Curios and Taonga: Early Māori Collections in Berlin and Their Representation in the Museum für Völkerkunde (now Ethnologisches Museum)

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Abstract

This article gives an overview of the very early collections of Māori artefacts in Berlin. These encompass the collections assembled by Johann Reinhold and Georg Forster and others on the famous voyages of James Cook to the South Seas at the end of the eighteenth century, but also objects collected by the North American captain Hadlock at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Later a wide range of German visitors reported from their tours through New Zealand and brought back artefacts and photographs. This paper points out the provenances of the core areas of the Māori collection in Berlin and retraces some shifts in the collecting practices as well as in the museum installations. It will be shown how the perception and evaluation of these objects changed and how they became symbols of identity in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Contents

Introduction

[1] The history of anthropological collections has always constituted a major field of museology research. However, in the course of the last ten years or so, scholars have come to focus their attention once again on the issue of the provenance of objects. In Germany, the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace in the city centre of the capital, designed to include the ethnographic and Asian art collections, has led to a heated debate about German colonialism.[1] In addition,

[1] This debate is manifested particularly in the founding of a group named "No Humboldt 21" that demands to "STOP THE PLANNED CONSTRUCTION OF THE HUMBOLDT FORUM IN THE BERLIN PALACE!" (see http://www.no-humboldt21.de/resolution/english/; accessed 10

requests from Namibia and Australia for human remains to be returned have renewed discussions about collecting policies in colonial times. Research conducted mainly on the provenance of European paintings in view of Jewish claims to ownership has been extended to consider also the acquisition policies of German ethnographic museums during the 1930s. Thus, the postcolonial debate which had previously been focused on anthropology as a discipline is now additionally concerned with the controversies surrounding ethnographic museums and their so-called colonial collections. Museums like those in Stuttgart or Berlin have begun to organize workshops and projects on the provenance of objects collected during the colonial period. However, the circumstances in which such objects have been collected are multi-layered and complex, and sources are often scarce or difficult to identify.

[2] The following account[2] gives an overview of how the early Māori collections today housed in the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin were assembled, and how they were presented to the general public over the decades. We do not know the numbers of visitors, and we have little information about the impressions these objects made on them. What is certain, however, is that they have a long history of display in very different buildings and locations in Berlin. Not all of these taonga, as they are called today by Māori themselves, are still in the Ethnologisches Museum: some were lost during the Second World War or were sold or exchanged with other institutions or art dealers, mainly in the 1920s and 1930s.

[3] The Māori collection is one of the smallest within the Pacific Department of the Ethnologisches Museum. Nevertheless, the interest shown in ethnographic objects from New Zealand during the nineteenth and early twentieth century was considerable. In the permanent exhibition which opened in 1926, for example, some 110 items from New Zealand were presented to the public. When last inventoried in 1998, 355 objects were classified as belonging to New Zealand, 52 objects were missing, and 28 objects had been exchanged or sold. Two are recorded as having been destroyed by insects. This makes a total of some 430 objects that originally arrived in Berlin, which is not much compared with other collections held in museums in Britain and in the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

March 2018). The Humboldt Forum's website is a reaction to such debates: https://www.humboldtforum.com/en/stories/a-site-of-debate/ (accessed 10 March 2018). The media debate is summarized in an article by Gero Schliess, "Is Berlin's Humboldt Forum Shying Away from Colonial History?" (14.08.2017), see http://www.dw.com/en/is-berlins-humboldt-forum-shying-away-from-colonial-history/a-40082234 (accessed 10 March 2018).

[2] A shorter initial version of this paper was presented at the "Taonga Māori Conference" held at the National Museum in Wellington in 1990, see: Markus Schindlbeck, "On the History of the Maori Collection in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin", in: *Papers of Taonga Maori Conference. New Zealand 18-27 November 1990*, ed. Cultural Conservation Advisory Council. Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington 1991.

[4] The most outstanding Māori collection in Germany in respect of its age and history is hold by the Ethnological Collection of the University of Göttingen: the so-called Cook/Forster Collection represents the most comprehensive accumulation of eighteenth-century cultural and artistic creations from the South Seas. Another highlight of Māori art in German ethnographic museums is the Rauru meeting house in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg. The ethnographic collections in Leipzig, Munich and Stuttgart likewise contain significant, though smaller collections of Māori art. The collection in Berlin is remarkable because of its temporal depth as well as its outstanding pieces of contemporary art; among these are works by the famous Māori artists Cliff Whiting, Lisa Reihana, John Bevan Ford, Cath Brown and Darcy Nicholas.

The Early Pacific / Māori Objects in Berlin

[5] The first artifacts of Pacific cultures in Berlin collections go back to the period of James Cook and Johann Reinhold Forster who, with his son George, participated in Cook's second voyage to the South Seas in 1772-1775. Although numerous articles and books have been published in recent decades on the collections of James Cook and his companions, the objects in Berlin that are attributed to Cook and Forster have never received adequate attention from ethnographers. It is remarkable that, of all the curators who have worked with the collection, such as Felix von Luschan, August Eichhorn, Hans Nevermann and Gerd Koch, none sought to document this early collection, which was so preeminent during the early period of the museum. Certainly, the relative scarcity of reliable documents was one reason.[3] Despite this, the great importance of these early collections in the eyes of their contemporaries is manifested in a few early publications as well as in the impact they had on later collecting activities undertaken by the museum.

