

## Provenance Research and Beyond – Dealing with a Collection from Hiva Oa (French Polynesia) from the 1930s

Beatrice Voirol 

**Abstract:** As far back as the 1930s, a collection of the Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) became the subject of an official investigation: the collectors Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier were accused of ‘desecrating graves’. The two young men from Basel travelled to Hiva Oa in the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia where they compiled a collection of artifacts. In addition, they took objects and human remains from ceremonial sites and burial caves, upon which the French colonial authorities stepped in: the men were placed under observation in Hiva Oa and, after travelling to Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia, the crates containing the objects were seized. It was only after the MKB intervened officially, that the collection was cleared and shipped to Basel. This article sheds light on the provenance of the respective objects and human remains from different angles, namely actors, landscapes, collections, institutions, and conflicts. Including local voices, the article raises questions as to how provenance research on an ethnographic collection can be conducted and to where this can lead.

**Keywords:** Museum der Kulturen Basel; French Polynesia; Lucas Staehelin; Theo Meier; provenance research

### Introduction

The collection acquired by Lucas Staehelin (1906-1975) and Theo Meier (1908-1982) from the Marquesas Islands *Te Fenua ‘Enata/Te Henua ‘Enana* received mention in a museum report of 2015 titled ‘Das Basler Museum für Völkerkunde. Grundzüge einer Sammlungsgeschichte zwischen 1914 und 1945’:

*“The two Basel citizens Theo Meier, who later lived as a painter in Bali and remained closely associated with the museum, and Lucas Staehelin-von Mandach together went on a trip around the world in the 1930s. However, the objects they collected in Oceania could not be shipped to the museum as planned. The authorities in Papeete in the French colony of Tahiti suspected the two Swiss of being involved in the ‘desecration of graves’ in 1935, and so the packed and ready crates were seized and legal proceedings were opened against the two. After the Basel museum insisted through the Swiss envoy in Paris that the export had been authorized by the*

*director of the museum in Papeete, proceedings were dropped and the objects were cleared for export. The French colonial government proved to be the crucial authority.”<sup>1</sup>*

The problematic side of this collection was addressed once more in the exhibition *Thirst for Knowledge meets Collecting Mania* at the Museum der Kulturen (22nd March 2019 – 22nd November 2020). The exhibition shed light on complex issues resulting from the history of the institution, the circumstances of collecting, and the mode of presentation in museums. In the section ‘Salvaging – Pillaging’ on the handling of human remains, a selection of objects from the collection in question was displayed. It is against this background that the collection is being reassessed: the provenances of the objects and human remains are collated with documents

1 Lukas Cladders: Das Basler Museum für Völkerkunde. Grundzüge einer Sammlungsgeschichte zwischen 1914-1945, Basel 2015, 18, <https://www.mkb.ch/de/museum/forschung/fellowship.html>, <20.04.2022>.

from the archives, Lucas Staehelin's diary, photographs and insights gained from research carried out in Hiva Oa (16th March – 15th April 2022), thus revealing related connections and determining relevant colonial contexts. By means of different approaches, the complex and divergent data situation is reviewed and analysed. The 'actors' perspective focuses on the main protagonists Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier. What was their relationship to each other and to others? Under 'landscapes', I attempt to describe and explain different significant places in Hiva Oa and to address the difficulty of viewing these landscapes from a Western vantage point. In 'collections', the concern is with the circumstances under which the objects were collected. In 'institutions', I reflect on the scholarly zeitgeist and on how colonial thought determined institutional practices at the time. Finally, in 'conflicts' I focus on specific problems that arise from this collection, for example regarding the handling of human remains and the issue of restitution. The conclusion gives a status report of the current research findings that will be continued in the frame of a new research project application focusing on collaboration between the MKB and Hiva Oa.

## Actors

The mesh of relationships developed by the two collectors in Hiva Oa was marked by both amity and enmity emanating from the existing colonial structures.

Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier had known each other from childhood.<sup>2</sup> The idea to travel to the 'South Seas' probably came from Theo Meier. A painter himself, an exhibition on Paul Gauguin he saw in 1928 left a deep impression on him.<sup>3</sup> Gauguin's paintings from French Polynesia told the story of an 'exotic paradise'. Theo Meier was also familiar with the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and his notion of the 'noble savage' also seems to have had a deep impact on Meier. So, he decided to



Fig. 1: We [Lucas Staehelin, Theo Meier] at the beach in Pareo [Picture (F)Vc 781].

experience this paradise himself.<sup>4</sup> In order to raise enough funds for the journey, Theo Meier founded the self-styled 'Theo Meier Club'. He gathered together 20 'members' who each were prepared to support the venture with a contribution of 20 Swiss francs per month for one year. Their investment constituted a kind of pre-order for paintings yet to be created.<sup>5</sup> Lucas Staehelin's motives to go on the journey were a bit different.<sup>6</sup> He had lost his father at an early age, leaving him a considerable inheritance which had, however, been largely squandered by an appointed guardian. Hence, for Lucas Staehelin the pursuit of the non-material – knowledge and experience – became a driving force in life, since these were assets that nobody could take away from him.<sup>7</sup> He loved nature and especially the mountains and undertook several mountain climbs in French Polynesia.<sup>8</sup> For the two men, both in their mid-twenties, the journey was without doubt a great adventure.

After a 67-day voyage on the *SS Astrolabe* from Marseille via Guadeloupe, Martinique, and the

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- 2 Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, January 13th 2022. Whereas Theo Meier later became a renowned painter and spent the rest of his life in Asia, Lucas Staehelin came – after some years in Australia – eventually back to Switzerland where he became head of the music department of the short-wave service of Swiss radio broadcasting.
- 3 Henry Charles Girard (ed.): *The Autobiography of Theo Meier*, Bangkok 1963, 5.

4 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 5.

5 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 9.

6 Lucas Staehelin, for his part, produced postcards featuring South Seas motifs which he sold in Tahiti.

7 Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, 13th January 2022.

8 Lucas Eduard Staehelin: *Bergfahrten auf Moorea in Polynesien*, in: *Die Alpen. Monatsschrift des Schweizer Alpenclub* 4 (1935), <https://www.sac-cas.ch/de/die-alpen/bergfahrten-auf-moorea-in-polynesien-4912/> <20.04.2022>.

Panama Canal, they finally arrived in Papeete on Tahiti, the capital of French Polynesia. However, disillusionment followed swiftly: Papeete presented itself as bustling commercial centre. The people wore Western clothes, even the women.

*“Tahiti [...] was known to the world as the idyllic South Seas island paradise described by Captain Cook, immortalized in the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson and brought to our eyes in this century in the paintings of Paul Gauguin. I had expected the natives to be living confirmation of Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’ theory.”*<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, the two friends decided to travel on to the ‘end of the world’, to the ‘lonely’ Marquesas Islands. They boarded the copra schooner *Maréchal Foch* which was heading for San Francisco, with stopovers in Atuona on Hiva Oa. After a roller-coaster crossing – a cyclone hit their boat – and an adventurous landing without any quays at that time, they arrived in Hiva Oa in September 1932.<sup>10</sup> The two men were overwhelmed by the beauty of Hiva Oa’s landscape, but here again the colonial reality soon caught up with them: of the once ‘mighty’ culture there seemed to be nothing left but ruins.<sup>11</sup> The island’s inhabitants were described as being threatened by extinction. “The only links that provided tenuous contact with bygone times were songs, immortalizing illustrious ancestors and ornamental artifacts either kept in old chests or dug up from old graves and then sold.”<sup>12</sup> The stark contrast between the striking landscape and the sad-looking people clearly upset the two Swiss adventurers.<sup>13</sup>

In the end, Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier remained for two months on Hiva Oa. They were able to rent a house in the main settlement Atuona through the Compagnie Naval in Papeete which they moved into shortly after their arrival on 28th

September.<sup>14</sup> Even though Theo Meier accompanied Lucas Staehelin on some of his trips across the island, his main ambition was to paint,<sup>15</sup> so he went in search of suitable subjects and models. Lucas Staehelin, who was responsible for the scientific collection, including ‘naturalia’ for the Natural History Museum Basel (NMB), went to work straight away in search of suitable objects. He experimented with his Rolex camera, equipped with the best lenses of the time, documenting what he had seen and developing the films straight away. Undoubtedly, he was also the driving force behind the excursions. He loved to climb new heights and discover yet hidden valleys. Accordingly, his diary bears evidence of his fascination for the nature and culture of Hiva Oa.

