International Public Authority", [Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders"](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-



## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

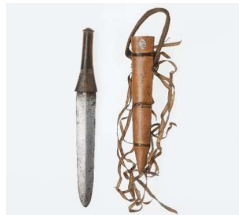
Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)

International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*

Funded by



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

 @PPRC2021

## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*Lost Objects, Missing Documentation. Challenges of Provenance Research in the  
Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical  
Agriculture, Witzzenhausen*

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break



11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.





**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.

## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.

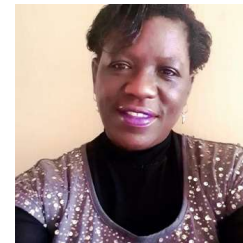


**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) – this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.



## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.

**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.





**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

### **Panel “Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation”**

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.

**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.





Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *"Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?"* published in 2016, and *"Biopiracy's Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka"* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law's Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) "The Exercise of International Public Authority", [Cluster of Excellence "Formation of Normative Orders"](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

#### *The objectives of the PAESE-project are*

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

#### *The PAESE-database*

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

#### **Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

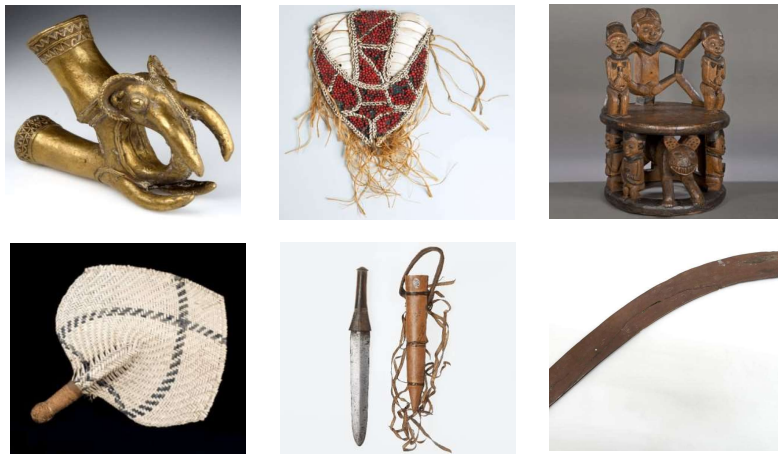
Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)

International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** **Sabine Lang**, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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**, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** **Mareike Späth**, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).



## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Brisance of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.



## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.



This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today’s understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.



**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.





**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniale"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

### **Panel “Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation”**

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.



**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.





**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) “The Exercise of International Public Authority”, [Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

The PAESE-project  
State Museum Hanover  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hannover/ Germany

Responsible: Claudia Andratschke/ Lars Müller

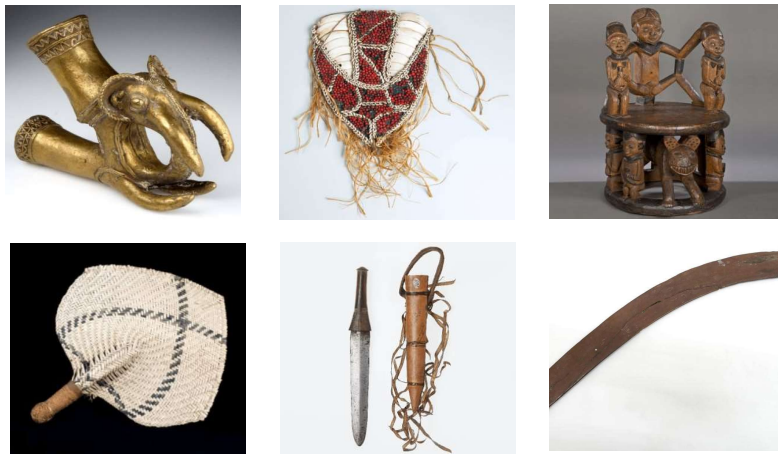
Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)



International Conference

**Provenance Research on Collections from  
Colonial Contexts -  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



Funded by

**Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts  
Principles, Approaches, Challenges**

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 parts of the conference.*



## Program

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Welcome Panel*

**Björn Thümmler**, Minister for Science and Culture  
Lower Saxony  
**Katja Lembke**, Director of the State Museum Hanover,  
Spokeswoman of the PAESE-project  
**Adelheid Wessler**, Head of Team Societal  
Transformations, Volkswagen Foundation  
**Volker Epping**, President of the Leibniz University  
Hanover

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET)

*Opening Session:*  
*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation  
within myself and between, spaces, objects and the  
moments unseen"*

**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**, Professor for African History at  
the Department of History, Leibniz University  
Hanover

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection):  
*The Question of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Fang Objects*

**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions  
of the Global North*

**Bianca Bauman** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project):  
*What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure  
from the West Region of Cameroon*

**Comments by:**

**Alexis von Poser**, Deputy Director of the Ethnological  
Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin  
**Oswald Masebo**, Senior Lecture in History,  
Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

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**, State Museum for Nature and Man,  
Oldenburg/ PAESE-project

**Nzodo Awono** (Georg-August-University Göttingen):  
*Colonial Collecting Strategies*

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*On Provenance Research within Hamburg's Colonial World Trade Networks*

**Olaf Geerken** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project):  
*Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen. German Ethnographic Museums and their  
Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer-und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project):  
*The World in Showcases. The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum  
Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (CET)

*Managing, Using and Researching Objects in  
Collections*

**Chair:**

**Hannah Stieglitz**, Georg-August-University  
Göttingen/ PAESE-project

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port  
Moresby):  
*Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg):  
*Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Route des Chefferies Program/ ICOMOS,  
Cameroon):  
*Conservation of African Cultural Heritage. A Comparative Study between Europe and  
Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe)  
*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 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (CET) *Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts*

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum  
Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa):  
*Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions-und Biodiversitätsforschung):  
*The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project):  
*Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London):  
*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, German Lost Art Foundation

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)  
& **Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek):  
*Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

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

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia):  
*Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sisy House of Fame, Bamenda):  
*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

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CET) *Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives*

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea)  
& **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich):  
*Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba)  
& **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project):  
*Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

**Silvia Forni** (Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon):  
*Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue. Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (CET) *Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation*

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/  
PAESE-project

**Michael Pickering** (National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University):  
*First Principles*

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program, Australia):  
*Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala):  
*Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

11:00 p.m. – 11:15 p.m. (CET) Coffee Break

11:15 p.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**, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA):

*The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance. The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University):

*Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

**Naazima Kamardeen** (University of Colombo):

*The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *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**, University of Dschang/ University of Berlin

**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)

## Abstracts and short bios

### Welcome Panel:

**Björn Thümler** (Minister for Science and Culture in Lower Saxony)



Björn Thümler has been Lower Saxony's Minister for Science and Culture since 2017. After studying political science and history in Hanover and Oldenburg, he first became office manager for Erich Maaß, and later a member of staff for Manfred Carstens, both members of the German Federal Parliament. He has been a member of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) since 1986 and has held various offices there (chairman of the Junge Union (Young Union) in the Westermarsch district, chairman of the CDU Wesermarsch district association and, since 2003, CDU state executive director) and a member of the Lower Saxon Federal State Parliament since 2003.

**Katja Lembke** (Director State Museum Hanover, Spokeswomen of the PAESE-project)



Katja Lembke studied Classical Archaeology, Egyptology and Latin Language in Heidelberg, Rome, Munich and Tübingen. In 1992 she received her doctor's degree with a study on the Iseum Campense in Rome. Her thesis won the travel grant of the German Archaeological Institute. Between 1994 and 2004 she worked for the Egyptian Museum Berlin and conducted several research projects in Syria and Egypt. Since 2003 she has been a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, since 2004 head of the research project "The necropolis of Petosiris in Hermopolis/Tuna el-Gebel" (sponsored by DFG, DAAD and VolkswagenStiftung). From 2005 until 2011 she was head of the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, in 2011 she became director of the State Museum Hannover. Since 2015 she has been honorary professor at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Apart from her duties in museum and at university Katja Lembke is involved in several voluntary activities concerning research, museums and church.

Since 2018 she has been speaker of PAESE-project, initiated by the State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Stiftung (in cooperation with Leibniz-University Hannover, Georg-August-University Göttingen, State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, Municipal Museum Braunschweig, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony)

**Adelheid Wessler** (Volkswagen Foundation Hanover)



Adelheid Wessler is Head of the Team Societal Transformations, responsible for ancient and non-European languages and cultures as well as (European) ethnology. Previously supervised collection-related research projects at museums as well as cooperation projects between Africa and Germany. She studied ethnology, sociology and political science in Bonn and Cologne and completed a doctorate on "Museal Representations of the Self and the Other in the (De-) Colonisation Process of Namibia". Longer research stays in Bolivia and Namibia, among others, and collaboration in various (international) exhibition projects. Professional stations include the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and the University of Cologne.

**Volker Epping** (President of the Leibniz University Hanover)



Professor Volker Epping studied law and received his doctorate in 1992 from the Faculty of Law at the Ruhr University in Bochum, where he also habilitated in 1996. After holding a university professorship for public law at the Westphalian Wilhelms University in Münster, he has held the university professorship for public law, international and European law at the Faculty of Law of Leibniz University in Hanover since December 2001. From 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009 he was Dean of the Faculty of Law, and from 2009 to 2011 he was a member of the Senate of Leibniz University Hanover and the Senate of the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH). Since 2015 he has been President of Leibniz University Hanover.

## Opening Session

*"Process & Materiality. An ongoing conversation within myself and between, spaces, objects and the moments unseen"*

by **Syowia Kyambi**



**Panel “Dialogues between Theory and Practice: Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies of Postcolonial Provenance Research”**

**Chair:** Brigitte Reinwald, Professor for African History at the Department of History of Leibniz University Hanover

**Comments by** Alexis Th. von Poser, Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin & Oswald Masebo, Senior Lecture in History, Department of History, University Dar-es-Salaam

Postcolonial provenance research engages different disciplines and theoretical influences such as anthropology, history and postcolonial studies and involves public debates about restitution as well as addressing the colonial past. The challenges include making the voices of producers, sellers, previous owners and other participants audible while working with various source genres such as written documents, oral history or material culture. How do we close gaps in the records of acquisition contexts, how do we deal with the lack of contemporary witnesses, different time layers or the unequal socio-cultural contexts between today's place of repository and the original place of use?

Important aspects of the research include the social, cultural, economic, political and normative circumstances of the object appropriations in the colonial context. What kind of agency did local people have in the acquisition contexts and how can historical events be reconstructed? Can the analysis of the change in meaning of the objects through their musealisation contribute to the reappraisal of the museums' colonial past, and if so, to what extent? What meanings are attributed to the objects by people in the societies of origin? What conclusions can be made about the future handling and destination of these objects? What influence do the researchers have in the research process? The aims are to deal productively with the challenges of postcolonial provenance research and to overcome – or at least decentralise – the Eurocentric perspective.

