

CATALOG

GÖTTINGEN COLONIAL

1870 – 1945

**STÄDTISCHES
MUSEUM**
Göttingen



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CATALOG
IMPRINT

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REMEMBER. REAPPRAISE. UNDERSTAND. GÖTTINGEN AND COLONIALISM

INTRODUCTION

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The history of colonialism is not a distant one. It has left its traces – in the former colonies as well as in Germany. In cities like Göttingen, these traces were barely visible for a long time. Yet from the very beginning, the colonial project was inconceivable without support from the centre of German society: In universities and school textbooks, in bourgeois initiatives and in military units, in scientific collections, at weekly markets and in monuments, colonialism was not only supported but also actively shaped.

The exhibition, which was shown at the Göttingen City Museum from September 2024 to February 2025, focuses on this local dimensions of German colonialism on the spot. Using the example of twelve biographies from Göttingen – of missionaries, merchants, professors, officers, and club members – it shows how closely colo-



nial thought and action was linked to everyday life in the city. This applies both to the period of official colonial rule between 1884 and 1919 and to later periods in which colonial ideologies continued to have an impact – not least in the form of political colonial revisionism, which gained particular influence during the Weimar Republic and National Socialism.

The exhibition thus continues a long overdue examination of an aspect of the city's history that has so far been addressed only marginally at best. The objects, sources and contexts brought together here make it clear that colonialism is not a distant phenomenon, but a structural component of the local past. Göttingen was not a colonial metropolis, but the city – like many other medium-sized towns – was part of a larger colonial network that encompassed scientific, economic, political and cultural practices. These interconnections are not always spectacular – but they are telling.

The question of how to deal with this history is highly topical. Ever since the German government committed itself to coming to terms with German colonialism in the coalition agreement back in 2018, it has been clear that the remembrance policy does not begin with the Nazi era. At the same time, the debates of recent years – such as the return of Benin bronzes, on dealing with the genocide of the Herero and Nama, colonial street names, or a national concept of remembrance – show how controversial the debate on colonial heritage still is. While civil society initiatives have been pointing out colonial continuities and their consequences – for example in the form of structural racism or global inequality – for decades, they continue to be met with resistance: through political relativisation, nostalgic colonial images in right-wing milieus, or ignorance.

Against this backdrop, the exhibition also sees itself as a contribution to a decentralised culture of remembrance. It makes visible how colonialism was conceived, organised, supported, and sometimes also contested in a city like Göttingen. The focus is not only on public representations – such as the colonial monument, which was erected in 1910 and has not been dismantled to this day – but also on private forms of colonial appropriation, for example in the form of estates, collections or biographical narratives.

The exhibition is the result of a close collaboration between the Göttingen City Museum and the Department of Medieval and Modern History at the University of Göttingen. It was conceived and realised together with students as part of a project seminar led by Dr Karolin Wetjen and Charlotte Prauß. It thus also follows a research-orientated approach to teaching that deals with pressing social issues – and always understands the view of the historical as a question about the present.

THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS WORKED ON THIS PROJECT:

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We invite you to explore these local traces of colonialism in Göttingen – and to place them in the context of current debates. Because the history we are talking about here is not closed. It continues to have an impact – in the cityscape, in institutions, in thought patterns. And it challenges us to think anew about responsibility, remembrance and justice.

AN EXHIBITION PROJECT

Researching the colonial past and engaging in dialogue with Göttingen's citizens was a project close to the heart of Rebekka Habermas, Professor of Modern History at the local university, who died far too young. She came up with the idea for this exhibition. It has now been realised as part of a project seminar.

Under the direction of Dr Karolin Wetjen and Charlotte Prauß M. A. 16 students researched the connection of Göttingen residents to the German colonies and the significance of colonial revisionism for Göttingen in the summer semester of 2024. The exhibition on display here was created in close collaboration with Iris Olszok M. A., researcher at the City Museum Göttingen. It was financially supported by Studienqualitätsmittel, the Landschaftsverband Südniedersachsen, and the City of Göttingen. We would like to thank Sarah Sophie Lange for her support as a student assistant. For the drafting and design of this catalogue we thank Steffi Riemann of the Basta advertising agency and the assistance of Fabienne König, Henri Hoor and Annika Schulz.



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GÖTTINGEN – A COLONIAL METROPOLIS?

That Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen have a colonial past is now well known. But even in Göttingen, the »City of Knowledge«, colonies have been important points of reference at least since the beginning of German colonial rule in the German Empire and throughout the Nazi era.

Colonial associations campaigned for the establishment or restoration of German colonial rule, while a missionary association collected donations and supported the supposed »civilisation« of the colonised population, who were imagined as children. Colonial goods shops traded in products from the colonies such as coffee, pineapples, tobacco, and rubber tyres. By advertising their products, they spread racist stereotypes around Göttingen's kitchen tables. Göttingen soldiers fought in colonial wars and were involved in the genocide of the Herero and Nama.

Lectures on racial theories were held at Göttingen University and research was carried out to solve the colonial labour question. Ethnographic objects, plants, and even human remains from the colonised territories were brought to the university's collections in Göttingen.

The exhibition explores these connections with colonialism using selected biographies of Göttingen citizens from the period between 1870 and 1945. It asks: What does the university city have to do with colonialism? What role did colonialism play in everyday life in Göttingen? In what way did citizens participate in colonial rule? What continuities still exist today?



COLONIALISM IN THE CITY OF GÖTTINGEN

Between 1870 and 1945, numerous places can be found in the city that had a connection to the colonies. The Colonial Monument, the train station, and the university represent these connections, as do the numerous colonial shops, the residences of professors researching colonial history, and the clubhouses of colonial societies. A selection of these places and locations is listed here. Some are featured in the exhibition.

PLACES AND STREETS IN GÖTTINGEN

ALBANI-KIRCHE (ALBANI CHURCH)

The pastor of the Albanikirche, Rudolf Steinmetz (1832–1921), was for a long time superintendent in Göttingen and chairman of the Göttingen Missionary Society. In 1905 Friederike Fricke's Missionskränzchen moved here.

ALBANIPLATZ 3

The Rohns bathhouse was built around 1819 by the Göttingen architect Christian Rohns (1787–1853). He was the great-grandfather of the deaconesses Hedwig and (Char)lotte Rohns.

BAHNHOF (STATION)

Link between the city and the colonies. Troops passed through the station during the »Boxer war«, but colonial goods and ethnographic objects were also brought to Göttingen by train.

DAHLMANNSTRASSE 1

Hometown of the historian Paul Darmstädter. He taught colonial and economic history from 1928 to 1933 and was dismissed as a Jew after the Nazis came to power.

DÜSTERE STRASSE 30

August Fickert, Colonial goods shop

EBERTAL

Up to 10,000 prisoners of war were housed in the prisoner of war camp during and after the First World War. The Iranian studies professor Friedrich Carl Andreas (1846–1930) conducted language studies on Pashtun prisoners of war, among other things.

FRIEDLÄNDER WEG 19

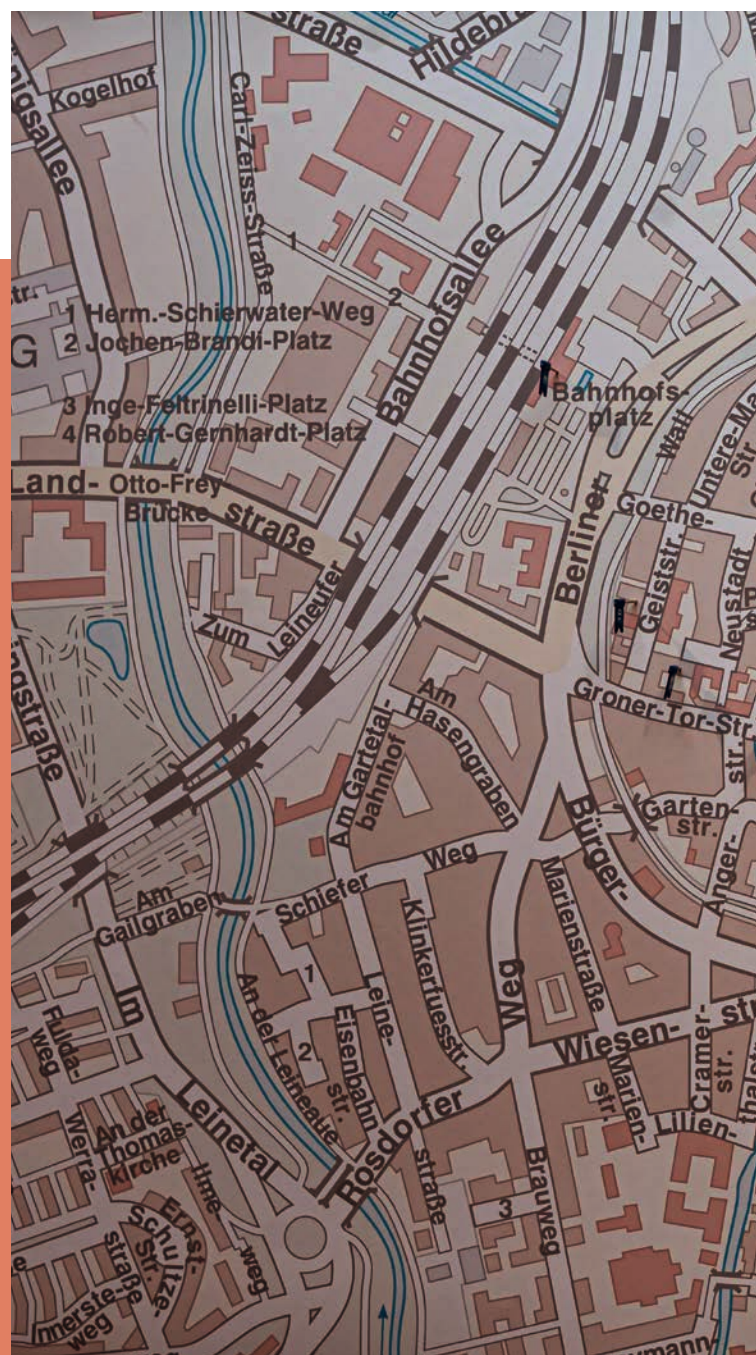
Friederike Fricke taught at the »Höhere Töchter-schule«, now the Hainberg Gymnasium.