Word about the presence of the two Swiss spread quickly. A man called Guégan, an old Breton sailor and former gendarme who had been living at the end of the Taaoa Valley for some 25 years, was recommended as a guide. Over time, Guégan became a close associate and friend of Lucas Staehelin.<sup>16</sup> They undertook numerous excursions together, usually on horseback, with Lucas Staehelin riding Guégan’s horse Léon. For these trips, they relied on a few Marquesan men for support: Matau, Matuu, Tona, and Nao. They knew how and where to locate and access the desired objects, and they were familiar with many of the burial caves and ritual sites. The diary does not reveal the basis of the ‘arrangement’, for instance, how much the local men were paid for their services, but the relationship seems to have been generally amicable. “Matuu and Nao had seen us coming & had sounded the conch shell – [...] [they] appear to be very happy about my visit.”<sup>17</sup> Being a passionate mountaineer himself, Lucas Staehelin was amazed how the locals moved through the terrain without shoes. He himself always wore his nailed boots on his tours. He mentions Matuu in particular because it was Matuu who had taught him how to make his way through ‘la brousse’ – the bush.<sup>18</sup> Alcohol seems to

9 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 9.

10 Lucas Eduard Staehelin: *Auf den Spuren von Paul Gauguin*, in: Maria Lutz-Gantenbein (ed.): *Die Ernte – Schweizerisches Jahrbuch*, Basel 1962, 97-113, here: 102-104.

11 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 9-10.

12 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 11.

13 Girard 1963 (see FN 4), 11. When the two men arrived in Atuona, there were only 117 people living there. In 1901, when Paul Gauguin had settled down there, there were still more than 1.000. Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, 20th February 2022.

14 Lucas Eduard Staehelin: *Südsee-Tagebücher*, 2 vols., Atuona 1932, vol. 1, 3.

15 Theo Meier had a solo exhibition in the salon of the Yacht Club of Tahiti that was inaugurated on 29th December 1932. Theo Meier later got famous for his Bali painting, where he was living for 15 years. See Didier Hamel: *Theo Meier (1908-1982)*, Jakarta 2007, 35.

16 Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, 20th February 2022.

17 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 47.

18 Staehelin 1935 (see FN 8).

have been the cement in the bond between the men: the Marquesans obviously had a liking for vermouth; it flowed abundantly and was put to use purposefully by the two Swiss.

Staehelin and Meier also got to meet other Marquesan men and women, encounters which Staehelin frequently recorded on camera. However, communication was difficult as most of the locals knew little French and the two Swiss did not speak Marquesan, as, for instance, in the case of the two women busy weaving which Lucas Staehelin encountered, and of which one turned out to be Gauguin's daughter.<sup>19</sup> On an excursion around Puamau in the north-eastern part of the island, Lucas Staehelin once injured his foot and was treated by a local female healer who was called in. A group of locals began dancing and singing to support the healing process. Of course, he also encountered a wide range of cultural practices. Guégan once introduced him to a richly tattooed elderly couple.

*"I now understand this adornment; it is in no way repulsive, on the contrary, it really [makes people] more beautiful. The tattoo is pure indigo blue in colour, and, in combination with the golden hue of the skin, it looks really splendid. Above all, however, the idiom of the tattoo, the drawings, are really elegant."<sup>20</sup>*

Language was not the only barrier in their encounters. Ioteve, then the oldest man on Hiva Oa, told Lucas Staehelin about the deeds of a famous healer, but when the latter asked him about the whereabouts of his grave, Ioteve became suspicious and refused to disclose the site.<sup>21</sup> In the end, the deteriorating relationship with the French colonial authorities was the reason for their hasty departure from Hiva Oa. The doings of the two Swiss had been a thorn in the side of the authorities for quite a while. Theo Meier and Lucas Staehelin left Hiva Oa on 6th December on board the *Coquette*. On a three-month voyage via Fatu Hiva and the Tuamotu Islands they returned to Papeete before finally leaving French Polynesia for good at the end of August 1933 travelling on to Vanuatu.

19 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 81. Guégan used to be a close friend Paul Gauguin's who spent his last three years – until his death in 1903 – in Hiva Oa.

20 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 9.

21 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 76-77.



Fig. 2: The old road of Hanauaua [Picture (F)Vc 839].