Case studies will be used to present research results obtained with the help of different or combined approaches and methods. In addition, representatives from their respective disciplines will contribute different theoretical perspectives. Together, they will discuss the contribution of ethnographic research, cultural studies concepts, postcolonial studies, oral history or other approaches to postcolonial provenance research.

**Alexis Th. von Poser** (Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin)



Alexis von Poser is Deputy Director of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin. He received his PhD from Heidelberg University and did extensive fieldwork at the north coast of Papua New Guinea. He was lecturer at the universities of Heidelberg, Madang (Papua New Guinea), Göttingen and Berlin, as well as project leader for the digitization of the ethnographic collections of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. As curator of the ethnographic collections at the State Museum Hanover he for instance curated “*A Difficult Legacy – Remnants of Colonialism Today*” and was co-principal investigator of the PAESE-project. He is journal co-editor in chief of the *Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology* and of the *Baessler-Archiv*, head of the provenance research in the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art and speaker of the Research Campus Dahlem.

**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe** (Lübeck Museums, Ethnological Collection): *Problem and Solution of the Emic and Etic Categorisation of Objects*

The discourse of this work follows the principle of progressing from the most visible to the least visible. By “most visible” we mean the objects to be examined and the information that is accessible to us in the databases of the Lübeck Ethnographic Collection. The aspect of the “least visible” is represented by the population groups who previously owned these objects and who in the past often had to experience these “collections”. Using information from the society of origin, the emic nomenclature of African cultural assets is to be incorporated into the development of a kind of encyclopaedia in a defined process. It ranges from the natural ecological environment of the material used, through the manufacture, to its acquisition and finally to the museum. The resulting designation should consist of the emic name of the object and its method of manufacturing.

There is a structure in the classification of objects and there are several levels of understanding. They cover the meaning, importance, usage itself and its circumstances, as well as the complete history of the objects. To determine the origin of an object, we need to consider the history of the society of origin, their customs, their worldview, their cults and rites as well as the path and the strategy of the collectors in order to build a geographic map of origin and migration of the objects. Beside all this, we also need to consider the live and worldview of the today society.



**Drossilia Dikegue Igouwe**, born in Port-Gentil, Gabon. Native language is French, German at level C1, English and Spanish. After graduated with a bachelor's degree at the Omar BONGO University in Libreville, Gabon, she studied Applied Intercultural Linguistics and Ethnology at the University of Augsburg, Germany, completing in 2018 with a master's degree. May 2019, she started her PhD there on the thesis “*Zwischen Partnerschaft und Restitution? Neubewertung zentralafrikanischer Objekte in der Lübecker Völkerkundesammlung*”. From March until May 2020, she visited Gabon to prepare her field research in Central Africa.



**Sara Müller** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Finding Shards and Pieces – Traces of the Sepik-Expedition in Institutions of the Global North*

In 1912 and 1913 an expedition from Germany was sent to conduct scientific research along the Sepik river in the north of today's Papua-New-Guinea. With more than 200 crewmembers, this expedition was one of the biggest that ever travelled the Sepik. At the end of this expedition, the crew sent back to Germany a vast collection of photographs, phonographic recordings, anthropological studies, vocabularies and animals, specimens of plants and minerals and more than 4,000 ethnographic objects. In 1939 the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen received seventeen of those objects as part of a donation from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin (the former Museum für Völkerkunde).

By looking at those seventeen objects exclusively, this paper wants to give an insight on how to answer questions like: What is the biography of the objects? Which people need to be looked at more closely in connection with the objects? What economic role do the objects play? And what connections do the objects have to German colonialism?

By doing so, it focuses on an intensive and comprehensive research of various documents in different institutions of the Global North. On the one hand, disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries have to be crossed to find answers. On the other hand, this approach delves deep into the subsoil of those institutions that hold different kinds of source material.



**Sara Müller** studied political science and history at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. She has been working there as a research assistant at the Department of Modern History since October 2018. Her PhD-Project is part of the PAESE-project. In this context, she works closely with the ethnographic collection at the University of Göttingen. Within her doctoral research, she focuses on the reconstruction of trade routes and networks between Germany and its former colony German-New Guinea, today's Papua New Guinea. Sara Müller is an associated member of the Volkswagen-Research-College "Wissen Ausstellen" located at the University. Her research

focusses on German colonial history, history of ethnographic collections and museums and (post-) colonial provenance research. (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/goettingen-viele-wege/?lang=en>).

**Bianca Baumann** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project): *What is it all about? Attempts to interpret the Biography of a Portrait Figure from the West Region of Cameroon*

What does postcolonial provenance research want, what can it achieve and what does it have to provide? How can the study be conducted appropriately so that it produces results that are relevant to museum practice, historiography and the so-called societies of origin? How can it possibly withstand the tension of expectations?

Using the example of a portrait figure that a colonial officer from Hanover gave to the institution that was to become today's State Museum Hanover, it will be shown to what extent combined methods allow a complex picture of interpretations around the figure's biography to emerge.

In order to assemble diverse narratives and interpretations of the object and its changing ownership, as well as to be able to frame and evaluate contemporary questions about its whereabouts and handling, both ethnological and historiographic methods were applied. With the help of approaches of both disciplines, historical conditions and social practices were reconstructed as well as contemporary attitudes, conceptions and interests with regards to the object's past and future were revealed. Postcolonial theories form the framework for reflection. The diversity of interpretations of the object's appropriation and corresponding conclusions that can be drawn for contemporary practice demonstrate the complexity of postcolonial provenance research and raise the question of what it is ultimately about.



**Bianca Baumann** works as a research associate and member of the project PAESE at the State Museum Hanover. She completed her curatorial traineeship at this museum in 2017 where she curated the exhibitions "Cedric Nunn. Unsettled" and the Africa section of "A Difficult Legacy. Remnants of Colonialism today". She has also worked at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin and at a publishing house in London. At the universities in Mainz and Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), she studied Cultural Anthropology, African Linguistic Studies and Sociology. Her research interests include German Colonialism in Africa, particularly in Cameroon as well as the material cultural heritage of Africa.

(<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hannover-erwerbsstrategien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Collecting Strategies and Collectors’ Networks in European Colonies”

**Chair:** Jennifer Tadge, State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg

Europeans in the colonies were connected by networks, and many of their collections were distributed among various museums. This is why research on collectors’ networks and collecting strategies is so important.

One focus of the panel is on military personnel as collectors. However, merchants, too, maintained extensive networks in various colonies where they obtained ethnographic objects as “by products”, so to speak, of their business activities, and passed them on to (museum) collections. The situation was similar with regard to churches and missionary societies whose networks consisted of missionaries. Additional networks connected museums in Germany with Germans living overseas. These emigrants, in turn, were in touch with each other and supplied the museums of their native cities with ethnographic objects.

In some cases, objects of individual collectors are found scattered in various collections. This is due, among other things, to the role played by the Royal Museum of Ethnology (Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. All objects coming from ventures funded by the German Empire had to be sent to that museum. So-called “doublets” were subsequently sold, given as gifts, or given in exchange for other objects to museums and other institutions all over the Empire.

How can these diverse collectors’ networks be grasped? What strategies of collecting – on collectors’ own initiative, but in some cases also inspired by manuals such as Felix von Luschan’s “Instructions for ethnographic observations and collecting in Africa and Oceania” – can be observed? How important were military structures in the context of the acquisition, transport, etc., of objects collected by members of the “Schutztruppen”? To what degree does this also apply to the structures of missionary and trading companies with regard to the collecting activities of missionaries and merchants?

**Nzodo Awono** (University of Göttingen): *Colonial Collecting Strategies*

My paper is based on the analysis of the acquisition circumstances of the Cameroon collection in the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Ten collecting strategies were recorded that enabled the colonial rulers to gain access to the cultural treasures of non-European peoples. Punitive expeditions were among the forms of appropriation. With the help of four examples, I will discuss the punitive expeditions as a collecting method. Meetings with local rulers, round trips or inspection trips by officials were suitable occasions for collecting. Collections were also made during research expeditions. The researchers travelled through the regions to study the customs and traditions of the groups, and they were constantly in contact with the people and their objects. Companies and businessmen or merchants were interested in collecting. Missionaries also took an active part in collecting. They used violence against indigenous people and took advantage of the conversion ceremonies to confiscate idols and other symbols of indigenous beliefs. According to documents, the collectors acquired objects for sale in some places. Colonial collecting methods also included trial, medical treatment and war reparations.



Born in Nkol-Mendouga near Yaoundé, **Nzodo Awono** studied German at the University of Yaoundé. 2007 and 2010 obtained the Maîtrise and DEA. 2010-2014 Lecturer in German colonial history at the University of Yaoundé I. 2014/15 DAAD scholarship holder at the LMU Munich, 2017-2021 PhD student and research assistant at the University of Hamburg, participation in the project “*Colonial Traces*” at the Übersee-Museum Bremen. Since April 2021 research assistant on the project “*The New Bricolage of Old Objects*” at the Institute of Ethnology, University of Göttingen.

**Jamie Dau** (MARKK, Hamburg): *On Provenance Research within Hamburg’s Colonial World Trade Networks*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, numerous trading posts in many regions of West Africa served as ports of call for German merchants. These trading posts were an integral part of the colonial world trade network. In the Hamburg context, this is particularly evident in the large number of ethnographic objects from West Africa in the collections of the Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK). However, colonial world trade, arguably the largest collectors’ network of former European colonies of its time, has long been disregarded in the historical reappraisal of ethnological museums’ collections. Suspicions of dubious acquisitions have not been considered comparable to the appropriation practices of military and scientific actors in colonial contexts. The provenance research project at MARKK, ongoing since July 2020, focuses specifically on the research of traders who collected ethnographic objects, as well as of object biographies. So far, multiple suspicious facts associated in the multifaceted appropriation and negotiation processes of the Hamburg trade network dating to 1860-1920 have been identified.



**Jamie Dau** is an anthropologist specialized in provenance research within colonial contexts. He studied at the Universities of Mainz, Heidelberg and Toulouse and most recently in Vienna, where he graduated (MSc) in Anthropology with a thesis on the plaster cast collection of Felix von Luschan. Between 2016 and 2017, he worked as assistant at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. From 2019 to 2020 he was research assistant at the Anthropological University Collection in Vienna. Since July 1, 2020 he works as provenance researcher for the colonial context at MARKK.

**Olaf Geerken** (Research Fellow Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project): *Museums, Missionaries and Middlemen German Ethnographic Museums and their Lutheran Missionary Collectors in Central Australia – 1890s to 1914*

Two Lutheran missionaries at the Central Australian mission station of Hermannsburg were particularly instrumental in supplying German museums with substantial collections of Aboriginal ethnographica: Carl Strehlow and Oskar Liebler. Prompted by Spencer and Gillen's publication on the Central Australian tribes in 1899, and reports from various missionaries describing the Aranda/ Arrernte people of Central Australia, German museum directors contacted, encouraged, and guided the missionaries to collect ethnographic information and materials for their museums from the early 1900s, until, in November 1913, the Australian Government proclaimed an export ban on ethnographica to control the flow of objects to overseas collections.