FRIEDLÄNDER WEG 30

Ernst Lehmann, a Göttingen citizen passionate about colonialism, lived here. He hosted passing troops fighting in the »Boxer War« and provided objects for the 1909 Colonial Exhibition. His home also housed a museum with many objects, particularly from present-day Tsingtau.

**GEISMARER LANDSTRASSE/
FRIEDLÄNDER WEG**

»German South West Africa Monument«: It was originally intended to commemorate the soldiers of the regiment stationed in Göttingen who died in German South West Africa 1904–1908. The monument was erected in 1910. In 1913, a bronze eagle was added. In 1935, the monument was still an important colonial-revisionist symbol.

**GEISTSTRASSE 9**

Theological foundation Göttingen (Theologisches Stift Göttingen): Carl Mirbt was Collegiate inspector from 1886–1887.

GOTHAER-AREAL (GOTHAER AREA)

Municipal casern

GRONER STRASSE 20

C. L. Witte, Colonial goods shop

GRONER STRASSE 24

Ernst Feßler, Colonial goods shop

GRONER STRASSE 35

Colonial goods merchant Quentins Eck

GRONER STRASSE 36

Hermann Arand, Colonial goods shop

**GRONER STRASSE 46**

Kaiser's Kaffee-Geschäft,
Colonial goods shop

GRONER STRASSE 60

Wilhelm Caemmerer, Colonial goods shop

GRONER TOR 29

Kaffee-Special-Geschäft, Eduard Schmidt,
Colonial goods shop

GRONER-TOR-STRASSE 32

Carl Fraatz, Colonial goods shop

GRÜNER WEG 8**(TODAY: WAGNERSTRASSE)**

Residence of the geographer and founder
of the Göttingen branch of the German
Colonial Society, Hermann Wagner

HAINHOLZWEG 38

Residence of the professor of physi-
ology Max Verworn (1963–1921): He provided
objects for the colonial exhibition at the
Englischer Hof in 1909.

HERZBERGER LANDSTRASSE 66

Residence of the historian and colonial
revisionist Percy Ernst Schramm

HIROSHIMA-PLATZ 1–3

Exercise area and square of the former
»old casern«: The old office building (»Altes
Amtshaus«) at Hiroshimaplatz 3 is the only
building still standing from the caverns.

JÜDENSTRASSE 17

Südfruchthandlung (South fruit trade)
Rittmeier, Colonial goods shop

JÜDENSTRASSE 35

Englischer Hof: The hotel hosted a colonial
exhibition in 1909.

KORNMARKT 4

Head office Hartwig & Vogel,
Colonial goods shop

KURZE-GEISMAR-STRASSE 2

F. W. Lührig, Colonialwaren (Inh. Ferdinand
Lührig), Colonial goods shop

KURZE-GEISMAR-STRASSE 25

Wilhelm Busch, Colonial goods shop

LANGE-GEISMAR-STRASSE 30

Erich Krüger, Colonial goods shop

PLACES AND STREETS IN GÖTTINGEN

LANGE-GEISMAR-STRASSE 42

Reinhold (owned by Rakebrandt),
Colonial goods shop

LANGE-GEISMAR-STRASSE 63

Wilhelm Beiermann, Colonial goods shop

MARKT 17

Tengelmann's Kaffeeengeschäft, Colonial goods
shop

MERKELSTRASSE

Merkel Street (Merkelstraße) is named after the mayor Georg Merkel (1829–1898), who took office in 1870. His inauguration marked the beginning of a comprehensive modernisation of the city. Merkel was particularly committed to cultural policy. During his term of office, the Göttingen commemorative plaques (Gedenktafeln) were introduced, many of them with a connection to the colonies. Merkel himself applied for an honour for the biologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840), whose research contributed to the development of the concept of race.

NIKOLAUSBERGER WEG 22

University Institute of Colonial Agriculture
(1940–1945)

RITTERPLAN 5

Residence of the missionary scientist Carl Mirbt

SCHILLERSTRASSE 68

The colonial associations hold regular events on the Schillerwiese.

SCHILLERWIESE

The colonial associations hold regular events on the Schillerwiese.

SPECKSTRASSE 15

C. H. Ludewig (owned by Widow Charlotte
Ludewig)

STADTPARK

Events of the colonial associations take place regularly in the city park.

THEATERPLATZ 6

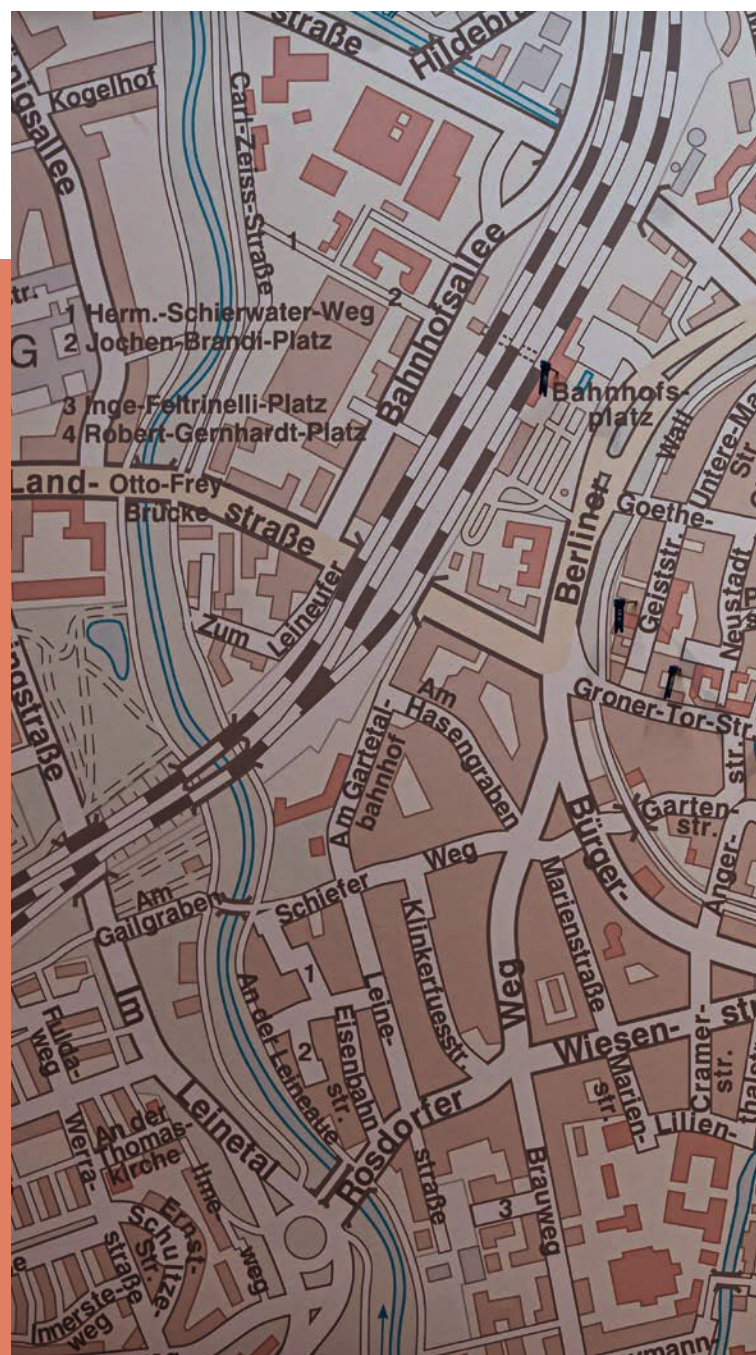
Residence of the geophysicist Gustav Heinrich Angenheister, who directed the Samoa Observatory.