[6] During 1802 several objects from the Pacific were bought by the precursor of the Ethnologisches Museum, the so-called Kunstkammer. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact identity of these objects, only that some of them originated from New Zealand and that they were part of the collections made during the voyages undertaken by Cook, whose fame was widespread at that time. The person responsible for the collection was John (or Jean) Henry (1761-1831), a refugee from France who worked as a protestant clergyman in Berlin and later as a librarian and director of the Prussian Kunstkammer from 1794 to 1829.[4] In 1805 he compiled a brief inventory of the Kunstkammer, including a special chapter on

[3] This situation led one of the most well-known researchers of Polynesian artefacts, Adrienne Kaeppler, to have general doubts about the provenance of the objects attributed to Forster in the museum inventory because some of them originated from islands not visited during the second Cook voyage. Today, however, we know that the exchange of objects among the Pacific islands was already widespread in earlier times. Cf. Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and Christian F. Feest, eds., *James Cook. Gifts and Treasures from the South Seas. The Cook/Forster Collection Göttingen*, Munich and New York 1998.

[4] Wolfgang Dahmen et al., eds., *Das Französische in den deutschsprachigen Ländern: Romanistisches* Kolloquium VII, Tübingen 1993; Eva Giloi, *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750-1950*, Cambridge 2011.

the objects from overseas. These were located in a separate room in the Prussian palace in the center of Berlin.[5] Due to the occupation of Berlin by Napoleon's troops, a number of ethnographic objects from this early period were taken to Paris; nothing is known about their further whereabouts. Although part of this loot was returned to Berlin after 1815, we do not know if it included objects from the Pacific.

[7] The second major acquisition was carried out in 1819 by Martin Hinrich Lichtenstein (1780-1857), director of the Berlin museum of zoology, who was sent by Henry to London on the occasion of the sale of the William Bullock Museum.[6] The Bullock Museum was a private institution and included parts of the Leverian Museum, which had been sold shortly before.[7] Both contained substantial parts of the Cook collections. The catalogue of the sale by Bullock is mentioned in a short note probably written by John Henry.[8] Henry had marked the pieces to be bought. He writes – mainly in view of plans to concentrate the royal collections in a public museum – that these rarities would embellish the royal art collections, noting also that the present ethnographic collection in Berlin was too poor and not comparable to the collection in Göttingen. Henry's plans were later implemented, and the first public museum in Berlin, named Royal Museum, was opened in 1830 (in a newly erected building today called Altes Museum), albeit without the ethnographic objects – a decision to which Wilhelm von Humboldt objected.[9] The remark by Henry is important because it reveals that there were different ideas about the content of this first public museum in Berlin. And the reference to Göttingen illustrates the fame the Cook collection in Göttingen had already gained at that time.[10] Lichtenstein refers in his notes to the high prices for feather cloaks and complains that he can only buy weapons, domestic utensils and

[5] This historical location is today made a case for moving the exhibitions housed in the *Ethnologisches Museum* in Berlin-Dahlem to the partially reconstructed Berlin Palace in the city centre, the Humboldt Forum. What this argument neglects to mention, however, is that the large collections held in storage will never be displayed there. They were to be transferred to a new storage building on the eastern outskirts of the city. Due to funding difficulties, they will remain in Berlin-Dahlem for the time being.

[6] Following Giloi, it was a decision taken by the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm III "to fund Hinrich Lichtenstein's acquisition from Captain Cook's estate and the Bullock Museum"; Eva Giloi, *Monarchy, Myth, and Material Culture in Germany 1750-1950*, Cambridge, UK 2011, 69.

[7] Further information about the Leverian Museum can be found in Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *Holophusicon: The Leverian Museum: An Eighteenth-Century English Institution of Science, Curiosity, and Art,* Altenstadt 2011.

[8] Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, KKM 29-30.

[9] Sigrid Westphal-Hellbusch, "Zur Geschichte des Museums", in: *Baessler-Archiv. Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 21 (1973), 1-99, 8.

[10] Regarding the Māori collection in Göttingen, see Markus Schindlbeck, "New Zealand – Land of the Long White Cloud", in: *James Cook. Gifts and Treasures from the South Seas. The Cook/Forster Collection, Göttingen*, eds. Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and Christian F. Feest, Munich and New York 1998, 172-194.

decorative objects. Thus, most of the objects he bought were oars, war clubs, spears, tattooing instruments and the stern of a New Zealand canoe, “a very fine specimen of the taste and ingenuity of those islands”.[11]

[8] If we examine the portraits by Lindauer we get an impression of the refinement and value of these Māori cloaks. Alongside the carvings made by men even today, they are the most highly regarded pieces of Māori women’s work. The museum inventory of this early period is rather incomplete and so it is not possible to give a definitive number of all the objects relating to Cook or Forster. With all these reservations in mind, we can say that the New Zealand objects currently include fifteen objects attributed to Cook and fourteen objects attributed to Forster. Those collected by Forster are weapons (fig. 1), axes and some wind instruments (fig. 3).

1 *Taiaha* weapon (detail), New Zealand, ca. 1750. Forster collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 134 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

[11] List of Bullock‘s sale. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, KKM 29-30, Akte 42.

2 *Stone club*, New Zealand, ca. 1750. Cook collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 54 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Those collected by Cook are weapons (fig. 2), tattooing instruments, various carvings (fig. 4), and the above-mentioned stern of a canoe.