By tracing original correspondence between these two missionaries, museum directors and their middlemen, the paper seeks to describe the discreet networks and circumstances through which the Aranda/ Arrernte collections reached their, so far final, destinations in German museums.



**Olaf Geerken** is an Anthropologist who currently works at the Georg-August University Göttingen on the PAESE-project "Provenances of Tjurungas" (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/provenienzen-von-tjurunga/?lang=en>). He studied Ethnology, Anthropology and Aboriginal Studies in Munich and Adelaide, Australia. He worked for 22 years as an Anthropologist with and for the Central Land Council in Central Australia, primarily on Aboriginal land rights matters. In the course of his work he collected valuable experiences in relation to Tjurungas (Aboriginal secret-sacred objects), both in terms of their ongoing use and ceremonial value among current Aboriginal communities, as well as relating to provenance research on secret-sacred objects held in German-speaking museums in Germany and Switzerland.

**Sabine Lang** (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project): *The World in Showcases: 'The Collectors' Networks of the Roemer-Museum Hildesheim and the Growth of the Ethnographic Collection, 1844–1914*

The Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum is not an ethnographic museum. From its very beginnings, it has been laid out as a "Mehrspartenmuseum", that is, a museum whose collections cover several disciplines: Natural History, Egyptology, Art, Hildesheim city history and prehistory and, last but not least, Ethnology. When the Roemer-Museum opened in 1845, its ethnographic collection comprised about 28 objects. Today, there are about 12,000 objects from all parts of the world. Many, but by no means all, were collected in colonial contexts.

The paper will present results of the PAESE subproject at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, whose focus is on collectors' networks and collecting strategies from the beginnings of the Roemer-Museum 1844/45 until World War I. While the museum's directors Roemer, Andreae, and Hauthal used their international networks to increase not only the ethnographic but also the natural history holdings, the focus of this presentation is on the impact of these networks on the growth of the ethnographic collection.

Two basic types of networks can be distinguished: Professional, personal, and political networks of the directors themselves; and networks connecting Hildesheim-born expatriates both with their native city and with each other. The large number of collectors under study in the Hildesheim subproject allows some generalizing statements on the possibilities and limitations of clarifying the circumstances of acquisition based not only on one collector or few collectors but on many collectors.



**Sabine Lang** was trained in Cultural Anthropology, Ancient American Studies, and European Pre-history. Her doctoral dissertation (Hamburg, 1990) was on systems of multiple genders in indigenous cultures of North America. After earning her doctoral degree she continued her research on these systems by conducting fieldwork, funded by the German Research Foundation, in the United States. She has presented the results of her research in numerous publications. Since early 2017 she has been conducting provenance research at the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, currently in the context of the PAESE joint project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/hildesheim-rekonstruktion-sammlungsbiografien/?lang=en>).

## Panel “Managing, Using and Researching Objects in Collections”

**Chair:** Hannah Stieglitz, Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project

Collections are home to objects that were acquired in the context of German and international colonialism. In terms of provenance research, the question of the collecting practices of the researchers who acquired these objects in different ways is often the only one addressed. In this panel, however, the focus is less on the analysis of the forms of acquisition than on the question of what happened to the objects after they found their way into a collection.

By looking at different collections different practices in dealing with objects can be discovered. Collecting, preserving and researching with and about objects depends on the respective collections and the people working there. In the context of this panel, examples will be used to show what kind of role and significance objects have taken on within different collections and continue to take on today.

Representatives from collections in Cameroon, Papua-New Guinea and Germany offer an inside into their research and the collections they work with. They are going to raise questions like: How were the objects inventoried? How were and are the objects preserved? How were they researched? Was any research done on the objects at all? Did they become illustrative material, exhibition objects, art objects, teaching materials, exchange objects, gifts, or have they always been stored in a depot? And to what extent has their significance within the collection changed?

**Hannah Stieglitz** (Georg-August-University Göttingen/ PAESE-project)



Hannah studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and History at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. Her discourse analytic and practice-oriented thesis was concerned with educational service in ethnographic museums between ideal and daily practice. Since November 2018 she is working as a research assistant in the Ethnographic Collection Göttingen in the PAESE-project (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammeln-und-lehren/?lang=en>).

In her PhD project she investigates practices of documenting, using and interpreting objects deriving from colonial times (Academic Adviser: Prof. Dr. Elfriede Hermann, Dr. Michael Kraus). Hannah’s research interests range from (post-)colonial provenance research and theory to the anthropology of museums, debates on representation in social and cultural anthropology and history and the history of (ethnographic) museums and science.

**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby): *Insights into Museum Practices at the National Museum and Art Gallery PNG*

In his presentation Tommy Buga will share his experiences from current practices of managing, using and researching objects in the collections he works with at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. The various types of collections need care and safeguarding, as well as actions ensuring preservation. We will learn about the work behind the scenes and how Tommy is committed to the value and importance of cultural materials.



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, “the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”.



**Katharina Nowak** (MARKK, Hamburg): *Colonial Entanglement, 'South Sea' Imaginations and Knowledge Production*

My lecture focuses on a collection that came during the German colonial period from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Germany. It is called the 'South Seas Collection' by Wilhelm Knappe (1855-1910) which is housed by the Museum of Thuringian Folklore in Erfurt. Knappe was a German diplomat and colonial official. I am interested in different epistemic practices through which knowledge is produced in dealing with these objects in historical and contemporary contexts, including everyday cultures from which they originated. In relation to the practices of collectors and dealers, curators and scholars who gathered these objects from their everyday or ritual contexts (sometimes using force and power), mobilized them, shipped them to Germany and sold, stored, researched, curated, and still curate them in the context of museums. How are and were these objects remembered and forgotten, conceived and classified, produced and used, stolen or exchanged, researched and exhibited? To outline these questions, I am going to use an object biography. In conclusion I will point out current questions concerning the collection.

**Katharina Nowak** studied Anthropology and Communication and Media Studies in Bremen as well as Museum and Exhibition Studies in Oldenburg. Since September 2019, she is a PhD student at the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research at the University of Bremen. Her research focuses on collaborative forms of ethnographic knowledge production, decolonization of knowledge and she has a regional interest in Papua New Guinea. Since April 2021, she has been working as a curator assistant for the Oceania collections of the MARKK in Hamburg.

**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** (Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon): *Conservation of African Cultural Heritage, Comparative Study between Europe and Africa: The Case of Cameroon and Germany*

The conservation of cultural heritage is a concern common to all peoples. But the techniques differ from one space to another depending on the environment, customs and traditions and the context. Our work will talk about the comparative study of the conservation of African cultural heritage in European (Germany) and African (Cameroon). Here, we will relate the techniques of conservation of cultural heritage according to the model of German museums and those practiced by the Cameroonian peoples before and after independence. We will also show the place of cultural goods commonly called "objects" for the peoples who produced them and those who keep them in Western museums. This analysis will lead us to talk about the place played by community museums of traditional chiefdoms in heritage conservation. Finally, we will also talk about the use of these heritage assets which are kept in community museums on a daily basis for ceremonies and rituals within the community and distort their nature. This comparative study will not only refocus the global vision on issues of conservation of African cultural heritage, but also show the important place of these properties for the communities that produced them as well as the negative impact of their loss for the community.



**Paule-Clisthène Dassi Koudjou** studied Archaeology and cultural heritage management at the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and was a Trainee professional culture at the National Institute of Heritage (INP) Paris. She has been responsible for the conservation and management of collections and other objects of the Chief of chefferie-museum of the Batoufam group and has served for several diagnostic missions of the chieftaincy collections in partnership with the Route des Chefferies (DRC), the Institute of Fine Arts in Nkongsamba, and the Bangangté Mountains University (2014-2018). She is Conservation Manager for the Route des Chefferies Program in Cameroon, the Deputy Secretary General of ICOMOS Cameroon, a Member of ICOM Cameroon and a General Secretary of the Batoufam Tourism and Leisure Association.

**Martin Nadarzynski** (Baden State Museum, Karlsruhe): *Lost Objects, Missing Documentation Challenges of Provenance Research in the Ethnographic Collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture, Witzenhausen*

The ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture has a long and eventful history, which is closely linked to the German Colonial School. This school was founded in 1898 and trained young men as tropical and colonial farmers in Witzenhausen from 1899 to 1944. In the context of the school, an ethnographic collection was established from 1901 onwards, which was fed by object donations from graduates from the German colonies of the time and other non-European areas. This collection was steadily expanded and in the 1970s was ceded by the successor institution, the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL), to the Ethnological Museum Witzenhausen on permanent loan. In the museum, established as a foundation and supported by the DITSL and the town of Witzenhausen, the collection was looked after on a voluntary basis and thus, from today's perspective, non-professionally. Several challenges for provenance research arise from this special history of the collection. In addition to heterogeneous object groups, the voluntary, non-professional care of the collection led to undocumented object losses and missing or incorrect information about the objects or the collection.

Accordingly, the presentation will use several case studies from the collection to shed light on these problems and present possible solutions from practical provenance research.



**Martin Nadarzynski** studied ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, graduated with a Master of Arts degree. Since October 2020 he is a PhD student & scientific volunteer at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (PhD: „*The ethnographic collection of the Badische Landesmuseum from 1875 until today*“). His research interests include ethnographic collections & their (post)colonial history, memory culture, and museum ethnology. Among other projects, he worked on the exhibition "*Posted! Reflections of Indigenous North America*" at the Weltkulturenmuseum Frankfurt as a student co-curator.

Otherwise, he has published on the ethnographic collections of the natural history department of Museum Wiesbaden and on the ethnographic collection of the German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture Witzenhausen.



## Panel “Transdisciplinary Provenance Research on Objects from Colonial Contexts”

**Chair:** Sabine Lang, Roemer and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim/ PAESE-project

Ethnological objects represent only a fraction of the museums' inventories from colonial contexts. By now, the focus is increasingly shifting to include the handling of natural history collections. This may be by means of projects designed to develop guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, to apply post- and decolonial approaches to natural history collections, or to consider ethnological and natural history collecting practices together. Natural history specimens are also playing an increasing role in debates about possible restitution – as, for example, in the case of some dinosaurs at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

Only a transdisciplinary approach, beyond the boundaries of today's disciplines and museum depots, reveals the entire "spectrum" of colonial collecting - and also the mass of objects gathered in total. Through this approach, common collectors, networks, dealer structures, or transport routes of objects become evident as well. The transdisciplinary connection of colonial collecting practices is particularly striking in multi-disciplinary museums, where collectors of colonial objects are usually represented in several departments – but this connection may go unnoticed, and the handling of the various types of objects may differ greatly.