THEATERPLATZ 15

Institute of Ethnology and the Ethnographic Collection

THEATERSTRASSE 18

Henny Kobold, Colonial goods shop

**THEATERSTRASSE 26**

Südfruchthandlung (South fruit trade) Rittmeier, Colonial goods
shop

UNTERE KARSPÜLE 2

In today's Old Botanical Garden, botanical specimens from the colonies and Europe were collected and cultivated as living or dried plants. The garden still serves as a place of retreat for the people of Göttingen and as a place of teaching and research for the university.

WAAGEPLATZ

Theodor Schneemann (1873–1937) worked as a »horse breeder« in modern-day Tanzania between 1903 and 1910, and was part of the German colonial troops involved in putting down the Maji Maji War.



WEENDER TOR

A series of lectures on the former German colonies is held in the university auditorium during the Nazi era.

WEENDER STRASSE

Since 1876, Cron and Lanz has used colonial goods, chocolate and coffee in its cakes and pastries.

WEENDER STRASSE 17/18

Heinrich Fincke (owned by Gustav Fincke), Colonial goods shop

WEENDER STRASSE 62

»Oriental« Tobacco and Tobacco Specialist Shop (Tabak-Special-Geschäft), Colonial goods shop

WILHELM-WEBER-STRASSE 1

This is where the Göttinger Kindermissionsverein (Children's Mission Association) met under the leadership of Friederike Fricke. They sewed for the mission. It was also the residence of missionary Carl Mirbt.

WILHELMSPLATZ

Residence of the Georg-August-University: Many professors undertook research trips to the colonies or dealt with regions outside Europe in their research. They shared their knowledge with students through teaching. The founder of the university, George II (1683–1760), King of Great Britain and, as Georg August, Prince-elector of Hanover, was a partner in a slave trading company. Wissen geben sie in der Lehre an Studierende weiter.

Westermanns Neuer Schulatlas,
1928, Wikimedia Commons.

COLONIALISM IN THE GERMAN EMPIRE

From 1884 until the end of the First World War, the German Empire had colonies in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. By 1900, the German colonial empire was the third largest in Europe and six times the size of Germany. Since the 18th century, »colonial fantasies« and the desire to own colonies circulated. Colonial expansion was supported by a broad majority of the population. Economic interests played a central role in the »acquisition« of colonies. The colonies were also intended to serve as places of emigration for the growing population. The German colonies were seen as important prestige projects at home. German colonialism was driven in particular by the conviction of its own superiority and the supposed need to »educate« the colonised population. It is referred to as a »civilising mission«.

In the colonies, the enforcement of German rule was characterised by numerous, mostly brutally suppressed uprisings, wars, and everyday violence. At the same time, it remained geographically limited and was centred around military bases. The economic expectations associated with the colonies were not fulfilled. Frequent military operations and extensive infrastruc-



ture projects, such as the construction of railways, turned the colonies into a loss making business. After the First World War, the German Empire had to relinquish its colonies.

UNMARRIED WOMAN IN THE MISSION HEDWIG ROHNS (1852–1935)

Hedwig Rohns was born in Göttingen in 1852. She was the daughter of Philipp Rohns, the founder of the local salt works, and granddaughter of the builder Christian Rohns.

During the colonisation of Africa, she was a missionary in the German colony Togo. After completing her education as a teacher, she joined a Hamburg deaconess institution. These Protestant institutions enabled unmarried middle-class women to work as teachers or nurses.

In 1889, she was one of the first women to travel to the colony with her sister »Lottchen« on behalf of the Northern German Missionary Society. The missionary society wanted to promote the Christian faith in Togo. As a deaconess, Rohns contributed to this goal. She was promoted to head nurse and founded an infant school, where she taught children needlework, housework and religious matters.

Hedwig Rohns had a profound faith and was convinced of European superiority. Through her work, she taught Christian ideas of family and gender roles,

and contributed to the European »civilising mission«. The idea that superior Europeans would bring civilisational progress to the »savage« and »inferior« populations of the colonies was a central justification for the legitimacy of colonialism.

Rohns returned to Germany in 1909 and wrote a book about her endeavours in Keta.



ROHNS (LEFT) WITH HER SISTER, IN:
Zwanzig Jahre Missions-Diakonissenarbeit im
Ewelande, Bremen 1912.

WOMEN SEW FOR THE »CIVILIZING MISSION« FRIEDERIKE FRICKE (1855–1945)

Friederike Fricke was born in Fallingb.-
stel in 1855. In 1873 she passed her teach-
er's examination. Fricke moved to Göt-
tingen in 1881 to be close to her family.
There, she became a teacher at the
Höhere Töchterchule (today: Hainberg
Gymnasium).

Together with a colleague, Fricke
founded the Göttinger Kindermissions-
verein, a mission association, in 1882.
Under Fricke's guidance, up to 35 chil-
dren produced handicrafts of all kinds.
These were then raffled off for the ben-
efit of missionary work in India, a British
colony at the time. The proceeds were
intended for the education of orphans
at the Indian stations of the Leipzig Mis-
sionary Society.

Fricke's organisation promoted the
European-bourgeois education of chil-
dren, which was based on diligence,
order and zeal. It was founded on the
racist assumption that people in the col-
onies were poor and uneducated. This
narrative was used to legitimise alleged
»civilising missions«. Through them,
European missionaries wanted to »edu-
cate« and »uplift« what they considered
to be »inferior races«.

The Göttinger Kindermissionsverein was
renamed the Missionskränzchen in 1890,
as more and more adults joined the



SAMPLER

Stramin, cotton, 1885, Göttingen City Museum, TK.2006.203.

organisation. It offered middle-class women an opportunity
to support colonialism and the colonial »civilising mission«
from Göttingen by sewing clothes. The Missionskränzchen
was an integral part of Göttingen's support for the mission.
As part of her »Missionskränzchen«, Friederike Fricke pro-
moted missionary work in European colonies by producing
and sending handicrafts. At the meetings, the women read
books by missionaries containing devotional texts, stories
about the mission and suggestions for supporting missionary
work. The »Missionskränzchen« is an example of female activ-
ity that anchors support for the »civilising missions« in the
local community.

Samplers like this one were used to learn, practise, collect and
memorise textile techniques and patterns. For a long time,
learning different needlework techniques and making sam-
plers was an integral part of girls' education.

Protestant missionary societies such as the Leipzig Mission Society and the North German Missionary Society finance their work largely through donations.

Such collection boxes, which are intended to visually emphasize the purpose of the donation, were placed in shops, schools, community centers, and churches. Children took them from house to house in special collection campaigns. The box depicts orphans from the two mission areas of the Leipzig Mission Society in Tranquebar (India) and the Kili-manjaro region in present-day Tanzania.

COLLECTION BOX OF THE LEIPZIG MISSION SOCIETY



COLLECTION BOX OF THE LEIPZIG MISSION SOCIETY

Cardboard, circa 1915

Loan: Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society Leipzig, Rn. 2149

**BATAK ARM RINGS**

Ivory, bronze, undated

Ethnicity/Provenance: Toba-Batak, Lake Toba, Sumatra, Indonesia
 On loan: Ethnological Collection, University of Göttingen, As 736, As 738

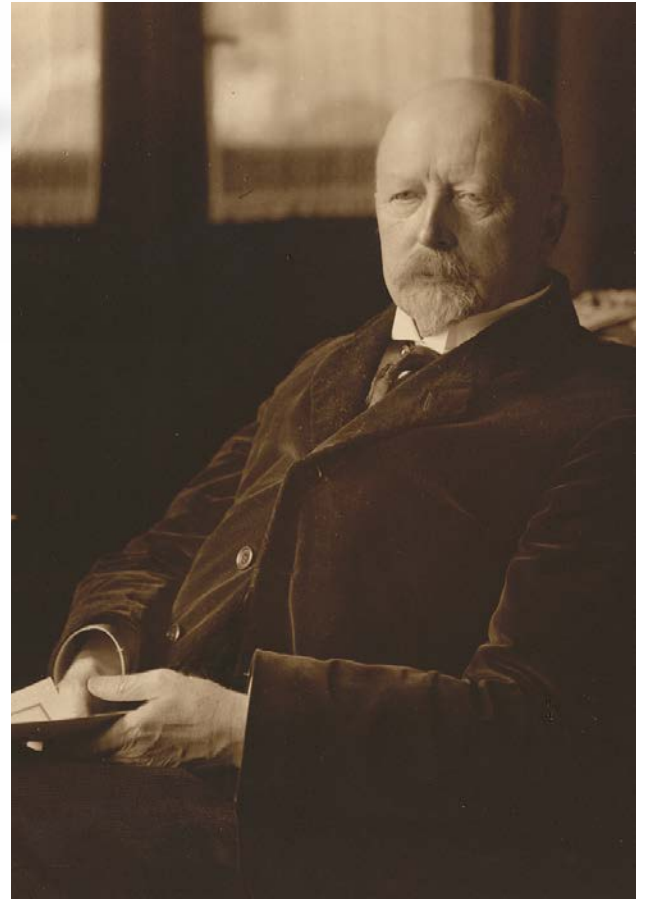
BETWEEN FAITH AND COLONIAL POLICY

CARL MIRBT (1860–1929)

Carl Mirbt was born in Lower Silesia. He studied theology and took up a professorship for church history in Göttingen in 1912. He specialised in missiology.