3 *Flute*, New Zealand, ca. 1750. Forster collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 414 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

4 *Part of house lintel*, New Zealand, ca. 1750. Cook collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 164 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

[9] During the year 1824, after the death of Johann Reinhold Forster's widow, some more objects from Forster's possession were acquired in Germany.[12] The journeys undertaken by Forster and his son were important for the subsequent research conducted by Alexander von Humboldt as well as for the journeys of Adelbert von Chamisso and later Adolf Bastian. Thus, these objects attributed to Cook and Forster constitute early milestones in the development of the museum and the discipline of anthropology in Berlin. They were regarded as initiating a tradition of anthropological ventures into the Pacific.

[10] Another even more important collection from this early period derives from the North American captain Samuel Hadlock (1792-1829). The objects were bought, probably by John Henry, in 1826: twenty-two objects in the hand-written inventory of the *Ethnologisches Museum* are matched with the entry "Hadlock". There is not a great deal of information in the museum archive about this figure. A short note, which I found, describing two pieces he sold to the Kunstkammer may be of some interest: one piece was a Hei Tiki, and the other an object called a "calendar".

The idol which I sold to the Royal Museum is cut out of blue jade stone [...] said stone is a badge of honour for the kings and princess [sic] of New Zealand, it is called in their language 'marow' and was brought out, in the year 1823, by the prince Kayatera to London, who received it from his father, Kayatera King of the Bay of Islands.[13]

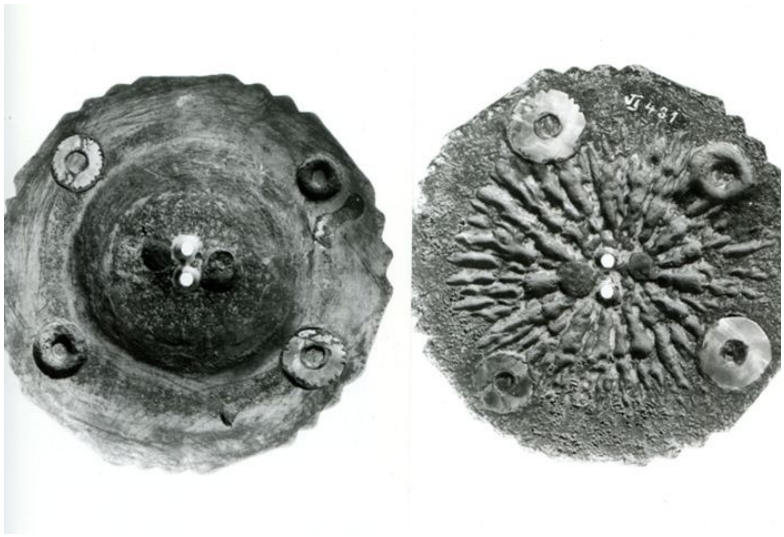
Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to clarify the identity of this prince Kayatera. There is only one Hei Tiki in the Hadlock collection, and so I presume it is the object with the inventory number 251 (fig. 5).

[12] Cf. Inventory of the South Pacific Collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin.

[13] Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, KKM 29-30, Akte 87.

5 *Tiki*, New Zealand, ca. 1800. Hadlock collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 251 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

[11] The other piece of information refers to an object which Hadlock describes as a “calendar”. This is probably the object with the inventory number 481, a round piece of bone with inlaid work of mother-of-pearl shell (fig. 6).



6 *Ornament*, New Zealand, ca. 1800. Hadlock collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 481 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Hadlock says:

The calendar, a Royal dignitys, [is] only possessed by kings, and princess [sic]. They take it out of their native country in travelling, to prove their dignity. The calendar was brought out by the same prince Kayatera, who died at Lemington in

England the 9th of August 1823, as witnessed by my hand and seal, Capt. Hadlock.[14]

The other objects coming from Hadlock's collection were weapons, a belt, a necklace, a cloak, a comb and a flute.

[12] Hadlock was an entrepreneur who lost his fortune while exhibiting a travelling show of Inuit people in Europe in the 1820s.[15] He had left North America for Europe in 1821, travelling via Britain where he probably acquired the New Zealand artefacts. He also brought a significant number of Inuit artefacts with him. In 1824, he arrived with his show in Hamburg before moving on to Leipzig. In Berlin, he met the daughter of the magistrate of Charlottenburg and they fell in love. It was during this time that he probably sold the artefacts to the Kunstkammer in Berlin. In 1829, he and his ship were lost while sailing to the Arctic to hunt seals.

[13] Thus, Hadlock's Māori collection demonstrates the early connections forged between the Kunstkammer and impresarios travelling through Europe with shows of indigenous people. This pattern was to be repeated at the end of the century. A demonstration of artefacts was often included in the shows of indigenous groups. World exhibitions were the precursors of ethnographic museums and events involving performances by indigenous groups. Even before the famous Great Exhibition in London in 1851 there were smaller presentations on a local scale. Some of the objects of these exhibitions entered the collections of ethnographic museums. Photographic images created in studios after the middle of the century could be seen in relation to these shows. Indigenous or "exotic" people were photographed together with a selection of ethnographic specimens, which were thought of as being representative of their culture. Often the persons themselves decided on the way they were to be portrayed. Unfortunately, we do not have much information about this participation of the individuals who were photographed. The Lindauer portraits certainly give us an idea of this relationship of cooperation.

The Pacific / Māori Collections in Berlin in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

[14] The methods through which collections were incorporated into the museum changed radically in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the museum commissioned its own expeditions, people travelling or living overseas also collected artefacts for the museum. The number of objects increased considerably after 1870. – In 1886, the ethnological collections were transferred into a museum of its own, the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (today's Ethnologisches Museum; the renaming took place in 2000). – There are various reasons for this, the most important one surely being colonial expansion. The

[14] Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, KKM 29-30, Akte 87.