However, what are specific issues and challenges in research using transdisciplinary approaches? What are the implications of these insights for post- and decolonial practices in dealing with these holdings? And how can research projects on natural history specimens and ethnological objects be linked in order to achieve synergy effects?

**Abiti Adebo Nelson** (Uganda National Museum/ University of Western Cape in South Africa): *Ethnography and Natural History. Whose idea and What do they mean in Museums*

We are in the paradox of understanding the inherited colonial museum that hold memories of cultural objects into the disciplines of ethnography and naturalness as an African Museum. But whose idea should we think about in these disciplines? Who can understand and reinterpret the cultural heritage of the society? The idea about the past that has continued to reflect backwards through accumulation of natural history collections is yet contested issue in our museums. The difficult question in this concept of natural history is to engage in the debate of tribal ideas about the indigenous man and the human skeletons being incorporated into the classificatory aspect of natural history. In the ‘Tribal’ framing of people of Uganda and the ideas of curiosities of ethnographic, and the categorization of the society along the lines of ethnic and natural history studies have embedded the very knowledge of the anthropological practices in the museums. In the East African countries, we have national museums that hold muted names of ethnographic and natural history collections that have become a source of provenance to the colonial architect. If we are to be inclusive, interdisciplinary and questioning the very notion of provenance and its colonial-ness, who has the right to tell the story ethnographic and natural history collections.

**Nelson Adebo Abiti** has spent more than 10 years of being curator for Ethnography and History at the Uganda National Museum. He is currently a PhD student of History at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. He also an MA in the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas at Sainsbury Art Gallery, University of East Anglia in 2015. Abiti spent much time at the British Museum –Africa section engaging with the Ugandan collections and researching. Abiti has co-curated exhibitions on ‘Road to Reconciliation’ in post conflict situation of northern Uganda. He also co-curated the Milk exhibition project in Uganda and Switzerland; and the recent ‘Unseen Archive of Idi Amin’ that opened at Uganda Museum 18th May 2019. Abiti's research focuses on the history of ethnographic collections and exhibitions framing at the Uganda National Museum. He has also engaged with community work in post conflict northern Uganda on transitional justice and memorials.

**Katja Kaiser** (Museum für Naturkunde, Leibniz-Institut für Evolutions- und Biodiversitätsforschung): *The Coloniality of Natural History Collections*

Natural history collections have so far only played a marginal role in the debates on collections from colonial contexts. They are either mentioned without defining their special features or not mentioned at all. Yet natural history museums experienced an unprecedented expansion of their collections during colonial expansion. To this day, collections of colonial provenances form a nationally and internationally significant basis for research and exhibitions.

On the one hand, natural history collections are a central part of the history of imperial appropriation of the world. They are inseparably linked to the history of the collecting sciences and their institutions. On the other hand, we are only just beginning to understand the particularities of natural history objects from colonial contexts and to let the colonial past of natural history become part of the institutional self-understanding of natural history institutions.

This means a profound transformation of the way we work with natural history collections, how we exhibit and research them, how we enter collaborations and how we understand digitisation processes.

Using the example of the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde, it will be discussed how colonial entanglements shaped the history of institutions and collections and which legal frameworks, colonial infrastructures and collector networks determined the centralisation of ethnological and natural history collections at the Berlin museums. It will be argued that natural history collections must be considered in an interdisciplinary context with ethnological or anthropological collections in order to recognise the similarities and differences and to reconstruct shared acquisition contexts and provenances. In addition, initial considerations on specificities of natural history collections from colonial contexts will be presented as first results from projects at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.

**Katja Kaiser** is a historian specialized in colonial history, museum and collection history and gender studies. She has published on the emigration of German women to the colonies and on the institutional and collection history of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum. She has also been involved in various exhibition and research projects in cultural history museums and natural history museums. Since 2002 she is a researcher at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin and works on guidelines on dealing with natural history collections from colonial contexts.

**Jennifer Tadge** (State Museum for Nature and Man, Oldenburg/ PAESE-project): *Same Provenances in Different Disciplines: Impulses for a Transdisciplinary Approach*

Collecting in colonial contexts is by no means a phenomenon pertaining to ethnological objects only. Many of the collecting individuals and institutions had a much broader range of interests, as can be seen in various European museums today. This becomes particularly apparent at multi-disciplinary museums such as the State Museum for Nature and Man Oldenburg. When examining the acquisition and inventory records of such museums, it is evident that the same collectors gave both ethnological objects and natural history material to the museum at the same time. However, the various classes of objects were quickly separated from each other after their arrival, with the result that objects of possibly shared provenance are today kept in different storerooms, recorded in different databases, and looked after and researched by scientists in their respective fields. Therefore, the handling of the various types of objects and the documentation of their provenance may differ significantly.

The presentation will give impulses for a transdisciplinary approach to such research of shared provenances. It will highlight the close interrelation of natural history and ethnological collecting, but also point out specific challenges and requirements inherent in this approach. Particularly in multi-disciplinary museums, transdisciplinary provenance research on common collector personalities and contexts of origin is an opportunity or even an imperative. However, increasing digitization and networking can also result in synergy effects for other types of museums; for example, they may give clues on collector networks beyond the respective museums' disciplinary focus.



**Jennifer Tadge** studied Ethnology and Arabic Studies at the University of Leipzig, as well as Museology at the University of Applied Sciences Leipzig. Since September 2018 she has been a PhD candidate in the joint project "Provenance Research in Non-European Collections and Ethnology in Lower Saxony" at the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg. Her PhD thesis with the working title "*Colonial Collecting Practices in Military Contexts*" is supervised by Prof. Dr. Dagmar Freist at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Institute of History (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammelpraktiken-in-militaerischen-kontexten/?lang=en>).

**Miranda Lowe** (National History Museum, London): *Re-activating the Silenced Landscapes of Natural History Collections*

Narratives about the history of collecting are commonly absent from the interpretation of natural history collections where science, racism, and colonial power were inherently entwined. This misrepresentation of the past is problematic because it alienates non-white audiences. By telling the stories of where the specimens came from, and, more importantly, relating the context of why they were collected and being honest about how this furthered the colonial project, it will help remove an obstacle that is actively blocking wider participation.

This acknowledgement will show that museum professionals are aware of the stories of people who come from the same parts of the world as our museum specimens and artefacts, and that museums are not trying to deny their history or contribution. These are crucial steps towards ensuring we are all involved in our collective project of learning about the natural world. Using examples from a single natural history collection – the Natural History Museum, London (NHM) - this paper will demonstrate how an existing collection can still retain these colonial ideologies and narratives, and, as such, can be used at the centre of decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections.



**Miranda Lowe** is a principal curator and scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. Her research links art, science, and nature to aid the public understanding of natural world. She is part of the Museums Association's Decolonisation Working Group and has published work that discusses how museum collections are connected to colonialism and how to best deal with these difficult histories. Miranda is a founding member of Museum Detox, network for people of colour working in the heritage sector, championing fair representation, inclusion, and deconstruction of systems of inequality. She was listed in the BBC Women's Hour Power List 2020: Our Planet.

## Panel “Cases of Restitution”

**Chair:** Larissa Förster, German Lost Art Foundation

The debate on the restitution of collections that were acquired during the German colonial period has received widespread publicity in recent years and has been increasingly taken up in museums and politics. Claims for restitution from countries of origin were already being made to European states after the independence of the former colonies, but it is only in recent years that a political change seems to be getting underway. There is largely general consensus on the restitution of human remains from collections in German museums to the countries of origin. In contrast, the discussion on the restitution of ritual or historically sensitive objects has only just begun.

Provenance research projects can bring new dynamics into already existing restitution claims or provoke new ones. They aim to clarify the origin and circumstances of acquisitions of objects. Who ultimately decides on restitution and which interest groups are involved in the process? What happens when questions remain unanswered? To whom and to where should objects be restituted? What role can and should local communities play in restitution processes? If cultural property was illegitimately or unethically removed, is restitution to today's understanding the only solution or are alternative paths more appropriate in certain cases? Are further steps required alongside and after restitution?

The panel will examine specific cases of restitution regarding their entanglements and challenges from different perspectives. The chosen examples are at different stages, which show the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions.

**Larissa Förster** (Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts/German Lost Art Foundation, Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin)

Larissa Förster is Head of the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts established in 2019 at the German Lost Art Foundation, and Associate Member of the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University, Berlin. She is a cultural and social anthropologist with a regional focus on Southern Africa and works on issues of postcolonial provenance and return regarding artefacts and human remains. She co-edited „Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten“ (2019) and „Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte“ (2018).

**Claudia Andratschke** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)

**& Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek): *Recent Cases of Restitution to Namibia – from two Perspectives*

The human remains repatriated from Germany back to Namibia at different stages, shows the complexity of negotiation processes and the diverse meanings and conditions of restitutions. In Germany, guidelines on the handling of human remains have been in place since 2013 and there is public agreement to return remains to the so-called countries of origin. The talk by Claudia Andratschke will show that State Museum Hanover was never an institution that researched human remains, which is why human remains in the colonial period entered the collections of ethnology and natural history rather “accidentally” alongside objects or animal preparations. Nevertheless, it was clear that the research on and the return of human remains had to take place before doing provenance research on objects from colonial contexts. Therefore, the remains of three individuals were returned from the State Museum Hanover to Namibia in 2018. The whole process was preceded by intensive discussions whether or not anthropological investigations should be carried out in advance. The talk will shed light on the pros and cons of these discussions and would also like to show that the moral-ethical responsibility in dealing with human remains on the part of the German Institutions does not end with their return: On the one hand, the role of German Institutions and disciplines in the illegal transfer of human remains and the subsequent formation and distribution of racist stereotypes in museums in the colonial era and afterwards must be examined and made transparent until today. On the other hand, it is important to remain in a dialogue and to cooperate with the now preserving institutions and individuals in Namibia.

The talk by Nzila Mubusisi will show that the collection of human remains preserved in the National Museum of Namibia has more than doubled in the last ten years since independence until today, following the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects from the Charité University Hospital and other collections in Germany in 2011, 2014 and 2018. The first return of 20 human remains in 2011 received international publicity due to the direct and well-documented link between these human remains and the 1904/08 Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia. Photographs of some seventeen decapitated heads that had been used for research and published in a German scientific journal in 1913 were republished in the media. The heads had been taken from prisoners held in the notorious concentration camp on Shark Island at Lüderitz for racial studies.

In 2014 the human remains of a further 35 individuals and in 2018 the remains of a further 27 individuals were returned. Therefore, a total of 82 individuals has, to date, been returned to Namibia, which means that there is now a total of (MNI=137) in the collection of the National Museum of Namibia. This causes challenges related to capacity of the institution to handle the human remains and infrastructure required for proper preservation and management of the material culture.