## Landscapes

In their quest for knowledge, the two collectors scoured and investigated the local cultural landscapes. However, the way people had formerly interacted with these landscapes had fallen prey to the general precarity of the times. In political terms, the islands of the Marquesas belong to French Polynesia which, in turn, is a French Overseas Territory (Pays d'outre-mer POM). As far as the populated islands are concerned, a distinction is made between a north-western group with the islands of Nuku Hiva, 'Ua Pou, and 'Ua Huka, and a south-eastern group including the islands of Hiva Oa, Tahua-ta, and Fatu Hiva.

Archaeological evidence points to a settlement of the Marquesas from roughly 200 BC onwards (+/- 150 years). Polynesian expansion probably emanated from Fiji, Tonga, or Samoa.<sup>22</sup> In geological terms, the Marquesas represent peaks of a volcanic mountain range rising from the foot of the deep ocean. Mostly forested, the islands are predominantly mountainous with deep valleys in between. Hiva Oa is the largest of the south-eastern group, measuring roughly 322 square kilometers. It boasts a rugged coast line, with the Taaoa Bay and the view of Mount Temetiu (1.190 m) being the

22 Nicholas Thomas: Introduction, in: Elena Govor / Nicholas Thomas (eds.): Tiki. Marquesan Art and the Krusenstern expedition, Leiden 2019, 11-14, here: 7.

main features of the southern coast.<sup>23</sup> The Marquesas were ‘discovered’ and ‘named’ by the Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendaña de Neyra (1542-1595) as early as 1595, but it took another two hundred years until the next European ship landed on its shores. James Cook visited the south-eastern islands in 1774 during his second voyage to the South Seas. However, it was not until 1791 that a landing was made on the north-western group. Although there had been some hostile encounters before, it was not until around 1800 that the local population began to seriously suffer from the increasing European presence. “During the nineteenth century, however, Marquesan society and culture were subjected to intense stresses, including debilitating disease, political subjugation, and cultural suppression by missionaries.”<sup>24</sup>

In 1842, this part of Polynesia was annexed by France. The local Marquesan political leaders were supplanted by colonial officials, and although French presence diminished markedly between 1850 and 1880, the traditional political system seems to have had already broken down by then. The period between 1840 and 1880 was marked by an alarming decline in population. Abel Dupetit-Thouars (1793-1864), the commander of the French naval forces that had occupied the islands in 1842, estimated the population of the Marquesas at 20.200 people, for pre-colonial days, estimates mention figures as high as 100.000.<sup>25</sup> In the 1880s, the figure dropped by a further 5.000 and reached a low of merely 2.000 people in the 1920s.<sup>26</sup>

As in other parts of Polynesia, the society of Hiva Oa was highly stratified and ruled by an elite. Hereditary high chiefs (*haka’iki*), priests (*tau’a*), persons of wealth (*’akatia*) and warriors (*toa*),<sup>27</sup> which made up the upper class, were in constant competition with each other. Next to them was the class of commoners (*kikino*). The main social unit was the tribe (*mata’eina’a*), which usually inhabited one of the many valleys in the rugged

landscape. Often tribes tried to expand their sphere of influence by entering into alliances with others.<sup>28</sup> Before France claimed the islands in 1842, the Marquesans had a semi-private system of land ownership. The Marquesan elite was notable for its flexibility: on the one hand, they inherited their privileges, on the other hand, they acquired them through merit. They applied political power to exploit resources, beyond their own land, for their own benefit. Bonds were created and sustained through birth, adoption, marriage, and alliances. The close interconnectedness between the elite and their kinfolk was different from the common binary system of communal and individual land ownership. Although a large part of the land is owned communally through family relations, the concept of common ownership does not exist in the Marquesas. The Marquesan system of land tenure was, and still is, dependent on the interaction of families and different groups in terms of local politics and resources.<sup>29</sup>

Marquesans have close ties to their land. They regard the environment as being infused with *mana* – that is, as powerful and animated. Based on the traditional system of ownership, the people must follow specific modes of conduct informed by the concept of *mana*, otherwise they might face sickness, misfortune, or even death. Certain landscapes can be *tapu* because they once used to be the place where ceremonies or funerals were held. These can be traditional sacred sites such as *me’ae*, domestic platforms, called *paepae*, or dance and assembly platforms, called *tohuna koina*. Marquesans always have to behave respectfully in places that are *tapu* and look out for *uhane*, spirits. This respect includes not to move stones on a site, in fact, not to alter anything at all.<sup>30</sup>

With the help of their Marquesan guides, the two men from Basel moved through these landscapes, searching, digging, sometimes even finding something. Thanks to Lucas Staehelin’s diary, we are able to trace some of these trips. They visited Tohua Upeke on Hiva Oa, the largest sacred site in French Polynesia; they also visited I’ipona, an important cult site in the North of Hiva Oa. Apart

23 Patrick Kirch: Chiefship and competitive involution: the Marquesan Islands of Eastern Polynesia, in: Timothy Earle (ed.): Chiefdom: Power, Economy, and Ideology, Cambridge 1991, 119-145, here: 122.