[15] Robin K. Wright, "The Traveling Exhibition of Captain Samuel Hadlock, Jr. Eskimos in Europe, 1822-1826", in: *Indians and Europe. An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed. Christian F. Feest, Aachen 1987, 215-233.

actors behind the scenes were mainly Adolf Bastian (1826-1905)[16], the founding director of the Museum für Völkerkunde, and one of his assistants, Felix von Luschan (1854-1924)[17]. Both created a network of communication with a vast number of very different collectors. This network relied partially on the numerous voyages undertaken by Bastian himself. The Pacific was only one of his many destinations, though certainly a very important one to him, as we can deduce from his books and articles.[18] Bastian had also visited New Zealand. Karl von den Steinen, who later became famous for his studies on Marquesan art, gives us a vivid impression of Bastian's scope when he met a Māori researcher on the East Coast in Napier in 1880. Writing among piles of paper, mats, greenstone clubs and carvings, the researcher told von den Steinen that Bastian had visited him shortly before and that all these things were for him, including records of myths and genealogies he was translating from the Māori language.[19]

[15] Of the many donations and acquisitions made over the following decades, I have chosen to discuss the collection assembled by the German consul in New Zealand, Friedrich August Krull, the collection of Sir Walter Buller, and, finally, the collection of Georg Thilenius. Friedrich August Krull (1836-1914) emigrated to New Zealand in 1858 and became Konsul of the Norddeutscher Bund in 1861 and of the Deutsches Reich in 1871. Krull was born in Neubrandenburg north of Berlin and is one of the many German migrants who journeyed to New Zealand in the nineteenth century. He arrived in Wellington on January 27, 1859 after a four-month voyage on a Swedish ship: “With great alacrity we helped the sailors weigh anchor, and with what suspense did we stand on the foredeck to get the first view of the town which was to become our new home”, Friedrich Krull writes in his letters home which were published only recently.[20] “After we entered through the narrow straits a beautiful harbour lay before us, surrounded by high hills, and behind it more hills ascending to the snowline. In the east we saw Wellington itself, stretching along the coast for a mile. We were amazed: we had not expected the place to be so big.” Friedrich Krull lived in Wellington until his

[16] Cf. Manuela Fischer, Peter Bolz and Susan Kamel, eds., *Adolf Bastian and His Universal Archive of Humanity. The Origins of German Anthropology*, Hildesheim 2007.

[17] See the comprehensive studies of von Luschan by Peter Ruggendorfer and Hubert D. Szemethy, eds., *Felix von Luschan (1854-1924). Leben und Wirken eines Universalgelehrten*, Vienna 2009, and Christine Stelzig, *Afrika am Museum für Völkerkunde zu Berlin 1873-1919. Aneignung, Darstellung und Konstruktion eines Kontinents*, Herbolzheim 2004.

[18] For Bastian‘s visit to Australia, see Adolf Bastian, *Inselgruppen in Oceanien. Reiseergebnisse und Studien*, Berlin 1883; Markus Schindlbeck, “Bastian's Travels in Australia and Their Significance for Research on Australia in Berlin's Museum of Ethnology”, in: *Adolf Bastian and His Universal Archive of Humanity. The Origins of German Anthropology,* eds. Manuela Fischer et al., Hildesheim 2007, 207-221.

[19] “Adolf Bastian: Gedächtnisfeier am 11. März 1905”, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 37 (1905), 233-254.

[20] Friedrich August Krull, *An Indescribable Beauty: Letters Home to Germany from Wellington*, *New Zealand, 1858 & 1862*, Wellington 2012, 5.

death in 1914. He married and had seven children, held office as a Wellington city councillor and member of the Wellington Harbour Board, and in 1871 was appointed Imperial German Consul by Kaiser Wilhelm I. Many of his descendants still live in New Zealand.[21]

[16] In the year 1872, Consul Krull sent a letter to the *Reichskonsul* Wilke in London which was transmitted to Berlin asking if the ethnological museum would be interested in receiving any ethnographic objects from New Zealand.[22] As a response to this letter, Bastian, who was to become director of the ethnological collections in 1876, wrote a list of desirable objects. This list shows Bastian's wide range of ethnographic interests, which were not limited to art and beautifully decorated artefacts but included all kinds of objects such as sandals made of New Zealand flax, mats, and suchlike. Consul Krull brought together rather different collections that already existed in New Zealand, among them one by Henry Travers who had visited the Chatham Islands in 1863-1864.

[17] Henry Hammersley Travers (1844-1928) was a New Zealand naturalist, professional collector and taxidermist. His father had likewise been a renowned naturalist. The first time he visited the Chatham Islands, he collected botanical specimens at the request of Ferdinand von Mueller of the Victorian Government in Australia. On his second visit six years later, he paid considerable attention to matters of ornithology. In 1913, he was appointed curator of the Newtown Museum. His collection of birds is now in the Te Papa museum in Wellington. He offered the museum in Berlin various botanical, zoological and anthropological objects. Some of the blades, fishing hooks and mats housed in the museum today had been collected by Travers.