Mirbt sees the modern spread of Christianity as a significant transformation. He compares it to the time of the early church, when Christianity spread throughout Europe. In his opinion, the modern missionary movement would open up insights into various religious and cultural conflicts and provide valuable knowledge about the nature and past of Christianity.

Mirbt saw a close connection between mission and colonial policy and was in favour of positive cooperation. He was convinced that colonialism was legitimised by the superiority of the »white race«. The mission should »educate« the people in the colonies and provide them with a »superior substitute« for the loss of their culture.



SUB Cod. Ms. Voit: C. Mirbt

In the summer of 1913, he himself undertook a study trip to German East Africa and German South West Africa. There he visited schools and churches abroad. He shared his impressions of the trip with various mission societies.

Mirbt was well connected in Göttingen's middle classes and beyond. He attended international missionary conferences and was married to Hermann Wagner's daughter. After the First World War, he became involved in the right-wing conservative German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei). He taught in Göttingen until shortly before his death.

These bronze and ivory arm rings belong to Mirbt's collection and come from the Batak people of Indonesia. The origin of the pieces from Mirbt's collection can often no longer be fully traced today. The collectors and the context of acquisition are also often unknown. Indonesia was a Dutch colony for a long time and only became independent in 1949.

DEATH PENALTIES AND SOUVENIRS EWALD LEHMANN (1874–1935)

Ewald Lehmann was 13 years old when his family moved to Göttingen. There he studied law. In 1904, he went to Qingdao (German: Tsingtau), the capital of the German colony of Kiautschou in China, as an imperial judge.

As a judge in Kiautschou, Ewald Lehmann was responsible for the European and Chinese population. In the colony's legal system, as in all German colonies, a distinction was made between Europeans and the colonised population.

Much harsher penalties were imposed on the Chinese. Even minor offences were punished with caning. In Germany, corporal punishment had already been abolished by this time. Everyday life in the colony was closely monitored and subject to strict regulations. Chinese people were prohibited from leaving their homes at night without a lantern. Even the use of squeaky lorries was punished.

The death penalty was also imposed much more frequently than in Germany. Lehmann reported in a letter about a death sentence that was carried out on his orders. Japan captured Kiautschou during the First World War. Ewald Lehmann was taken prisoner of war. He returned to Germany in 1920 and died in 1935.



OBITUARY
paper ink, undated
Göttingen City Museum,
Leh. 2023.454

Zhou Xueshi informed Ewald Lehmann of the death of his grandmother »Mrs Fank« in an official letter. Zhou Xueshi's uncle Zhou Baoshan worked on various railway projects, including the Qingdao-Jinan railway project. Parts of his family lived in Qingdao.

The European and Chinese populations were to live separately in the colony of Kiautschou. The administration, like the judiciary, was in the hands of the Germans. The governor of Qingdao formed an »advisory committee« from representatives of the Chinese upper class, probably to facilitate economic relations. The actual power laid with the German colonial rulers.

This document shows that there was indeed personal contact between wealthy Chinese and the German colonial administration.

Ewald Lehmann gave the buttons to his father for Christmas. He wrote »... for you, dear father, a set of Mandarin buttons, which, if you don't want to put them on like this, are ideal for bottle corks.«.

»Mandarin« is a Western term for Chinese officials. During the Qing dynasty, their official costume included a round hat with a hat button.



HAT BUTTONS

Glass, brass, probably around 1900
Göttingen City Museum, Leh. 2024.10



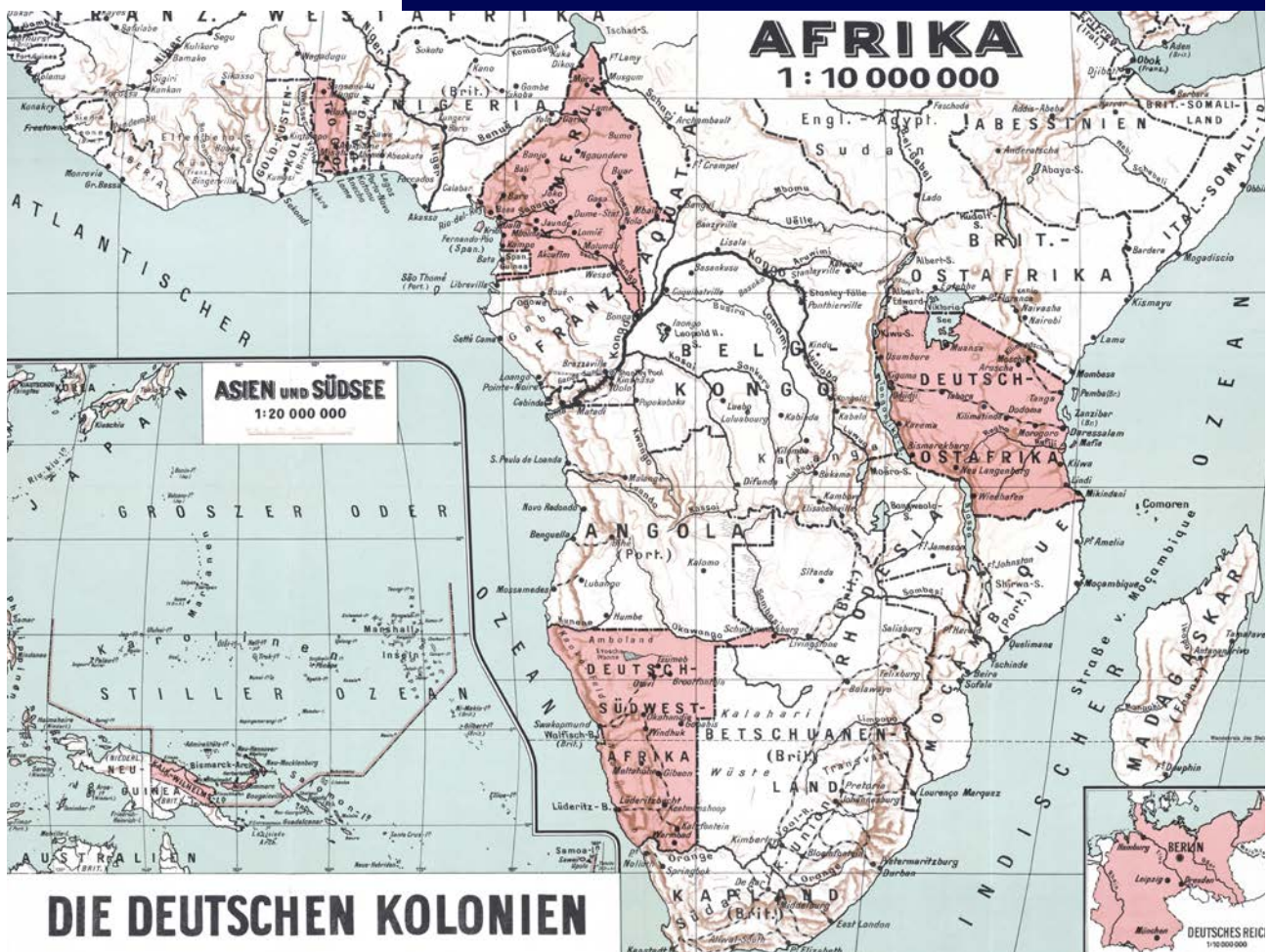
UNDERLAY

Silk, water-based paint, around 1900
Göttingen City Museum, Leh.2023.397

In addition to letters, Ewald Lehmann also sent gifts to his family from Qingdao. At first glance, these appear to be »typical Chinese« souvenirs. Some of them, such as the tea set mats and replicas of old Chinese coins on display, were probably made specifically for sale to Europeans. Tea set mats were not common in Chinese tea culture around 1900.

Chinese antiquities had been popular in Europe since the 17th century. Ewald's father Ernst Lehmann also showed great interest in the artefacts. He presented some of them at the Göttingen Colonial Exhibition in 1909.