24 Kirch 1991 (see FN 23), 122.

25 Kirch 1991 (see FN 23), 124.

26 Nicholas Thomas: Marquesan Societies. Inequality and Political Transformation in Eastern Polynesia, Oxford 1990, 4.

27 Kirch 1991 (see FN 23), 125-127.

28 Thomas 1990 (see FN 26), 19-47.

29 Emily C. Donaldson: Working with the Ancestors. Mana and Place in the Marquesas Islands, Seattle 2019, 38-41.

30 Donaldson 2019 (see FN 29), 12, 30-32.

from that, they also visited at least three caves: grotte dite Anaputa,<sup>31</sup> grotte Anatikaue, and a grotto in Hanamenu Valley in the north-western part of Hiva Oa.<sup>32</sup> Their behavior at these sites was very different from what indigenous protocol prescribed. However, their indigenous companions do not appear to have objected in any way. On one occasion, for instance, Lucas Staehelin went digging on a *paepae*, thus destroying the platform's stone formation, a fact that he himself appeared to have been aware of:

*“The two [Matuu and Tona] walk on immediately while Nao and I go to work on the house site. His idea is [...] to find belongings from the past. It is said to be the house of a chief. We first clear the plaza of leaves, branches. [...] then roll every stone from the forecourt. Away with all this stuff & the larger stones roll down until they reach the bed of the stream below, with a loud, thundering noise. Nothing. We turn to the chief's sleeping area which is made up of large stones. We find a beautiful shell cutter – but nothing else. But we get bitten miserably. The floor of the house is ruined, too – [...] but the hole we are looking for is nowhere to be found.”<sup>33</sup>*



Fig. 3: Our “collection” by 11th October 1932 [Picture (F)Vc 766].

31 Eric Olivier / Catherine Chavaillon: *Le patrimoine archéologique de l'île de Hiva Oa (archipel des Marquises)*, Papeete 2007, 155.

32 Lucas Staehelin noted in his diary 'Fekeani', possibly also 'Fekeau'i' or 'Fekeami'. However, in Hiva Oa these terms for the cave were unknown or long forgotten.

33 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 56-57.

## Collections

Ethnographic collections can never be considered representative of a culture, as they are determined by coincidence, varying interests, and the respective zeitgeist. Long-term transformations in Marquesan society can be discerned as the primary reason that led to cultural change: “Isolation, human-induced environmental change, an adaptive response to new environments, population increase [...] and increasing need for food production” favoured the emergence of a uniquely Marquesan culture that differed from its origins.<sup>34</sup> Those changes are also reflected in Marquesan material culture that is rich in variety and distinguished in particular by an abundance of adornments. The focus lies on the human body. On the one hand, in the shape of crafted human figures, *tiki*, representing embodied and deified ancestral figures, on the other hand, the human body itself becomes the object of artistic expression in the shape of decorative ornaments. Objects can be testimonies to the hierarchical social order of the Marquesas by expressing belonging to a specific socio-cultural group. Bones and teeth of different types of whale and dolphin are used as ornaments just as bird feathers, boar tusks, tortoiseshell, and mother-of-pearl, along with human bones and hair. The Marquesan cultural inventory also includes different kinds of weapons, tools, bowls, stils, bark cloth, and, of course, tattoos.<sup>35</sup>

Traditionally, Polynesia was not a focus of collection at the MKB. When the museum was offered a collection of 16 objects from the Ethnographic Museum in Neuchâtel (MEN) in 1919, the people in charge acted quickly: “We did not hesitate to purchase from the Ethnographic Museum in Neuchâtel duplicates from the Marquesas Islands, all pieces dating back to the classical period.”<sup>36</sup> The duplicates

34 Barry V. Rolett: *Hananiai: Prehistoric Colonization and Cultural Change in the Marquesas Islands (East Polynesia)*, New Haven 1998, 44.