[18] More important was the collection assembled by James Hector from the Colonial Museum of New Zealand for the "Imperial Museum" in Berlin at the request of Krull. It included not only objects of ethnographic interest but also all kinds of items relevant to the Berlin museum of zoology:

Certain articles illustrative of the habits of life of the Maori which are now seldom seen in use, the natives having within the last 15 years adopted better substitutes from those of European manufacture. They are therefore rarely obtained and are chiefly found in old cultivations or in the shell mounds near the coast where the Maories held their feasts in former times and which contain direct evidence that the present race with the same habits of life as they practised at the date of the settlement of the Colony by the Europeans, were coeval with the Moa and other gigantic Struthious birds now extinct.[23]

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[21] His grandson, Eric Krull, was a naval officer at the D-Day Normandy landings.

[22] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 1, pars 1 B, E 450/72, E 387/73.

[23] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 1, pars 1 B, E 387/73: Catalogue of Collections from the Colonial Museum of New Zealand selected for presentation to the Imperial Museum at Berlin at the request of F.A. Krull Esq. Consul.

Thus, the collection offered contained mainly archaeological material and casts – certainly not the objects Bastian had requested.

[19] Sir James Hector (1834-1907) was internationally renowned as a geologist and explorer. He was the first Director of the Colonial Museum in Wellington and held this position for many years. He could be considered the founding father of today's Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in short form Te Papa. Hector was born in Scotland in 1834 and arrived in New Zealand in 1862 after exploring western Canada for three years. He first worked in Otago, then came to Wellington in 1865 to run the Colony's Geological Survey and Museum. With regard to the lot of Māori objects arranged for Berlin through mediation of Krull, I was able to find a newspaper cutting from the *Wellington Independent* of June 27, 1872, stating:

Dr Hector is preparing for transmission to Germany an exceedingly interesting collection of Maori curiosities, [...] considerable pains are being taken to make the collection a very complete one, which will be valuable not solely for the variety and excellence of the articles included but for the reason that subjects connected with the ethnology of New Zealand are at present occupying more attention amongst scientific men on the continent than at any previous time. The collection is one that will be highly prized by savants throughout Germany, and will also form an attractive feature in any museum in which it may be placed.[24]

Looking at the 24 objects contributed by Krull to the Berlin museum, this appears rather exaggerated. Still it is a remarkably well documented selection of objects, a number of feather cloaks and mats being of most interest.

[20] Again through a connection with the Berlin museum of zoology, another collection entered the Museum für Völkerkunde, donated by Sir Walter Buller (1838-1906), who was a natural scientist and ornithologist (fig. 7).[25]

[24] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 1, pars 1 B, E 287/71.

[25] On the special relation of Buller to Lindauer, see Roger Blackley, "Gottfried Lindauer. Eine neuseeländische Laufbahn", in: *Gottfried Lindauer – Die Māori Portraits*, eds. Udo Kittelmann and Britta Schmitz, Cologne 2014, 43-45.

7 *Wooden club*, New Zealand, ca. 1850. Buller collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 11761 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Among the gifts was a monumental figure which is no longer in the museum (and was very likely lost during World War II).[26] Another object that deserves special mention, was a dog-skin cloak. Regarding this object Sir Walter Buller wrote to Bastian on June 29, 1893:

As you are doubtless aware, this Maori dog is now extinct and, due to their perishable nature, very few of these skin cloaks remain. The present one is said to have belonged to the celebrated Ngatiawa chief, Te Wharepouri, who died at Wellington about 1842. At that time the dog was scarce, and a few years later it became extinct.[27]

In the correspondence between Adolf Bastian and Walter Buller it is evident that there was a strong interest on the side of the museum in acquiring more objects from the Māori, especially larger carvings and pieces of architecture.

[21] Regarding the carvings Buller wrote to Bastian: “You have been to New Zealand and you know how extremely difficult it is now to obtain any of the very ancient carvings. Indeed, what were left of these were nearly all destroyed during the Māori war which lasted some ten years.”[28] Nevertheless, he promised that he would help the museum to acquire some ancient carvings. In fact Buller was

[26] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 6, pars 1 B, E 1285/93.

[27] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 6, pars 1 B, E 1285/93.

[28] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 6, pars 1 B, E 1285/93.

helpful in providing the museum with parts of a war canoe. The carvings were described in a short article written by von Luschan in 1895. In this article, he quotes information given by Buller:

This canoe was built on the supposed model of the traditional Arawa Canoe, in which the forefathers of the present Maori people came to New Zealand, and in early days of the colony it had a great fame among the tribes. It was used for the last time in 1857, when the Araua people conveyed Sir George Gray as Governor across the Rotomahana Lake.[29]

[22] According to the German-Austrian naturalist and explorer Ferdinand Hochstetter, who had visited New Zealand in 1859, George Grey was a governor whom the Māori had praised as one of their chiefs. The fact that the canoe in Berlin had carried the famous George Grey (who had also written the book *Polynesian Mythology*), leads von Luschan to the final remark in his article that Grey might be a suitable role model for the future governors of the new German colonies. This short excursus exemplifies how objects were instrumentalized in the making of political statements and were reinterpreted for a new audience. Felix von Luschan was married to the daughter of Ferdinand Hochstetter. This family connection gave von Luschan first-hand information about New Zealand and might have reinforced his interest in Māori artefacts.