GERMAN COLONIES



ÖNB/Wien, KS 16216192

CHOCOLATE PAPER FROM SAROTTI

Paper, after 1918. On loan: private

BETWEEN TOBACCO, CHOCOLATE, AND RUBBER

SELLING COLONIAL GOODS IN GÖTTINGEN

Colonial goods shops sold products from the European colonies, such as sugar, cocoa, tobacco and souvenirs. These goods were mainly grown and produced on plantations using forced labour.

These shops gained popularity during the time of the German Empire and the founding of Germany's colonies. In 1914, 254 people worked in the 88 officially registered colonial goods shops in Göttingen – a significant number considering that only 1,920 businesses with 9,075 employees were registered in Göttingen at this time.

Tea and coffee were already being offered in Göttingen's coffee houses in the 17th century. Colonial goods shops such as the Ratsapotheke, Quentin's Kolonialwarenhandlung or Alfred Ewert Tee & Gewürze, shaped the everyday life of the population and changed their consumer behaviour. Tobacco smoking and the consumption of coffee and chocolate, for example at Cron & Lanz, became the norm.

Some remnants of colonial merchants can still be traced back to the present day. In 1898, merchants in Berlin founded the Einkaufsgenossenschaft der Kolonialwarenhändler (Colonial Merchants' Association, EDEKA). In



1914, 19 different colonial goods traders in Göttingen established a regional branch of this purchasing association of colonial goods traders in Göttingen.

During German colonial rule, cocoa cultivation played a central role in agricultural production and the export trade, especially in Cameroon and Togo. German colonial companies set up plantations to grow cocoa. The local population was forced to work under poor conditions and often under duress.

The best-known end product made from cocoa is chocolate, which was often advertised in Germany with racist images. The exoticizing images, such as on Sarotti's chocolate wrappers, trivialize the power relationship between European plantation owners and African workers. The latter are often portrayed as »primitive savages« with a »childlike disposition«. The racist Sarotti brand character was introduced in 1918 and only replaced in 2004 with the stylistically similar Sarotti »Magician of the Senses« due to persistent criticism.

The coffee tin from the Jürgens brothers coffee roasting company in Braunschweig (1726–1956) is decorated with palm trees and a mosque, while the tin from the Adolf Brennecke coffee roasting company in Hanover is also decorated with »oriental« motifs.

The tin from the Hamburg coffee roasting company J.J. Darboven depicts coffeegrowing regions on the Pacific, in South America and on the Arabian Peninsula.



COFFEE CANS

Tinplate, 20th century
Göttingen City Museum,
AK.1988.426, AK.1994.55, AK.1993.178

**COLLECTOR'S ALBUM
»GERMAN COLONIES«**
published by the »Cigaretten-Bilder-
dienst Dresden« Cardboard, paper, 1936
Göttingen City Museum, Leh. 2023.416



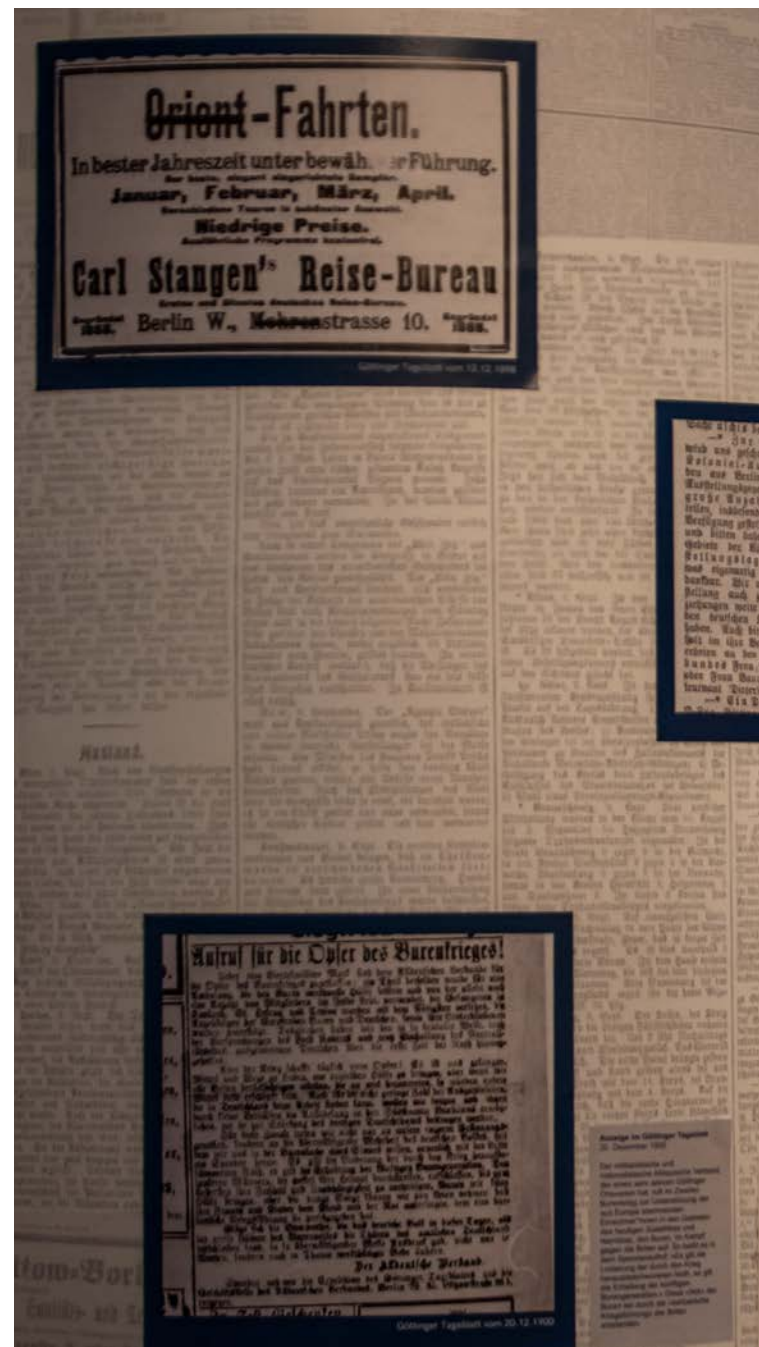
Pictures that can be collected in albums are often included with purchased cigarettes. These, too, often depict stereotypical images from the colonies. Collector's albums from the 1930s attest to the great interest in the colonies and in images of them, long after the end of German colonial rule.

WITH CONVIVIALITY FOR THE COLONIAL PROJECT GÖTTINGER COLONIAL ASSOCIATIONS

In the 19th century, numerous associations were founded in Germany, whose members support and propagate German colonialism through voluntary work.

The colonial associations organised lectures, film screenings and exhibitions to arouse interest in the colonies. By collecting donations they finance colonial projects.

Associations such as the Pan-German League (Alldeutsche Verband) or the Navy League (Flottenverein) were active in Göttingen. These strongly nationalist associations called for the expansion of the German colonial empire. The Göttingen branches regularly organised lectures on colonial themes and appealed for donations. Alongside the Pan-German League (Alldeutsche Verein) and the Navy



League (Deutscher Flottenverein), the German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; DKG) became a particularly influential pressure group in the German Empire and the Weimar Republic. In 1884, a local branch of the DKG was founded with 40 members under the leadership of geography professor Hermann Wagner. The local branch of the Women's Association of the DKG organised a well attended colonial exhibition in Göttingen in 1909.



A missionary club had existed in Göttingen since 1837, which organised missionary festivals and illustrated lectures in close cooperation with the local churches. Residents of the city and the surrounding area donated even small amounts according to their financial means to support the spread of the Christian faith and the »civilising mission«. The large number of associations and events shows how widespread interest in the German colonies in Göttingen were.



THE COLONIAL EXHIBITION IN GÖTTINGEN 1909:
Photography, 1929,
Göttingen City Museum,
Leh. 2023.369,1-2

THE COLONIALISM AS AN ATTRACTION



A branch of the Women's Association of the German Colonial Society (DKG) was founded in Göttingen in 1908. The section organised film screenings in the city park, tea parties and lectures.

In 1909 the Women's Association planned a colonial exhibition at the English Court. The exhibits ranged from clay bowls and weapons to animals captured in the colonies. Göttingen citizens, the Berlin Museum of Ethnology and the German colonial school in Witzenhausen lent objects on display.

The objects, lectures and even »native dances« were used to spread colonial stereotypes and racist ideas and propagate one's own cultural superiority. There were no critical perspectives on colonialism.

The exhibition was a great success and brought in 11,000 marks. The profit of 4,500 marks was used to set

up a women's house, a so-called »Heimathaus«, in Keetmanshoop. The aim was to prepare German women to serve in the colonies as »bearers of the German race and culture« and to contribute to their »inner Germanisation«.

The Göttinger Tageblatt accompanied the colonial exhibition with great interest and many articles. These articles reflect the obvious interest of the Göttingen community in the colonies.