In February 2019, two sacred heritage objects – a Bible and a Whip that had belonged to the famous anti-colonial resistance leader, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, were returned by the Linden Museum, from Stuttgart in Germany. Additionally, a more than 500-year-old Portuguese stone cross from Cape Cross was repatriated to Namibia in August 2019 from the German Historical Museum in Berlin, Germany. The consequence has been that a growing number of human remains and objects of cultural and historical significances are now accumulating in various storage facilities at various Namibian institutions including the National Museum of Namibia, the National Archives of Namibia and other institutions across the country. These returns have therefore raised awareness in the Namibian culture and heritage sector regarding the challenges of managing human remains (and associated objects) and heritage objects, hence restitutions debates can assist in developing guidelines on how human remains and other cultural objects can best be handled in a best compressive manner. This paper urges, that countries should be obligated to ensure proper Restitution and Repatriation of looted and illegally acquired of Namibian objects and related material culture in foreign Museums, Institutions and other places.



**Claudia Andratschke** studied art history, history, and law in Brunswick and Tübingen. Since 2008 she has been responsible for Provenance Research at the State Museum Hanover, since 2013 for all departments of the museum. Since 2018, she has also been head of the department Collections & Research. Since 2015 she has been coordinating the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony which includes more than 60 institutions and partners from museums to libraries, archives or associations. She is a member in the Provenance Research Association, several working groups for Provenance Research and has published and taught in this field.



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia's National Commission for UNESCO.

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

What started in 1993 with a first inquiry into the whereabouts of the cartridge belt of late 19th century Ovambanderu leader Kahimemua at the Brunswick Municipal Museum eventually evolved into an issue of paramount importance for the museum in recent years. Since then, the belt became the center of a multi-layered dialogue that extended to other related objects. Eventually, official discourses on several levels were just about being realized when the pandemic struck. It brought the whole process to a temporary halt. With the easing of conditions in sight, the museum is looking forward to revitalizing that process. As the museum is in the process of redesigning its permanent exhibition, hopes are high that matters will not simply be closed with the settling on the future of the cartridge belt of Kahimemua. Instead, the museum would greatly appreciate if the latter process will result in new modes of collaboration, facilitating a rethinking of how our common troubled history can be both commemorated and taken into a jointly shaped future.



**Rainer Hatoum** is Head of Collections and provenance researcher of the ethnographic collection at the Brunswick Municipal Museum (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig). He is in charge of the museum's ethnographic collections, provenance research, and the development of its new permanent exhibition. Since 2007, Hatoum has worked in several collaborative research projects involving, among others, the Navajo Nation residing in the American Southwest and the Kwakwaka'wakw on the Northwest Coast. These projects involved different collections of song, object, and archival manuscript materials.

**Werner Hillebrecht & Frederick Nguvauva** (Namibia): *Kahimemua Nguvauva, his Belt and the Colonial War of 1896*

There is a popular misconception – certainly not among museum professionals, but among the general public, both in Namibia and in Germany – that museum objects from Namibia in German museums are mostly a result of the genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908. This misconception is certainly due to the much publicised demand for reparations for the genocide, which is without doubt the most devastating and consequential event in the 30 years of German colonial rule over Namibia. It however obscures the consideration and examination of other provenance contexts – some less violent but nevertheless problematic, others just as violent but largely forgotten and under-researched.

The subject of this contribution, the Belt of Kahimemua, was alienated in a much earlier conflict, the war against the Ovambanderu and /Khauan in 1896. This war was only one in a series of twelve wars, “punitive expeditions” and “police operations” the Germans waged against Namibian communities between 1893-1903, however next to the Witbooi War of 1893-1894 the largest of all these campaigns. The Ovambanderu, an independent subgroup of the Ovaherero under the *omuhona* Kahimemua Nguvauva, had solicited the support of a neighbouring Nama group, the /Khauan, and risen against German land grabs and cattle theft.

This resulted in an all-out war with the Germans, the defeat of Ovambanderu and /Khauan, the confiscation of land and cattle, the deportation of a substantial section of their people to Windhoek as forced labourers, and the execution of their leaders Kahimemua and Nikodemus.

The contribution highlights the genesis of this conflict, the private appropriation of Kahimemua's cartridge belt as war booty by the prominent German settler and businessman Gustav Voigts, and its subsequent museum deposit in Vogts' home town Braunschweig. Allegedly deposited together with Kahimemua's gun (which could so far not be verified), it was seen by Voigts as a symbol of the German victory and his own participation in that war, but apparently also as a testimony to the indigenous dexterity in leatherwork, as he emphasized that the belt was no European product but "native handiwork". It further deals with the role of Kahimemua not only as political leader, but with his spiritual-religious significance as an ancestor and prophet in his time. This function was neither recognised nor appreciated by the contemporary Germans, but is amply documented in Mbanderu oral history texts that were recorded seventy years later by a German missionary. The subsequent history of the Ovambanderu people in Botswana exile, and their re-establishment as a community distinct from other Ovaherero in Namibia since 1952, is briefly traced.

Finally, the significance of the cartridge belt beyond its merely utilitarian function as a weapons accessory will be explored. This issue concerns the central importance of fire-arms and accessories in the constitution of Ovaherero society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a "gun society" (Henrichsen). It also concerns its present significance for the Mbanderu community, not as a simple artefact but as a symbol of identity and ancestral connection, and its possible function as a surrogate replacement of the ancestral destroyed by Kahimemua himself in a prophetic act.



**Werner Hillebrecht** studied chemistry and qualified as a nurse before switching to an information science career. In the context of the German anti-apartheid movement, he started to document literature and archival sources about Namibia to assist historical research and the studies of Namibians being educated in exile. Since 40 years, he is involved in this work, and has used over 100 libraries and archives in Europe and Africa. He worked for the Centre for African Studies (CAS/CASS) of Bremen University (1986-1991) and moved to Namibia with independence in 1990, where from 1992 he was employed at the National Archives of Namibia, then the National Library, and again for the National Archives which he led as Chief Archivist until retirement in 2015. He is researching and has published several articles about aspects of German colonial in Namibia, as well as bibliographies. Since his retirement, he works as a history and heritage consultant, in close cooperation with the National Archives and the Museums Association of Namibia, and is involved in provenance research and repatriation activities.

**Sylvie Njobati** (Sysy House of Fame, Bamenda):

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

The devastating aftermath of German colonial rule remains visible in the Nso community today rooted in German's interest to show off colonial conquest by keeping hostage the captured statue of the Ngonnso, founder of the Nso people stolen in an expedition in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial times. This conversation focuses on the efforts made by the people of Nso people to request the restitution, how the Nso people are preparing to welcome Ngonnso, what the return mean to the people and the challenges faced. Despite being the victims of colonialism, the people of Nso are willing to have meaningful and participatory dialogues and actions towards possible reconciliation. However, the response of the Germans is proof that they do not want to take any responsibility or remorse for their actions, and are 'reluctant' to accept the hand extended by the Nso people for Dialogue and reconciliation.



**Sylvie Njobati** is a film maker (2016-18 „*Draufsicht Bamenda*“, Programme of Solidarity Service International Germany), founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Sysy House of Fame Arts and Culture for Sustainable Development organisation in Bamenda. She has a BSc in Sustainable Development and Business Management from The ICT University Cameroon. Since 2018/19 she has been coordinating a Colonial Dialogue and reconciliation at the Sysy House of Fame and serving as the national Coordinator of Street Arts Federation Ministry of Arts and Culture in Cameroon. In March 2021 she has founded the „*Bring back Ngonnso*“ campaign.



**Panel “Cooperation Projects on Cameroonian Collections. Experiences and Perspectives”**

**Chair:** Thomas Laely, University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich

The cooperation between museums with non-European collections and individuals or institutions from so-called societies of origin has gained new relevance in the debate on how to deal with ethnographic collections from the colonial period. It has become a fundamental part of postcolonial provenance research.

Cooperation projects can take various forms and pursue different objectives. They can enable joint working on collections, the joint reappraisal of “shared histories” and thus an examination of the colonial past from the perspective of both the descendants of the colonised and the colonisers. Other topics include questions of representation, the renegotiation of property, the opening of collections and post-colonial museum work. Negotiation processes and the exchange of different perspectives are always central aspects: How do perceptions of the objects and individual ideas on coming to terms with the colonial past differ? What interests exist on the side of the societies of origin and on the side of European museums? What are the perspectives for the future handling of colonial collections or their reinterpretation? How can results be transferred into public discourse?

Challenges exist not only in terms of unequal expectations, access to the collections and the availability of resources, but also in terms of the sustainability of projects. How can we overcome postcolonial power relations and establish cooperations in a sustainable manner? What future forms and orientations can they take? What types of cooperations are desirable, what can they achieve, where are their limits and what is needed beyond provenance research? Based on selected cooperative projects, the panel will discuss what opportunities and challenges exist in cooperative work and how these can achieve consistency and permanence.

**Thomas Laely** (University of Zurich, former Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich)



Thomas Laely is a Swiss cultural anthropologist with a focus on museology, political anthropology and African studies. He has been the Deputy Director of the Ethnographic Museum at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, from 2010-2019. In previous years he was active in international arts promotion, 1994–2010, establishing and directing the International Department of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Currently, Laely is concentrating on issues of the history and perspectives of ethnological museums, particularly the exploration of new practices of collaboration between cultural history museums in Europe and Africa, and is part of an ongoing Ugandan-Swiss museum cooperation.

**Joseph Ebune & Ngome Elvis Nkome** (University of Buea) & **Karin Guggeis** (Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich): *Entangled Objects, Entangled Histories. A Collaborative Provenance Research on a Heterogeneous Colonial-Era Collection*

This paper focusses a collaborative and transdisciplinary German-Cameroonian provenance research on a colonial-era collection at Museum Fünf Kontinente. Funded by the German Centre for the Loss of Cultural Property and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, the Max von Stetten Collection is researched from a German and Cameroonian perspective for two years. The colonial officer von Stetten was involved in several military actions in leading positions between 1891 and 1896, i.e. in the early phase of the seizure of Cameroon by the German Empire. In addition to the kind of the acquisition situations and the acquisition places, the project uses the person of Max von Stetten as an example to explore the entangled history between Germany and Cameroon during this phase of colonial expansion. However, the project is not only focused on the past, but also on the present and on future developments. A particular focus is on the significance of the objects today for the descendants of the communities of origin and on the emerging discourse on the future handling of looted property and sensitive cultural assets in particular. In the interest of post-colonial provenance research, intensive cooperation with both academic partners in Cameroon and the descendants of the communities of origin is therefore indispensable. In this pilot project, however, there are no blueprints to fall back on. Other challenges such as the global Corona crisis or the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon are also discussed.