[23] The third major collection of this early period was compiled by Georg Thilenius (1868-1937), a physician and ethnologist who later became the first director of the museum of ethnography in Hamburg. In 1897 he travelled from Samoa to New Zealand, where he intended to collect anatomical material for the Berlin Academy of Sciences. As mentioned above in relation to the correspondence between Bastian and Buller, the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde was strongly committed to acquiring major parts of the architectural structure of Māori buildings. In his first letter from New Zealand dated November 3, 1898, Thilenius wrote that he had not had much success in finding Māori antiquities (fig. 8).[30]

[29] Felix von Luschan, “Über zwei alte Canoe-Schnitzwerke aus Neu-Seeland”, in: *Ethnologisches Notizblatt* 1 (1895), no. 2, 1-5: 1.

[30] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien*, vol. 10, pars 1 B, E 574/98.

8 *Footrest for digging stick*, New Zealand, ca. 1850. Thilenius collection, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv.-Nr. VI 16322 (© Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

The Māori had ceased to carve in the old ways, and all the old pieces had already been bought by museums or tourists. Pieces made using stone and shell tools were so weather-worn as to be of no value. Other carvings made after the beginning of the nineteenth century seemed to him to be too superficial.

[24] Despite these setbacks, Thilenius still hoped to find a traditional Māori house at East Cape, though prices were high – a whole house, he estimated, would cost about one hundred and fifty pounds. He therefore suggested commissioning a typical house. Von Luschan rejected this proposal, arguing that the new carving tradition was not authentic enough.[31] Finally Thilenius mentions several pieces he saw in the possession of an art dealer named Craig, but only a small number of the objects proposed could eventually be bought by the museum. More significantly, he mentions and gives details of a Māori house (or rather, fragments of a house) which were later bought by the museum in 1900. The art dealer Craig gives the following description of this house:

This pataka was built and used by the Ngatiwhaka-aue Tribe [sic], and called by them 'Maru'. The tribal name of a neighbouring tribe at Hauraki was Ngati-maru, and when they heard that the Ngatiwhaka-aue Tribe had named their food house 'Maru', they took it as an insult, made a warlike raid against that tribe, and defeated them. The beaten tribe took down the food house and hid it. Several years after it was carried to Wairoa, and was there at the time of the eruption of

[31] For the history of another Māori meeting house, the Rauru, which was sold to the Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg, see Carl Triesch, "Von Rotorua nach Hamburg. Rauru findet seine neue Heimat", in: *Das Haus Rauru, Meisterwerk der Maori*, eds. Bernd Schmelz and Wulf Köpke, Hamburg 2012 (= *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg,* vol. 43), 199-231.

Tarawera. After that it was removed to Peherangi, on Lake Rotorua, from hence to Rotorua.[32]

[25] Eric Craig (1829-1923) was a collector, publisher and dealer in artefacts relating to natural history and ethnography. He ran a curio business called *The fern and curiosity dealer* near the old Auckland museum. After the *pataka* came into Craig's possession, he must have sold the house fragments to the art dealer William D. Webster (1868-1913), from whom the museum in Berlin bought it in 1900. Webster was one of the most widely known art dealers in London, mainly on account of his Benin objects. "W.D. Webster was the last dealer not to depend on the break-up of museum collections as a major source for his stock. He travelled round the country purchasing materials from primary collectors who had obtained objects in the field, as well as acquiring artefacts at auction."[33] The Berlin *pataka* was to be displayed in all permanent exhibitions held at the museum since its acquisition. However, like most of the Māori objects, this *pataka* will not be shown again when the Humboldt Forum opens in 2019 (planned opening) due to lack of space. Thus, the permanent exhibition of Māori objects at the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde resp. Ethnologisches Museum between 1886 and 1939 and between 1970 and 2016 (when it was closed in view of its reinstallation in the Berlin Palace) will become part of the museum's history.

[26] The last acquisitions I shall mention were made by a famous art dealer named William O. Oldman (1879-1949) in London in 1911. "Oldman is best known for his Polynesian collection and printed catalogues of tribal art. Oldman knew W.D. Webster well."[34] Out of a selection of 19 pieces offered by Oldman, von Luschan chose only four: a doorway "[…] elaborately carved in high relief with two tiki figures on body, two male figures each side of head and two others at base (85£) […]"[35], a large carving showing a female figure giving birth for £66, a front board in two pieces for £42, and a war canoe prow for £38. No further information was given by Oldman on the provenance of these pieces. The last item was deaccessioned by the museum in the 1930s and is now in the Rietberg Museum in Zürich.[36]

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[32] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien,* vol. 13, pars 1 B, E 607/1900.

[33] Hermione Waterfield and J.C.H. King, *Provenance. Twelve Collectors of Ethnographic Art in England 1760-1990*, Paris 2006, 59.

[34] Waterfield and King, *Provenance,* 65.

[35] Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, archive, *Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien,* vol. 13, pars 1 B, E 353/11 .

[36] For the history of this outstanding Māori carving, cf. Markus Schindlbeck, *Gefunden und verloren. Arthur Speyer, die dreißiger Jahre und die Verluste der Sammlung Südsee des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin*, Bönen 2012, 146.