VIOLENCE AND RESISTANCE

The European powers established their rule in the colonies by force. In everyday life, the colonised populations suffered systematic oppression, forced labour and beatings. Resistance was cruelly punished. Resistance fighters such as Rudolf Duala Manga Bell (1873–1914), King of the Duala in Cameroon, were executed. Excessive violence by colonial officials repeatedly led to colonial scandals in the German Empire. However, colonial rule was not fundamentally questioned.

In colonial wars, such as the so-called »Boxer War« in China (1899–1901) and the Maji Maji War (1905–1907) in nowadays Tanzania, Ger-

man troops took brutal action against local resistance fighters. Under General Lothar von Trotha (1848–1920), German troops committed genocide in German South West Africa (today: Namibia) from 1904 to 1908. Tens of thousands of Herero and Nama died. It was not until 2021 that the German government officially recognised this genocide and apologised to the Namibian state and the descendants of the victims.

To this day, a controversial memorial in Göttingen commemorates four fallen soldiers of the Regiment No. 82 who were involved in the genocide.



OFFICER, GOVERNOR, AND GEOGRAPHER CURT VON FRANÇOIS (1852–1931)

Curt von François was born in Luxembourg in 1852 as the son of a Prussian officer. He took part in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 as a volunteer and was promoted to lieutenant during the war. In March 1882, he began his service with the 2nd Kurhessian Infantry-Regiment No. 82 in Göttingen.

In 1883 and 1885, von François undertook expeditions from Göttingen to the Kassai region and the Congo Delta. Due to his geographical knowledge, he was promoted to Captain in the General Command and sent to Togo as a research and surveying officer. In 1889, von François took over the leadership of the Schutztruppe in German South West Africa on behalf of the German Colonial Society. There, he founded the city of Windhoek in October 1890.

Because the Nama under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi did not recognise the »Schutzherrschaft« of the Germans, von François ordered an attack on the fortified Nama settlement Natas (German: Hornkranz) on 12 April 1893. The German Schutztruppe killed at least 80 people. They themselves only recorded two deaths. Von François was internationally criticised for this attack.

Major Theodor Leutwein ultimately replaced von François as governor of German South West Africa. In 1895, von François completed his service with the rank of major and returned to Berlin via Cape Town. Curt von François died on 28 December 1931 at the age of 79.



»A NICE, WELL-DONE RAID« HANS WILDE (1875–1914)

Hans Wilde was born in West Pomerania in 1875. At the age of 19, he came to Göttingen and joined the 2nd Kurhessian Infantry-Regiment No. 82. In June 1900, Wilde volunteered to take part in the so-called »Boxer War« in China.

In the war in 1900, eight colonial states, including Germany, fought against the Chinese Empire. The war was waged against the armed resistance of the Yihétuán – roughly: »Associations for Justice and Harmony«, known as »Boxers« in the West. The movement was directed against the growing colonial influence in China, the Christian mission and railway construction.

The anti-colonial uprising was suppressed with great severity and claimed over 100,000 lives. Kaiser Wilhelm II bade farewell to the German troops with his famous Hun speech: »Pardon will not be given; Prisoners will not be taken.« In this spirit, the troops murdered, raped and plundered in China.



Hans Wilde also took part in battles and so-called »punitive expeditions«, in which civilians were arbitrarily murdered after the end of the war. Colonial loot also came to Göttingen via Wilde. He sent objects that he claimed had been stolen from Chinese temples during the looting by soldiers.

Hans Wilde stayed in China for two years. He returned to Germany in 1902. He remained in the military and died in the First World War.

FLAG FROM THE »WAR OF 1900«
Cotton, linen, around 1900,
Göttingen City Museum, Leh.2024.11



ANTI-COLONIAL RESISTANCE AND THE »WAR OF 1900«

The Yihetuan rebelled against colonial influence in China at the end of the 19th century. The movement consisted predominantly of poor rural laborers, seasonal workers, and dispossessed peasants. A key factor in the spread of the movement in Shandong Province was the German railway construction in the region. This led to numerous local conflicts and violent clashes between the German colonial administration and local farmers and workers.

With the support of the imperial family and various provincial governors, the Yihetuan uprising developed into a colo-

nial war between the Chinese Empire and eight colonial powers. Known in the West as the "Boxer War," in China it was referred to as the "War of 1900" or the "Invasion of the Eight Powers Alliance."

The Yihetuan's anti-colonial resistance was violently suppressed, like the resistance in other European colonies.

UNIFORM

Crew uniform of the 2nd Kurhessian Infantry Regiment No. 82, 12th Company with the regimental affiliation on the epaulettes.

The unit was formed in 1866 as Infantry Regiment No. 82 in Posen. Returning from Paris, the I Battalion was garrisoned in Göttingen in 1871, the II Battalion in Northeim in 1872 and the III Battalion in Einbeck.

Members of the regiment take part in various colonial wars. For example, according to an advertisement in the Göttinger Tageblatt in January 1904, 5% of the regiment volunteered for deployment in German South West Africa against the Herero and Nama. Members of the regiment also took part in the so-called »Boxer War« in China as volunteers.



UNIFORM

Wool, cotton, brass, around 1800
Göttingen City Museum,
MW.1904.491

HELMET WITH LACE

Leather, brass, metal, around 1880
Göttingen City Museum,
MW.1904.491.12



So-called Pickelhaube with Prussian eagle, Prussian cockade (black and white), imperial cockade (black, white and red) and the inscription »Mit Gott für König und Vaterland« – »with God for king and country«. The helmet belongs to the uniform of the 2nd Kurhessian Infantry-Regiment No. 82.

COLONIAL MEMORY IN GÖTTINGEN

THE »SOUTH WEST AFRICA MEMORIAL«

The »South West Africa Memorial« commemorates four German soldiers from Göttingen who took part in the genocide of the Herero and Nama and died, probably of disease.

The monument stands on the corner of Geismar Landstraße and Friedländer Weg. It was built in 1910 by members of the 2nd Kurhessian Infantry-Regiment No. 82.

There have been protests against the monument since the 1970s. It remains controversial to this day. Activists see the monument as a glorification of German colonialism. It commemorates the perpetrators; the victims are not mentioned.

In 2022, Herero activists Israel Kaunatjike and Dr. Ngondi Kamatuka visited the monument at the invitation of the Network Göttingen Postcolonial. They spoke about the »South West Africa Monument«, the so-called »Reconciliation Agreement« between Germany and Namibia, their own involvement and their activism.

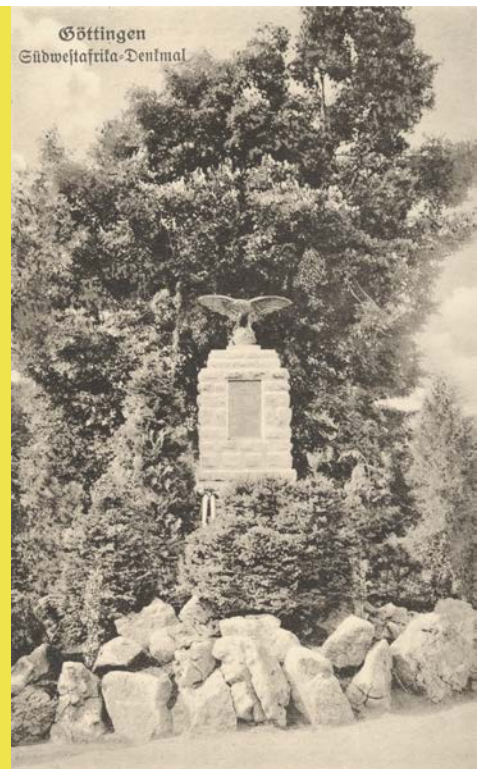
»SOUTH WEST AFRICA MONUMENT«

From the 1970s, the monument was criticised and damaged in protest. A group from the Communist League of West Germany (Kommunistischer Bund Westdeutschland; KBW) removed the bronze eagle from the monument in 1978. The head was auctioned off. The money went to the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

»SOUTH WEST AFRICA MONUMENT« TODAY

As well as destruction, there have also been attempts at transformation. In 2004, the Society for Threatened Peoples (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker e. V.) held a commemoration for the victims of the Herero and Nama next to the monument. In 2007, following protests from civil society, the city put up an information board on the crimes in South West Africa.

In recent years, there have also been repeated protests, such as the wrap-around of the monument in 2020 with the statement: »Abolish racism, decolonise Göttingen!«



POSTCARD »SOUTH WEST AFRICA MONUMENT«
Postcard, 1935, Göttingen City Museum

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH THIS MONUMENT IN GÖTTINGEN?

Removal without addition seems like: Let us forget what happened! In my opinion, the monument should be supplemented. Change its meaning and you change its power.

Demolishing monuments are not solutions.

We are also in favor of a creative deconstruction and rededication of the monument. It should be dedicated to the victims of German colonialism and specifically to the OvaHerero and Nama.