**Joseph B. Ebune** is an associate Professor of African History and Civilizations at the Department of History, University of Buea. He currently serves as Deputy Director at the Higher Technical Teacher’s Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea. His research interest cuts across colonial rule, African systems of thoughts, culture and cultural patrimony of Cameroon from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras with focus on African arts, cultures and believes systems. Prof. Ebune has a wealth of research and teaching experiences of

African History spanning over 20 years in addition to several publications to his credits. Apart from being a senior University administrator, he has attended and facilitated at high-level conferences, seminars and symposia in Cameroon and abroad.



**Ngome Elvis Nkome** recently defended his Ph.D in History from the Department of History, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. Before his recruitment as Research Assistant for the Anglophone Region within the context of the on-going Provenance Research on Germany-Cameroon relations, specifically, on Max von Stetten's collections, has been Part-Time Lecturer at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. His research interests are in the fields of culture history, African arts and the Cameroon-German/ European influences during colonial period and beyond. He has published articles in reviewed and peer review journals as well as attended conferences, workshops and Seminars in Cameroon, Kenya, and Nigeria in recent years.



**Karin Guggeis** is the overall director of the provenance research project *"The 'Blue Rider Post' and the Max von Stetten Collection (1893 - 1896) from Cameroon"* at Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. She worked at this museum for 27 years in various fields. She has co-curated several exhibitions on Africa as well as a large exhibition on football as a global phenomenon. The ethnologist's research focuses on provenance research, African art, the African art market, globalisation and racism.

**Rachel Mariembe** (Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala at Nkongsamba) & **Isabella Bozsa** (Municipal Museum Brunswick/ PAESE-project): *Re-engaging with an Ethnographic Collection from Colonial Cameroon through Collaborative Provenance Research*

In the framework of the joint research project PAESE, various forms of collaborative provenance research on the ethnographic collection at the Municipal Museum of Brunswick were realised. The research focuses on objects originating from the West, South- and Northwest Region of Cameroon brought to Germany by Kurt Strümpell. His involvement as a colonial officer in colonial wars – so-called expeditions –, raises questions about the circumstances of the collecting process. Another important issue to address is the lack of information in the museum's documentation of the object's provenance as well as their function and significance during colonial times. Likewise, the significance of the objects for descendants at the former collecting locations as well as their future handling have to be taken into account.

In this paper, Rachel Mariembe and Isabella Bozsa present different approaches of re-engaging with the collection from a colonial context. We analyse the process of establishing our cooperation, discuss fruitful or difficult forms of collaborative provenance research and their outcomes. The biggest difficulty for our international work since March 2020 is the pandemic. Currently, we try to continue our cooperation virtually and develop together a possible engagement with the collection's artefacts in the future. From two perspectives, we reflect upon the potential of collaborative research for decolonial approaches in museum practices and postcolonial provenance research.



**Rachel Mariembe** is the Head of Department (a.i.) of Heritage and Museum Studies at the Institute of Fine Art of the University of Douala in Nkongsamba. As archaeologist, curator, museographer, she led the inventory of tangible heritage in 17 chiefdoms in West Cameroon, and participated in the realization of exhibitions in 7 Community museums known as *"Case Patrimoniales"* and at the Museum of Civilization, where she was Deputy Director from 2009-2013. Today Dr. Mariembe is Associate Curator of the Route des Chefferies exhibition, currently under development, at the Quai Branly Jacques-Chirac Museum entitled *"On the Road to the Chiefdoms of Cameroon: From visible to invisible"*. She is also a national expert on the development of the UNESCO World Heritage site for the slave trade of Bimbia on the coast of Southwest Cameroon.



**Isabella Bozsa** is a provenance researcher at the Municipal Museum in Brunswick in the PAESE-project. Her PhD at the African History Department of the Leibniz University Hanover focuses on (post)colonial acquisition histories and meanings of a collection from Cameroon (<https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/paese/teilprojekte/sammlung-struempell/?lang=en>). From 2013 to 2019 she held different positions at the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB). As part of a fellowship at the MKB, she analysed the history and origin of the Basel Mission Collection from Cameroon and India. She studied Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology, Tibetology, Gender Studies and Religious Studies at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the University of Basel.

**Silvia Forni** (Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum) & **Hervé Youmbi** (Visual Artist, Cameroon): *Serendipitous Intersections and Long Term-Dialogue: Art Making and Research as Collaborative Exchanges*

Art making and academic research tend to be conceived of as separate domains. Artists channel their reflections and inspiration in the making of an artwork. Researchers, in turn, analyze this work as specialized observers somewhat removed from the creative process. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art, boundaries are never so clear cut as interpersonal relationships create unexpected intersections that may transform both art-making process and research.

Our presentation reflects on over a decade of dialogue between an artist (Hervé Youmbi) and a researcher (Silvia Forni). While, in many ways, our relationship is hard to frame as a straightforward "collaboration"- in that we never really worked on a project together – our shared interest in unpacking and complicating the ideas of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" in art production meaningfully impacted the work each one of us does. In particular, we will reflect on the development of Youmbi's ongoing series *Visages des Masques*, and how our common focus on the idea of contemporary traditions led us both to think about and work with artists and workshops in the Cameroonian Grassfields along parallel trajectories and occasional but always fruitful points of intersections.



**Silvia Forni** is Senior Curator of Global Africa, and Deputy Head of the Department of Art & Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Her research focuses on the significance of art objects and material culture both in local contexts and as part of global exchange networks. She is the author of numerous essays and book chapter. Among her recent publications is the volume *Africa in the Market. 20th Century art from the Amrad African Art Collection*. (2015) edited with Christopher B. Steiner, and *Art, Honor, and Ridicule: Fante Asafo Flags from Southern Ghana* (2017), co-authored with Doran H. Ross.



Born in the Central African Republic in 1973 and raised in neighboring Cameroon, **Hervé Youmbi** is a visual artist working and living in Douala. He is a founding member of the *Cercle Kapsiki*, a collective of five Cameroonian artists, founded in 1998. His work presents African-centered reflections on the power of both internal and external frameworks, questioning the operations of political, economic, and cultural forces. Youmbi often integrates traditional Cameroonian sculpture techniques within his installations and into performance and video. This allows him to juxtapose indigenous African art traditions with contemporary global art conventions, and to destabilize what is regarded as “traditional” versus “contemporary.”

### **Panel “Hidden Objects - Sensitive and Restricted Objects in Museum Collections. Issues Surrounding their Storage, Access, Consultations, and Potential Repatriation”**

**Chair:** Mareike Späth, State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project

A small group of objects in museum collections are today categorised as sensitive and/ or restricted objects, as access to, and knowledge of, such objects may be heavily restricted and strictly managed in the communities of origin. This may also apply to knowledge and documentation details associated with such objects and contained in museum records. From the 1980s onwards, increasing awareness of ethical and moral considerations regarding such sensitivities in a post-colonial museum environment resulted in secret/sacred objects being removed from exhibitions and general public access. Having removed sensitive objects from public access, and receiving an increasing number of requests for information and object repatriation, how will museums manage such objects in the future? In a post-colonial museum framework, dealing with sensitive, restricted, secret/ sacred objects and knowledge poses problems for museums and provenance researchers.

How can a meaningful dialogue with communities of origin be established? How are communities of origin identified? How are current authoritative custodians within those communities identified, who have traditional rights to the restricted objects and knowledge, particularly where knowledge restrictions involve political implications within the communities of origin? How can traditional custodians, once identified, be effectively consulted about restricted matters? How can their instructions/ needs be effectively accommodated and implemented in a museum environment? Can museums commit, from the outset, to implement custodians’ instructions, even when the repatriation of the objects is requested (repatriation of control in the first instance)? What are the legal and procedural implications in Germany vs. in the country of origin?

This panel will discuss the issues surrounding the future management of restricted Objects and knowledge in museum collections. It will draw on findings of the PAESE sub-project on central Australian Tjurunga (secret/ sacred Objects), as well as other examples and experiences, and present possible consultation guidelines and repatriation processes for Australian secret/ sacred objects.

**Mareike Späth** (State Museum Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Mareike Späth is currently curator for the ethnographic collection at the State Museum Hanover. She studied Ethnology, African Studies and Public Law at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. As research assistant at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, she focussed her work on questions of historiography and heritage-making. As

part of various academic projects, she worked in East and West Africa, particularly in Tanzania and Madagascar. In 2018, she took up a position as curatorial assistant for the African collection at the Museum am Rothenbaum in Hamburg before joining the State Museum Hanover in 2020. She is a member of the Arbeitskreis Provenienzforschung where, since 2020, she acts as spokesperson for the Working Group Colonial Provenances. She is also member of the AG Museums at the German Anthropological Association and the network Colonial Contexts.

**Michael Pickering** (Senior Repatriation Advisor, National Museum of Australia; Honorary Associate Professor, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University): *First Principles*

The more distant a collection is from its cultures of origin, the harder it is to apply culturally appropriate processes for its use and management. This is of particular impact in the area of repatriation. While collections managers may have close relationships with certain communities that have been the subject of their personal research, they often have little detailed knowledge of other distant cultures and communities. As a result, when working on a repatriation issue they are often at a loss to know where to start and what to watch out for.

This paper describes the general methodologies applied in the repatriation of central Australian secret/sacred objects as applied at the National Museum of Australia. This should serve as an introductory guide to foreign collectors and collecting institutions seeking to initial repatriation of such objects.



**Michael Pickering** is Senior Repatriation Advisor with the National Museum of Australia. He is an Honorary Associate Professor with the Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is on the editorial boards of the journals 'Museum Management and Curatorship' and 'Museums and Social Issues'. Pickering's research interests and publications include archaeology, anthropology, material culture, cannibalism, settlement patterns, exhibitions, ethics and repatriation.

**Iain G. Johnson** (Senior Researcher on the Return of Cultural Heritage Program) & **Shaun Angelis Penangke** (Return of Cultural Heritage Program): *Living in their Hands. The International Repatriation of Sensitive and Restricted Men's Objects to Australia*

Since 2018, AIATSIS has led the repatriation of sensitive and restricted men's objects to seven Aboriginal communities across central and northern Australia from overseas collecting institutions, and continues to work with some of those Senior Men who have requested further research concerning their material. After identifying the material and consulting with those Custodians, every group of Senior Male Custodians we have partnered with have requested the return of this type of material from overseas collecting institutions.

This situation is at odds with some publications concerning the repatriation of sacred material in the Australian domestic context. In this paper, we aim to address why this type of material must come back to Australia and the impact it has on custodians when it comes home. In our discussion, we aim to touch upon aspects of the long history of repatriating men's sacred material within the Australian domestic space and compare this with our own experiences of undertaking international repatriation and consultation about this type of material.



**Iain G. Johnston** is a Senior Researcher in the Return of Cultural Heritage Program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

A role he also held in the Return of Cultural Heritage Pilot Project. Johnston's major research focus is community-based rock art projects in Kakadu and western Arnhem Land and his publications concern archaeology, ethnography, rock art, ritual and repatriation.