The Representation of Māori Art in the Museum's Early Exhibition Guides

[27] The first description of the New Zealand items in the Berlin Kunstkammer was published in 1844 by the historian Leopold von Ledebur (1799-1877), who had succeeded John Henry as director of the Berlin Kunstkammer in 1829.[37] Ledebur notes that the ethnographic collections are filled with objects from the Islands of the Pacific. He mentions that several objects formed part of the inheritance of the "unhappy" Captain Cook and were bought in London. According to Ledebur, other objects entered the museum after 1819, having been bought by Konrad Levezow (1770-1835), who was an assistant to Jean Henry. In fact, is was Levezow who bought the objects from Forster's inheritance in 1824. At that time, the importance of the Cook collection was still acknowledged. Ledebur points out that these objects demonstrate how far human inventiveness can go, making sole use of inherited skills and the instinct of reason and without yet possessing iron. Special mention is made of New Zealand flax, which is worked into blankets and clothing, woven by a free and steady hand and displaying an evenness of the thread. This is an allusion to the Māori's special weaving technique. This technique was one reason why Europeans had a special interest in Māori textiles, as it was thought to represent a particular stage in a group's cultural evolution. Some of the very complicated *taniko* weaving can be seen in the Lindauer portraits. Ledebur also mentions the technique of tattooing as a means of ornamentation, along with the corresponding instruments.[38]

[28] One of the most artful pieces from New Zealand mentioned by Ledebur is a carved throne of a chief (inventory number D 1024). This throne has a special history. I have no indication of its outer appearance, but it existed until 1895/96, when probably Felix von Luschan took it apart as he realized that this throne was a fake and that the Māori never had a so-called throne. The larger part of this ensemble was sold in 1939 to a German art dealer; we have no information about its present whereabouts. Another part of this 'throne' is probably a finely carved and richly decorated part of a canoe corresponding to inventory number VI 165.

[29] Another object which is mentioned by Ledebur is a weapon attributed to Cook and New Zealand, a club made of casuarina wood. Its handle is claimed to carry the beards of slain enemies (inventory number E 1095). Ledebur gives the only native term for a weapon, "Pätta-Pättu", the short weapon of the New Zealander, normally made of stone but also of wood and bone. What is certainly remarkable in von Ledebur's catalogue is the still very vivid connection with the voyages undertaken by Cook and Forster. He described the objects not as mere curiosities but understood them as reminiscences of a great adventure and a reminder of Cook's death. Certainly, the materiality of the objects, such as flax, was of interest, but his approach has veered away from the 'curiosities' approach typical of the Kunstkammer in the seventeenth century.

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[37] Leopold von Ledebur, *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstkammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin*, Berlin 1844.

[38] Leopold von Ledebur, *Leitfaden für die Königliche Kunstkammer und das Ethnographische Cabinet zu Berlin*, Berlin 1844, 139.

[30] If the ethnographic collection in Berlin in 1830 was housed in an institution called Kunstkammer, this was purely the persistence of an elder institutional organization, though without continuing its former meanings and implications. Thus, it is wrong to include these early objects collected by Cook, Forster and Hadlock in a fictional Kunstkammer in the Humboldt Forum, as Horst Bredekamp has suggested.[39] The only reason for this misrepresentation would be to give some legitimacy for the transfer of ethnographic objects into a castle, where most of them had never been previously. The controversial reconstruction of the Hohenzollern Palace has been debated exhaustively. The legitimation for this 'returning home' of objects owned by royals in the past was an important argument in these debates.[40] However, the Humboldt Forum has been conceived from the outset to be far more than just a museum: its mandate is to demonstrate, in the center of the new German capital, an attitude of openness towards a discourse with cultures around the world. Thus, the political aspect of the museum has acquired greater importance in comparison with scientific and historical rigour. Lindauer certainly would have been an outstanding role model in this global dialogue. Yet just as no paintings by Lindauer were ever acquired by the National Gallery in Berlin, still today contemporary Māori art is not accepted either, as was clearly stated by the representatives of the Berlin State museums in 1995. Such art has been seen merely in terms of 'documentation' in Germany, whereas works by prominent Māori artists like Cliff Whiting and Lisa Reihana have been given considerable space in the Te Papa museum in Wellington.[41]

[31] With the building of the Royal Museum soon becoming too small to hold the ever-growing collections, an additional structure was erected, the so-called Neues Museum (and the first building called Altes Museum from now on). The reinstallation and reorganisation of the ethnographical collection in the Neues Museum after 1856/59 was overseen by Leopold von Ledebur, and later by Adolf Bastian. Three rooms on the ground floor displayed objects from Oceania, Africa, America and Asia. On the first floor, Egyptian artefacts and European collections were installed. In a description from the year 1865, the objects from Oceania were grouped into 1. Sandwich Islands, 2. Marquesas, Society and Friendly Islands, 3. Viti, New Hebrides and New Caledonia, 4. New Zealand.[42] The name of Cook is still mentioned in relation to the Hawaiian helmets on display. Several objects from New Zealand were shown in one larger showcase. Special mention is given to a free-standing or hanging model of a war canoe from New Zealand and the so-called throne of a Māori chief. The different continents were marked using

[39] See Horst Bredekamp, "Die Werke sind nicht bezähmbar", interview in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 7.7.2015.

[40] Cf. Markus Schindlbeck, "Humboldt Forum and the Debate on Colonialism" (forthcoming).

[41] On this discussion, see Markus Schindlbeck, "Contemporary Māori Art and Berlin's Ethnological Museum", in: *Pacific Art. Persistence, Change and Meaning,* eds. Anita Herle, Nick Stanley, Karen Stevenson, and Robert L. Welsch, Adelaide 2002, 342-352.

[42] P. Löwe, *Die Königlichen Museen für Kunst und Alterthum. Leitfaden für die Besucher des Vordern und des Neuen Museums, mit zahlreichen Erklärungen*, Berlin 1865, 24.

differently coloured labels. The ethnographic collection remained in this museum until the 1880s. At that time, it was already rather crammed. The lack of space meant that the objects had to be moved, and Bastian stated that he could not publish a detailed catalogue, but only a guide to the exhibition.[43] He placed special emphasis on the newly arrived collections, probably in order to honour (and encourage) the collectors.