The monument should be removed in a solemn ceremony and a memorial for the victims of German colonial crimes should be erected at the site! Information about the history of the place should be put up as a sign.

The memorial is adequately contextualised by the plaque and tells its own story in its present, partly demolished shape. It should be cleaned and stay that way! Its removal would also mean the loss of a monument of remembrance.

I am from Australia. We like to tear down our colonial past and pretend it never happened. Without such reminders, we are unable to condemn the atrocities of the colonial past. We need a museum like this!

COLONIAL REVISIONISM

With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Germany had to surrender its colonies. They were placed under the administration of other colonial powers by the League of Nations. This »loss« of the colonies is perceived by many Germans as a national humiliation. In response, large sections of the German population emphasised the supposed achievements of the German colonial era.



Many political parties and associations, such as the German Colonial Society, campaigned vigorously for the recovery of the colonies during the Weimar Republic. Key players in this revisionist movement were former colonial officials, military officers and academics.



They idealised the supposed successes in the colonies and presented colonial expansion as a legitimate and necessary part of German foreign and economic policy.



German colonial revisionism found little support in the international community and was ultimately unsuccessful. Nevertheless, it had a profound impact on the Weimar Republic and the Nazi era. Its propaganda contributed to the dissemination of distorted and glorified image of the German colonial era, which has only been critically analysed in recent years.



A COLONIAL BOTANIST IN GÖTTINGEN ALBERT PETER (1853–1937)

The botanist Albert Peter became famous for his expeditions and the botanical and ethnological collections. Peter studied in Königsberg (today: Kaliningrad) and Munich. In 1888, he became Professor of Botany and Director of the Botanical Garden in Göttingen.

In 1913, Peter travelled to German East Africa, to what is nowadays Tanzania, to explore the local flora. His expedition was interrupted by the First World War. The collections he made during this time were largely lost or destroyed. Therefore, he travelled to East Africa again at the age of 72. From his point of view, the second expedition between 1925 and 1926 was more successful. He collected a large number of plants, but also other objects such as everyday objects, weapons and jewellery belonging to the local population. The approximately 47,000 herbarium specimens he collected form an important part of the botanical collections in Göttingen.

PHOTOGRAPHS

SUB (State and University Library Göttingen)
Cod. Ms. Voit: A. Peter



On his expeditions, Peter benefited from the colonial infrastructure and administration. He used the railways and was supported by the European colonial and mandate governments. Peter's collections are still on display in the Botanical Garden and illustrate the close links between science and colonialism in the early 20th century. They continue to be used for botanical research and are still a reminder of the close colonial links between Göttingen, Germany and the world.

These herbarium sheets are from Peter's second expedition. Until the 1930s, he referred to the collection area, today's Tanzania, as German East Africa, even though it was no longer under German colonial rule after the First World War.



In doing so, he was following a widespread colonial revisionist idea. Peter organised and categorised the plants he had collected later in Göttingen. They are still important for botanical research today. However, the knowledge of the local population that Peter used on his expeditions often remains invisible and unrecognised.

HERBARIUM SHEETS

Asplenium wightianum Wall. ex Hook.,
Adiantum caudatum L.
Dry preparation on paper, 1926
On loan: Herbarium,
University of Göttingen,
GOET048386, GOET043626

The pipe bowl is made of wood. Carved threads and replica screw heads are intended to give the impression that it is made of iron. The wood is also coloured black, which supports this impression. The bowl is decorated with two figures.



TOBACCO PIPE

Clay, wood, vegetable fibre, undated
Ethnicity/Provenance: Zaramo, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
On loan: Ethnological Collection, University of Göttingen, Af 118 a-b

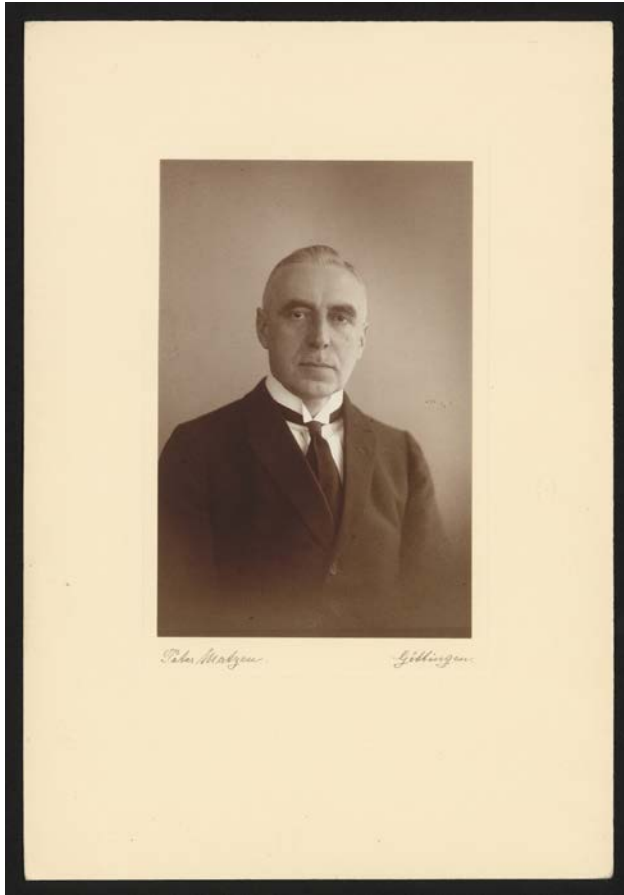


BOWL

Rattan, vegetable fibre, undated
Provenance: Mozambique
On loan: Ethnological Collection,
University of Göttingen, Af 151

In addition to plant samples, Peter also collected numerous ethnographic objects on his travels. It is often not known how Peter came into possession of the objects. One example of this is this bowl, the circumstances of its acquisition are largely unknown. Similarly, in the case of the tobacco pipe and the ring for holding tobacco together, it is not known whether they were a gift, bought or stolen.

The objects on display here are representative of many items that arrived in Europe during the colonial period without their history being documented in detail. Today, they are regarded as sensitive collector's items and the colonial context of their acquisition is critically scrutinised.



SUB Cod. Ms. Voit: G. H. Angenheister

FOR SCIENCE TO THE »GERMAN SOUTH SEA« GUSTAV HEINRICH ANGENHEISTER (1878 – 1945)

Gustav Heinrich Angenheister worked from 1905 at the Göttingen Institute of Geophysics. From 1907 to 1921, he was intermittently as a geophysicist at the Samoa Observatory and also served as its director.

The Samoa Observatory was initiated by the Royal Society of Sciences and Humanities in Göttingen. It was established in 1902 on the Mulinu'u Peninsula, near the present-day capital Apia on Samoa. As a branch of the Göttingen Earthquake Observatory, the observatory was used for atmospheric measurements and for studying geomagnetism, among other things. Angenheister returned to Göttingen in 1921 and became Director of the In-

stitute of Geophysics in 1928. From 1933, he supported the SS and thus the Nazi regime.

Angenheister brought back a total of 43 objects from Samoa. These were presumably colonial souvenirs or exchange gifts, which he had taken to Göttingen due to personal interest and as a memento of his stay in the »German South Sea«. Whether these objects came into Angenheister's possession legally has not yet been clarified. Since 1950, these objects have been in the ethnological collection of the University of Göttingen.

The observatory still exists today as the Apia Observatory of the Samoa Meteorology Division. In Göttingen itself, the »Samoa Hut« on Telegraphenberg is a reminder of the former connection between the city at the Leine and the state in the Western Pacific.

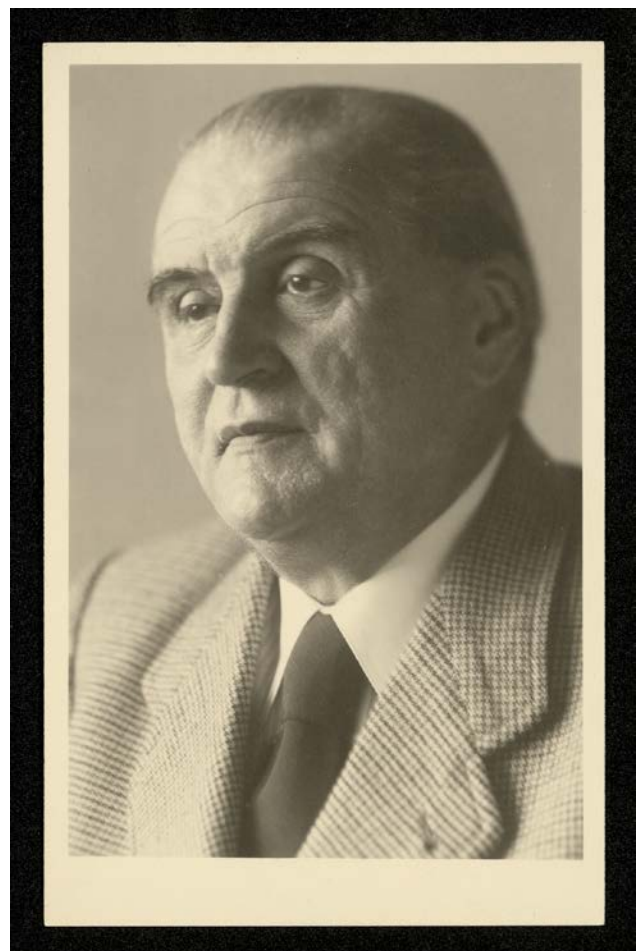
COLONIALISM ON THE ADOLF-HITLER-PLATZ HANS PLISCHKE (1890 – 1972)

Hans Plischke was an ethnologist and since 1928 Director of the Ethnological Collection at Göttingen University.