**Shaun Angeles Penangke** is an Arrernte man from Ayampe, located approximately 70 kilometres north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in the Central Desert of Australia. He has worked in repatriation for the past nine years primarily at the Strehlow Research Centre, Mparntwe, with an important collection of secret sacred objects, audio-visual material and archival records relating to numerous language groups across Central Australia. He is now with the Return of Cultural Heritage program at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, a program focussing on the return of cultural heritage material from international collecting institutions.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** (Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon): *Exhibiting Grassfields Restricted Objects in Museums Ruptures, Dilemmas and Challenges of Restitution*

The stratification of most African societies, the role of secret customary practices and the primacy of the *invisible over the visible*, gave rise to what peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields call restricted objects. Known for their attributes as power objects, access to them is limited to *initiates*, their exposure closely tied to taboos and their functions religious. They each have a soul and spiritual meaning. They are born, they live and die. (VB Ngitir, 2017). On account of their religious functions, restricted exposure and symbolisms within various customary societies, their alienation by colonial agents since the 1890s, and eventual appropriation by Western museums in Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, New York, London, and other cities have created multiple ruptures both at sources and destinations. In Cameroon, the crusade for their restitution began in the 1970s, climaxed in the 1990s but remains fruitless. Hinged on the theory of *functional conservation*, (AO Konare, 1995) this paper situates the alienation of Grassfields power objects, obstacles to their public exhibition and prospects for restitution. Its central question is: *“What ruptures surround the alienation and exhibition of these objects and how prospective is their restitution?”* Our methodology blends oral tradition, qualitative data and participatory observation, analyzed on the basis of chronology, content and the *conservation debate*.



**Victor Bayena Ngitir** was born in Victoria, Cameroon. He did basic high school and University education in Kumbo, Nkambe and Yaoundé respectively. He obtained the BA, MA and Post-graduate diploma in history and in 2014, a PhD in art history and museum studies. He was high school teacher of history for 20 years before joining the University of Douala in 2017. He has carried out extensive ethnographic research on Grassfields palace museums. He is senior lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. His research interests are

art history, archives and cultural heritage and community museums.

**Panel “Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance”**

**Chair:** Christoph-Eric Mecke, Leibniz –University Hanover/ PAESE-project

Provenance research is not an end in itself, but always leads in the end to the question of how to deal in the future with objects of clarified or – much more frequently – no longer sufficiently ascertainable colonial provenance history. In the search for consistent answers to this question, norms play a central role. They range from legally enforceable norms (hard law), which are still the exception in the field of decolonisation, to norms whose socio-political effectiveness is based on the collective self-commitment of the actors concerned, for example through resolutions and guidelines (soft law), to ethical norms of behaviour by which each individual is guided individually or group-specifically.

A fundamental problem, however, is still a largely missing interculturality of most – also international – norms, procedures and negotiation processes between the representatives of owning institutions in Europe and those of the societies of origin. Their indigenous legal thinking and their ethical norm systems in the present and in history have been largely ignored so far. In addition, the negotiation processes, which are only now slowly beginning on a broad front on a legal, political and civil society level with a delay of over a hundred years, pose another problem: in the societies of origin, the question of their historically, politically and legally legitimate representation in dialogue with the descendants of the European colonisers is becoming increasingly controversial. These and other questions can only be adequately discussed in intercultural dialogue.

Based on selected different cases from collections of colonial provenances, the panel will subject the existing systems of norms as well as legal and non-legal procedural solutions practised to date to a critical intercultural review. On this basis, possible options for action ranging from the permanent return to the permanent whereabouts of the objects will be discussed together in a second step. In a third step, options for action that are not only generalisable from a European point of view, but also include deviating indigenous norms of law, religion and culture, can lead to recommendations for further development of existing hard and soft law in the area of tension between law and intercultural justice.



**Christoph-Eric Mecke** (Leibniz University Hanover/ PAESE-project)



Legal scholar; studies of law, history and sociology at the universities of Passau, Tours (France) and Göttingen. Fellow of the Lower Saxony Grant program; 2007 PhD at the University of Göttingen; 2008–2017 research assistant at the universities of Göttingen, Hildesheim and Hanover; 2010–2012 Managing Director of the research project “*Family Law in Early Women’s Rights Debates. Western Europe and the United States in the 19th and early 20th centuries*” at the Leibniz Universität Hanover funded by the German Research Foundation; 2018/2019 research assistant at the University of Wolfenbüttel (Ostfalia. Brunswick European Law School), lecturer at the Leibniz Universität Hanover; 2019 habilitation at the University of Wrocław (Poland). Research in the field of legal theory and legal history especially of the 19th century, history of women’s rights, German and Polish private law, comparative law in Europe. Publications in German, English, French and Polish

**Chief Charles A. Taku** (President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA), Trustee and member for life of Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA): *The Legal and Moral Conscience of Justice in the European Collection of Colonial Provenance: The Bangwa Quest for Restitution and Reparations*

The topic of this conference Law versus Justice? An Intercultural Approach to the Problem of European Collections of Colonial Provenance is at the heart of a lively but difficult debate in Africa. I have been involved in that debate since 1991. This debate should not be difficult due to the fact that the provenance of the arts in the European Collections is not in serious controversy, the debate appears not only difficult but complicated. This complication arises from the capricious nature of law which is both a bane and a balm in resolving the matter in controversy. As a great grandson of one of Africa’s historic Kings, His Majesty Fontem Asonganyi whose artefacts are on display in the European Collections,

I am fully conscious of the circumstances under which the Bangwa Queen and our other precious arts were collected by German expeditionary forces during the pendency of a punitive military campaign on February 8, 1900 which lasted nine years to avenge the death of a German citizen. An acquisition in these circumstances, cannot be deemed legal under any circumstance; although colonial rule under which the punitive expedition and the appropriation of the arts occurred, deemed it legal. Africa and European colonial powers were not subjects of international law. Under the laws and customs of war and the principle of proportionality the degree of devastation that was caused and the looting that occurred cannot be deemed legal. Not then and not now. There may be a distinction between arts which were procured through commercial transactions with some African monarchs and people and those which were acquired by the use of force. The laws under colonial rule which are still applicable in some African countries, did not paint these situations with the same brush. Each situation must, therefore, be considered on its merit. The museums in which the European collections are on display have consistently pointed to the historical record in their possession to assert and defend their rights of ownership. The right of ownership may not be settled by the historical record alone. The validity of such records while acknowledged, is no longer as conclusive as it was during the colonial era when it was established.

The original owners did not participate in the establishment of the record. The civilized world is conscious that, the partition of Africa among European colonial powers provided a justification for violations in which these arts were appropriated. The appropriation of these arts was an integral part of colonial policy. The former colonial masters are, therefore, not innocent bystanders on this matter. Persons who appropriated the arts were their agents. They bear primary responsibility for the appropriation and for the return of the arts to their legitimate owners. European Collections are part of African heritage and patrimony. The museums in which these arts are on display did not directly appropriate or loot them. The laws of individual colonial countries guaranteed them property rights over this African patrimony. This included the Bangwa Queen, the Bangwa King and the personal symbols of power and authority of my great grandfather. International law expects state parties to respect their treaty obligation, especially obligations towards former colonies at independence and thereafter. Former colonial powers have done little to encourage dialogue between contesting parties in the European collections. They have not paid reparations and restituted these arts to the rightful owners. They have not encouraged or organized intercultural discussions to resolve contesting claims. This conference offers an opportunity to begin a discussion which many of the museums and private holders have hesitated to engage in.

The fact that I have come forth more than a century and two decades after the German punitive expedition to seek the restitution and the payment of reparations for our arts establishes the fact that our cry for justice will not abate. I recognize the fact that the capricious nature of law makes the exploration of other means of attaining justice, worthwhile. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee adopted Resolution 20002/5 of August 12, 2002 on the recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery, colonialism, and wars of conquest. The resolution recommended other avenues of obtaining justice without going through costly litigation. In its point 3, the resolution requested all countries concerned to acknowledge their historical responsibility and the consequences which follow from it to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate on the basis of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest and the necessity of just reparation. The United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee in this resolution recognized state responsibility in providing a solution to this and other historical wrongs.

The intercultural approach which is on discussion in this conference appears attractive and should be sufficiently explored. It can offer an avenue and perspective for the realisation of the goals of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee which I share. The intercultural approach will provide the opportunity for the contestants to the European Collection to present a new image and message to a world which represents the true face of humanity on this matter. It may provide an opportunity for Dapper Foundation in France, the National Museum in Berlin across European others to provide us access to our spiritual symbols and our symbols of power which are their custody.



**Chief Charles A. Taku** is a certified leading international law expert of forty years professional and trial experience. He provides legal representation for governments, victims and accused persons before international courts and tribunals. He is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA) and a Trustee and member for life of the Executive Governing Council of the African Bar Association (AfBA). As President ICCBA, Chief Taku addressed the plenary of the ICC during the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute on July 17, 2018 and the Assembly of State Parties

Conference on 6 December 2018 in the Hague, Netherlands. Over the last two decades, he represented clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha Tanzania. Chief Taku (HRH Fuatabong Achaleke Taku) is a traditional Chief in Lebang, Bangwa Fontem. He is a great grandson of His Majesty the legendary King, Fontem Asonganyi (1840- 1951) the King of the Bangwa-Fontem Tribe in West Africa.

**Evelien Campfens** (Museum, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University): *Whose Cultural Objects? A Human Rights Law Approach to Claims*

A common response to the issue of colonial looting is that no legal rules apply. But is that so? This paper argues that it is not a lack of legal norms that explains this (belated) discussion but, rather, the asymmetrical application of norms. Moreover, it suggests that a human rights law approach to claims, focusing on the heritage aspect of cultural objects, offers tools to structure this field. To illustrate these points, a case concerning an African ancestral sculpture will be assessed on its merits under international law.

Cultural objects have a special, protected, status because of their intangible 'heritage' value to people, as symbols of an identity since the first days of international law. Despite this, throughout history, cultural objects were looted, smuggled and traded on. At some point, their character tends to change from protected heritage to valuable art or commodity in a new setting, subject to the (private) laws in the country where it ended up. This paper proposes that, irrespective of acquired rights of new possessors, original owners or creators should still be able to rely on a 'heritage title' if there is a continuing cultural link. The term aims to capture the legal bond between cultural objects and people, distinct from ownership, and is informed by universally applicable human rights law norms, such as the right of everybody to (access one's) culture. A human rights law approach to claims implicates a shift in focus from past events to present-day interests; that the rights involved are defined in terms of access, control or return - not merely in terms of absolute ownership rights; and the classification of cultural objects depending on their social function and heritage value.