[32] In the permanent exhibition in the Neues Museum described by Bastian in 1877, the former prevalence of Polynesian objects disappears. There were now more and more objects arriving from Melanesia, such as those reported and brought by the ship *Gazelle* in the 1870s. The throne of the Māori chief is still mentioned, however. What is more intriguing is the description of pieces from Hawaii as “objects from the olden days of the Sandwich Islands”. We see here that Bastian is already distinguishing between the objects from Cook’s voyages and the recently acquired ones from Melanesia. The Polynesian objects were presented in showcases but some were also free-standing or hanging from the ceiling, such as a boat from Hawaii.

[33] In the 1880s, the ethnographical collections were again transferred. The new building of the Museum für Völkerkunde, which opened in 1886, provided new space and a new vision. Nevertheless, the curators soon realized that the available space was not enough for the increasing number of objects entering the museum. The ground floor housed prehistoric and Greek collections. The Oceania collection was located on the first floor along with all the other ethnographic collections and occupied two large rooms which were not subdivided, only the showcases lending structure to the room. One showcase located in the middle of the room was reserved for the objects from New Zealand. There were no additional criteria for ordering the objects. The Māori pieces were displayed near other objects from New Caledonia. The throne of the Māori chief was still mentioned in the new guide to the exhibition. As everything was on display, the guide gives a more or less complete list of the objects.[44]

[34] The next big step in the presentation of the objects from New Zealand came in 1926 with the splitting-up of the collection into a portion on display, and the other relegated into storage. There is not enough space here to go into the details of this process of dividing up the collections. Certainly, however, it was strongly influenced by aesthetic criteria. The mode of exhibiting objects in 1926 was different from earlier forms of display: the showcases were smaller and the New Zealand objects were arranged according to specific topics: carvings and weapons, ancestral figures, ornaments with clothing and weapons, and a special showcase for the Māori chief.

[43] Adolf Bastian, *Königliche Museen. Führer durch die Ethnographische Abtheilung*, Berlin 1877.

[44] *Führer durch die Sammlungen des Museums für Völkerkunde*, herausgegeben von der Generalverwaltung, Berlin 1887: 115-136. The throne is mentioned on page 116.

Conclusion

[35] The constitution of ethnographic collections is dependent on a large number of different influences. As we have seen, the personalities involved, their network of contacts, and their special interests and activities are all extremely important. The Berlin curators never undertook a systematic collection of artefacts from New Zealand as they did for other places in the Pacific. The objects offered to the participants of Cook's voyages constitute the first collection in Berlin. It includes, most prominently, weapons, although some tools and musical instruments are also enclosed. The fascination generated by the reports of Cook's voyages is transferred onto the objects, which in turn became famous because of their association with Cook and Forster.

[36] Later, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Bastian sought to systematize the collection, making a list of desirable and missing objects. Among them are many items of everyday use. Unfortunately, it was already too late for this type of collecting activity. Thus, the Māori collection in Berlin largely mirrors the impressions conveyed by the paintings of Lindauer: weapons and clothing dominate the scene, together with ornaments such as pendants and Hei Tiki. Towards the end of the century, a greater deal of attention was placed on larger carvings, houses, and architectural frames. This turn reflects a growing interest of art historians in Europe in ornamental design, expressed in lively debates toward the end of the nineteenth century about the development of art and ornaments.[45] However, it certainly also mirrors the situation in New Zealand regarding colonial exhibitions, where entire architectural constructions were displayed, transferred and sold.[46]

[37] At the same time Bastian and von Luschan chose not to buy newly carved boards and lintels, as they classified them as inauthentic. In making this decision, they inadvertently perpetuated for subsequent generations the image of the Māori as a vanishing culture; the dynamics of and changes in Māori culture have thus been underrepresented. Gerd Koch, who installed the renowned and oft-repeated permanent exhibition in Dahlem in 1970, did not integrate any Māori objects dating from the end of the nineteenth century as they showed traces of European influence. This European perspective on Māori culture was so strong that it was almost impossible to introduce contemporary Māori art in a temporary exhibition in 1995.[47] Apparently, the shifts in object categories entering a museum collection and the changes in their presentation and description in museum contexts can tell us much about shifts in the apprehension of other cultures.

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[45] Alois Riegl, “Neuseeländische Ornamentik”, in: *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 20 (1890), 84-87.

[46] Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori. A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, Oxford, New York 2007, 26.

[47] For comments on contemporary Māori art by the directorate of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz in 1995, see Schindlbeck, “Contemporary Māori Art and Berlin's Ethnological Museum”.

[38] The Lindauer portraits do not give a representative view of the material culture of the Māori at the end of the nineteenth century, as their focus is on displaying Māori figures adorned with garments and ornaments. Nevertheless, we do gain an insight into what was fashionable at that time. We must also remember that Māori material culture underwent drastic changes and losses during the period after the Māori Wars (1843-1872). This change can be observed in the huge diversity of cloaks and clothing as well as in the exuberant decoration applied to carvings. Some of these changes can be detected in the Lindauer portraits, such as an adze with an iron blade or garments made from red and blue wool. Certainly, the selection of objects in the paintings points to future uses and today's popular adaptions of Māoriness, such as *hei tiki* with its great significance for identity, and *mere* and *taiaha* as instruments of dance and the expression of physical ability.

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