In 1931, ethnology was given its own institute on the Adolf-Hitler-Platz, now Theaterplatz. Plischke was its first chair. His focus was on the history of ethnology and the so-called »Voyages of Discovery« in the context of European expansion. He idealised these in his works and thus contributed to colonial revisionism. Plischke was particularly interested in Oceania, as can be seen in the objects of the collection he managed and restructured.

This included statues, clothing and jewellery, which Plischke described in publications and used in teaching. The objects came to Göttingen via a network of colonial agents – including scientists, missionaries, officials, traders and soldiers. The objects were often »acquired« during the German colonial period and in various cases violently.

Plischke was involved in many debates on ethnology and colonialism within Germany. He exploited ethnology to scientifically legitimise colonialism and advocated for the preservation and reconstruction of a German colonial empire. In 1940, he spoke at the opening of the Institute of Colonial Agriculture in Göttingen, stating: »A new era of German colonial endeavours is upon us«.

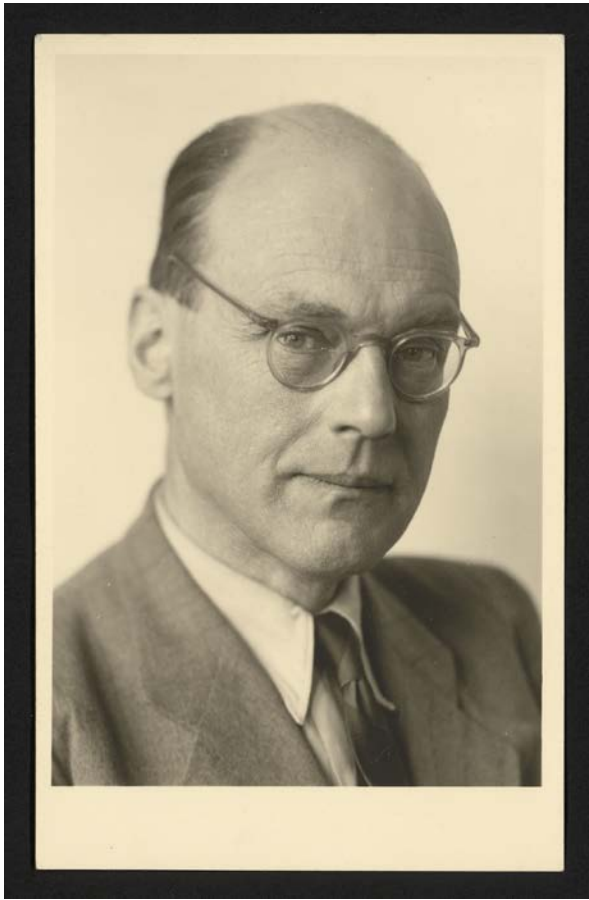


SUB Cod. Ms. Voit: H. Plischke

Plischke became a member of the NSDAP in 1933. After the war, he was removed from office. However, he was reinstated as Head of the Ethnological Institute and the Ethnological Collection in 1949. He retired in 1959.

THE GLORIFICATION OF COLONIALISM IN GERMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

PERCY ERNST SCHRAMM (1894 – 1970)



SUB Cod. Ms. Voit: G. H. Angenheister

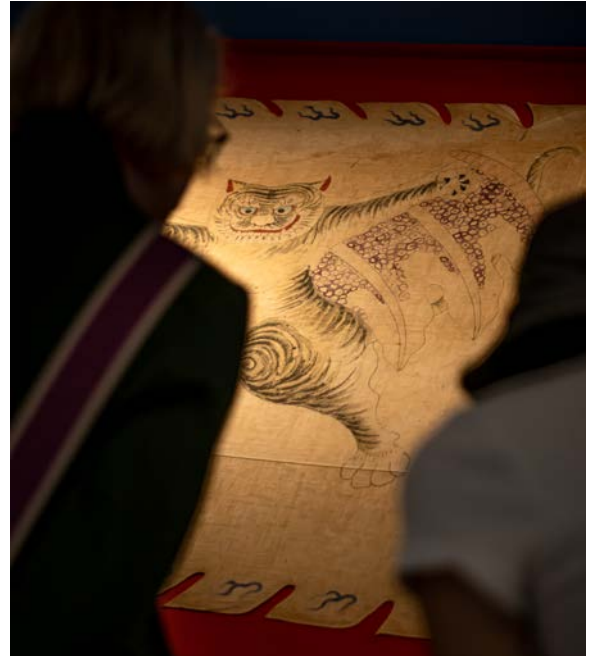
Percy Ernst Schramm was one of the most prominent German historians of his time. In 1929 he was appointed Professor of Medieval and Modern History at the University of Göttingen.

Schramm welcomed Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 and became more and more involved in the structures of the Nazi regime. He actively participated in the colonial studies initiatives that began at the University of Göttingen during the Third Reich. In the winter semester of 1938/39, for example, he gave a colonial revisionist lecture in which he spoke of the »plundering of the colonies« – in the spirit of the newly ignited colonial debate.

Schramm's writings on the history of colonialism are characterised by a highly glorified portrayal of colonialism. According to Schramm, the European colonisers had a natural claim to territories on the African continent, as »pioneers of a superior and superior race«.

He glorified colonialism as an act of cultural foundation that contributed to the civilisation of Africa, which he dismissed as »barbaric«. Schramm, who was born into an influential family of Hamburg merchants, proudly portrayed his ancestors as alleged pioneers of the German colonial empire.

Throughout his life, Schramm clung to his undifferentiated assessment of colonialism. He taught in Göttingen until 1963.





EXHIBITION COMMENTARIES

HOW DID THE EXHIBITION CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON COLONIALISM?

When you don't agree with the value underlying colonialism it's easy to put colonialism in the distant past or on people who are not you. Exhibits like this remind us that colonialism is an immediate part of who we are and where we're from.

As a white person, it is so easy to ignore colonialism. One can close one's eyes to many things that are commonplace for other people or that are obvious remnants of colonialism. So open your eyes.

We Europeans have not exactly covered us with glory in this time! No empathy for other peoples, but only the exploitation of raw materials, then we wanted to force our »culture« and our faith on them. Today the pendel strikes back... Now we are colonialized...

A person born in the 21st century is repeatedly made aware that a critical, anti-colonial perspective on both German and general colonial history is still a relatively recent achievement. Even today, far too much is still being glossed over. Especially in light of the rightward shift in this country, it is crucial to recog-

nize how fragile these advances are – and thus all the more worthy of protection against revisionists like Weidel and co.

Just because Germany's colonial history was shorter doesn't mean it's okay for it to keep shaping how people see other countries and museums around the world – especially if we don't actively confront that history. As the exhibition made clear, colonial exploitation and its justification were deeply embedded in society, and the racist beliefs behind them are still evident in today's society and cause damage.

Not changed BUT shown again how sad it is that one does NOT learn about it and one has to inform oneself about it. Be silent, so that one is not the bad one.

WHAT TRACES OF COLONIALISM CAN BE FOUND IN GÖTTINGEN?

We can't just see »traces« of colonialism – especially in times of globalization, we recognize clear parallels. Many of the products we buy are not made under fair conditions. The exploitation of other nations is the reason for our prosperity today, and that exploitation is still happening.

Too many! General wealth – questionably acquired – reflected in the city's architecture. Legacy companies that refuse to critically examine their own history. And a Europe whose economic policies are anything but fair and humane.

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH OUR COLONIAL PAST TODAY?

USE your student culture!

Make it visible. Educate about it. Critically examine it. Most importantly: Center the descendants of the victims – they have the authority to interpret this history! And: Question our own consumption with a critical eye! P.S. And of course, exhibitions like this – thank you for your dedication!

We need more exhibitions like this – ones that don't dismiss colonialism as a distant problem but instead reveal its deep entanglements reaching even the most remote corners of Germany. Additionally, postcolonial continuities must be exposed, as colonial structures are still being maintained, reproduced, and even expanded today.

It must not be forgotten. Exhibitions like this should receive more support. Additionally, colonial history should be a bigger topic in schools

**STÄDTISCHES MUSEUM
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