Evelien Campfens is a lawyer specialised in cultural heritage law. Since June 2020 she holds a post-doc position with the Museums, Collections and Society Research Group of Leiden University. After a position at the Dutch Restitutions Committee for Nazi looted art (2001-2016) she joined Leiden University (Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies) in relation to her PhD research. She is research coordinator of the [Heritage Under Threat group](#) of the LED Centre for Global Heritage and Development; a member [Committee on Participation in Global Cultural Heritage Governance](#) of the International Law Association; and a member of the Ethics Committee of the Dutch Museum Association ([Ethische Codecommissie](#)).

**Naazima Kamardeen** (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo): *The Shifting Goalpost. A Colonial Perspective on Cultural Property*

The issue of cultural property has evoked partisan feelings in the minds of both those who retain it, and those from whom it has been taken. With the rise of human rights jurisprudence and the corresponding affirmation of cultural rights as part of that discourse, the retention of cultural property that was taken by means legal at the time, yet illegal by modern standards (and unjust by any reasonable yardstick) continues to be a matter of deep concern to many countries including Sri Lanka, which was colonised by three European nations over a period of almost five hundred years.

In ascertaining the possible legal arguments for and against the original taking and current retention of cultural property, it is argued that the operative system of international law during the heyday of European colonialism was created by Europe itself, and served its expansionist agenda. The positivist thrust of international law, elucidated by European jurists, supported the view that the ruler was always right and that the law was what the ruler said it was, enabled invasion, looting, taxation of the population to fund invasion, and the taking of war booty.

With the ending of the Second World War, and the subsequent affirmation of human rights, the positivist agenda was no longer tenable, and therefore the goalpost was shifted yet again, to the position that previous takings were legal, but future takings would not be. Prescriptive periods impossible to be met by newly independent states were also set, again by the very nations who were the perpetrators, which effectively ensured that previously taken cultural property would not be returnable. The most recent example of shifting the goalpost is the false hope given that restitution will be made provided that the provenance can be established, even though it is well known that documentation of this type has not been made in most cases, especially when the property was indiscriminately looted. Against this backdrop, the legal basis for the return of cultural property taken in colonial times has been negated, and what is left is to appeal to a sense of justice, that the taking was wrong, whatever the legal regime at the time dictated, and that the historical injustice must be corrected even at this late stage, if we are to achieve global harmony. However, this does not seem to have had much impact, especially where the collections have economic potential.



Naazima Kamardeen holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. She has authored two books, *“Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?”* published in 2016, and *“Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka”* published in 2019.

**Matthias Goldmann** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law): *Imperial Law’s Ambiguity*

In the course of the past decades, numerous states and communities in the Global South have raised claims for restitution and reparation against former imperial powers. According to a popular view, many of these claims are ill-founded from a legal perspective. According to the principle of intertemporal law, reference is to be made to the law of the imperial past, and it is believed that reparation and restitution claims find no basis in it. This conventional view of imperial law has been criticized, notably by critical theories of law, for entrenching imperial injustice. Surprisingly though, it has rarely been seriously questioned. Many advocates of the conventional view and many of their critics consider imperial law as a monolithic, unequivocal, and impervious means for the defense of imperial interests.

This paper challenges both views. On the basis of insights from postcolonial theory, it argues that imperial law of the 19th century is fundamentally ambiguous. In that sense, imperial law reflects the contradictions pervading imperial projects and the irritations caused by imperial encounters. Imperial law served as a means to justify an imperial expansion that was met with different feelings from an increasingly democratic domestic audience, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement, via benign ignorance, to, although rarely, outright skepticism. It also had to navigate complex patterns of diverging interests in the territories subject to European expansion, taking into account the constraints imposed by limited resources.

The conventional view eclipses the resulting ambiguity by oscillating between the normative and the factual, by taking the brutality of imperial power as evidence of legality. Far from exculpating imperial law from its instrumental role in facilitating the European expansion, the paper calls for recognizing the ambiguity of imperial law and for investigating the fuzziness, gaps, and contradictions in legal arguments establishing title to imperial artefacts in Western states, or the rejection of restitution claims. Drawing on a few examples of imperial artefacts situated in Germany, it demonstrates how the mentioned ambiguities undermine legal title. This has repercussions for the role assigned to law in debates and negotiations about the restitution of imperial artefacts. It raises the question whether legal provenance research might help to rebalance structurally asymmetric negotiations.



Matthias Goldmann is Junior Professor of Public International Law and Financial Law at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Senior Research Affiliate at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Associate Member of the Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, and Co-Editor-in-Chief, German Law Journal. Since 2018: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute (part time); since 2016: Junior

Professor of International Public Law and Financial Law at [Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (full time). On parental leave for 6 months in 2017; 2016: Visiting fellow, Law Department, London School of Economics and Political Science; 2013-2016: Coordinator of the [research group](#) “The Exercise of International Public Authority”, [Cluster of Excellence “Formation of Normative Orders”](#), Goethe University Frankfurt; 2013: Dr. iur., Heidelberg University, Faculty of Law ([thesis](#)); 2011-2016: Senior Research Fellow at the Institute; 2011: New York University School of Law, LL.M. in Legal Theory (Hans Kelsen Scholar); 2010: Second State Exam in Law (Land of Hesse); 2008-2009: Visiting fellowships at the European University Institute, Florence, and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University; 2004-2011: Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute (with Armin von Bogdandy); 2004: Legal Intern at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania); 2004: First State Exam in Law (Free State of Bavaria); Diploma in European Law (University of Würzburg); 1998-2004: Studies in Law in Würzburg (Germany) and Fribourg (Switzerland)-

## Closing Session

**Chair:** Richard Tsogang Fossi, University of Dschang/ Technical University Berlin

The final panel shall revisit and discuss key questions that have come to light during the conference or in the course of the work and collaborations in the PAESE-project. What has proven to be a successful approach? Where is criticism appropriate and are there any suggestions for improvement in the future? The panel guests shall be exclusively partners from the countries of origin. The organizers of the project shall limit themselves to the role of listeners.

**Richard Tsogang Fossi** (University of Dschang/Technical University Berlin)



Richard Tsogang Fossi holds a PhD in German Studies (Literature, Colonial History and Memory). He is a Teacher Guest Lecturer at the University of Dschang in Cameroon. From 2016 and 2021 participation in research projects to transnational German/Cameroonian memory topographies (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), to Textbooks as Media of Colonial Memory/Aphasia (Georg-Eckert Institut Braunschweig), to the exhibition project „Hey! Kennst Du Rodolf Duala Manga Bell?“ (MARKK, Hamburg). Presently Postdoc Research Fellow in the research project „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture

from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by Prof. Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).

## Participants:

**Flower Manase, Tanzania** (National Museum of Tanzania)



Flower Manase is the curator at the National Museum of Tanzania. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and Archaeology and Msc. in Natural Resources Assessment and Management both from the University of Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase has worked with the National Museum and House of Culture since 2009 as the curator of history. She is the head of collections management department at the Museum and House of Culture since 2017. Ms. Manase has curated national and international exhibitions including the exhibition project of “The role

of Tanzania to liberation movement of Southern African Countries” titled “Road to independence” hosted at the museum in Dar es Salaam. Ms. Manase is currently working on numerous provenance research projects of colonial collections in German and Tanzania such as “The collaborative research project between the German and Tanzania institutions” i.e. (National Museum of Tanzania, Ethnological Museum in Berlin (SPK), University of Dar es Salaam and Humboldt University) funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** (National Museum Windhoek)



**Nzila Marina Libanda-Mubusisi** has a Master in World Heritage and Cultural Projects for Development (University of Turin, Italy), a Postgraduate Diploma in Heritage Conservation and Management (University of Namibia) Bachelor of Technology Degree (Namibia University of Science and Technology) and a Diploma in Human Resource Management Business Management (Training College of Southern Africa, South Africa). She is a heritage professional, researcher, cultural economist and has 24 years of work experience in the public service of Namibia. She is currently working as the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Namibia, since 2009. She coordinated the repatriation of Namibian Heritage through appropriate channels and is serving in various ministerial and intergovernmental committees such the Namibia Human Remains and Management Committee, the working group for the revision of the Arts and Culture Policy, the National Committee Member for Education, Arts and Culture Policy Analyst or the Culture Programme Committee of the Namibia’s National Commission for UNESCO.

**Albert Gouaffo** (Professor for German literature and Culture Studies, Intercultural Communication, at the University of Dschang, Cameroon)



Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and cultural studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the Université de Dschang in Western Cameroon He is Vice-President of the Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS). His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural objects stolen during German colonisation. His current book is “Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns” (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019). One of his current research projects is „Reverse Collections’ Stories. Art and Culture from Cameroon in German Museums“, directed by him and Prof. Bénédicte Savoy (Technical University Berlin).



**Tommy Yaulin Buga** (Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby)



Tommy Yaulin Buga works at the National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea as the Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. After graduating in Port Moresby, Tommy Yaulin Buga moved to Perth, Australia, and worked as a Refurbishment Officer at the Australian Regional Council. In 2014 he returned to PNG and began his career in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Since then, he has been caring for objects and became Senior Technical Officer in the Anthropology Department. In this position he manages the manifold objects of the ethnographic collections by for example cataloging, doing inventory and organizing storage. Tommy regularly participates in fieldtrips assigned by the management to enforce the National Cultural

Property Act to the Sepik regions, which are home to him. There he works with communities helping to raise awareness for the importance of collections and also collecting objects for the museum. Within the PNG-Aus Partnership at the National Museum he also contributed to research and the installation of exhibits connecting objects with, as he says, *“the stories embedded in the rich culture of my people”*.

**The objectives of the PAESE-project are**

- basic research on the ways in which ethnological or ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony were acquired, as well as research on related issues in the participating institutions,
- networking and cooperation with representatives of the respective societies of origin,
- the establishment of networks regarding provenance research on collections from colonial contexts. These networks are to include not only research conducted in Lower Saxony but also comparable projects in the German-speaking and other European countries,
- Transparency and initiation of a dialogue about the origin of the objects and their future handling, based on accessibility of the collections under research to all interested parties.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/>

**The PAESE-database**

The PAESE-database documents the object collections that are being examined within the subprojects at the State Museum Hanover, the Ethnological Collection and the Department of History, Georg August University Göttingen, the State Museum Nature and Man Oldenburg, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim, the Municipal Museum Brunswick and Evangelical-Lutheran Mission of Lower-Saxony, Hermannsburg. The focus is on the documentation of the provenance of the objects. The information provided represents the current or most recent state of research and is continuously supplemented.

The network partners strive for the greatest possible transparency. In justified exceptional cases, we refrain from publicly displaying images for moral-ethical or legal reasons. This is done in coordination with our colleagues and partners from the so-called countries of origin.

**Learn more on:** <https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/datenbank/>

**Credits:**

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Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation & with by the Lower Saxon Ministry for Science and Culture (“aus Mitteln des Niedersächsischen Vorab”)