35 Carol Ivory: *Art et culture aux Marquises à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, in: Carol Ivory (ed.): *Mata Hoata. Arts et Société aux îles Marquises*, Paris 2016, 111-132, here: 111-131; Eric Kjellgren: *Adorning the World. Art of the Marquesas Islands*, New York 2005, 4-5; Denise Wenger: *Bijoux Polynésien. Regards sur une sélection de parures de Nouvelle-Zélande, des Marquises, des Fiji et d'Hawaii*, Geneva 2009, 26-36.

36 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: *Report on the Basler Museum für Völkerkunde for 1919*, Basel 1919, 16-17.

purchased before 1914 came from a collection acquired by André Krajewski, “a rich Franco-Polish collector who travelled the Pacific and the Marquesas and was tied to the MEN.”<sup>37</sup> It was possibly these 16 objects that prompted the expansion of the Polynesian collection in connection with the travel plans of the two young men from Basel in the early 1930s. Except from Basel and Neuchâtel, an early collection from the Marquesas Islands already existed in the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich (UZH). The objects were given to the museum by Johann Kaspar Horner (1774-1834) – a Swiss academic who participated in the Russian Krusenstern expedition to Nuku Hiva at the beginning of the 19th century.<sup>38</sup> Even though there had been a huge interest in collecting Marquesan art, paradoxically the field remained underrepresented in in-depth studies on Marquesan culture. Unspecific or diffuse provenances of Western collections often led to poorly historicized knowledge on Marquesan art and material culture.<sup>39</sup>

Objects provided the chance to draw conclusions regarding cultures, which, according to the belief at the time, were on the verge of extinction.

*“The fear of seeing cultures disappear without retaining any trace of them attests to an essentialist conception of indigenous populations; it served as a leitmotif of ethnographic publications from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century.”*<sup>40</sup>

The Oceania Department of the MKB was in no way different in this regard. In his work on New Caledonia, Fritz Sarasin (1859-1942), one of the founders of the MKB, had already remarked earlier on that he had probably arrived too late and that, by then, the culture of New Caledonia had all but disappeared. What remained of it he had already collected. Felix Speiser (1880-1949), another MKB protagonist of the early years, shared the same opinion with regard to another Pacific region: Van-

uatu’s culture was already in a sad state of decay, he stated, and he had arrived just in time to collect what was left of the once rich culture.<sup>41</sup>

Lucas Staehelin’s and Theo Meier’s travel plans tallied with this imagined world: the progressive colonisation of the Pacific lent additional urgency to their venture. It was probably for this reason that the two young men were given a preparatory ‘fieldwork’ course at the MKB, very likely also at the neighbouring Natural History Museum (NMB) for which they also collected. Prepared by this ‘training’ and equipped with appropriate letters of recommendation, the adventure could begin.

But what circumstances did the two young men actually encounter in the ‘field’? Lucas Staehelin’s diary gives us an impression of how they compiled their collection. This ranges from purchasing objects to bartering them for tobacco and alcohol, to simply extracting items and excavating culturally significant sites (*me’ae, paepae*) and burial caves.

For the locals, selling objects for money seems to have been quite difficult at times. How does one assess the value of an object in money? “Johny came to us with 12 stone axes. The people have little sense for money. First 40 ffr, then 34 & finally 18! We gave him 20 & he went again, evidently quite happy.”<sup>42</sup> It looks as if Lucas Staehelin had been instructed beforehand about which objects to look for:<sup>43</sup>

*“We go to the great feasting ground of Atuona with Johny. Nearby live Ivo who wants to sell us something. We were rather amazed when we came across a small, faded domestic deity of little value instead of the large tiki we were expecting, but there were also two fan handles, a human bone for whatever purpose, and a small stone axe. We agreed on 50 ffr for the lot.”*<sup>44</sup>

Money was not the only means of payment, but also tobacco and alcohol: “Nonetheless, in the light of a torch I barter from him three small pilons [pounders] in return for some Tahitian tobacco and a sip of vermouth from a coconut shell & and we had him onboard.”<sup>45</sup>

37 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisitions 1914: Vc\_0015.

38 Elena Govor: From Nuku Hiva to Europe: the collections’ histories, in: Elena Govor / Nicolas Thomas (eds.): Tiki. Marquesan Art and the Krusenstern expedition, Leiden 2019, 49-72, here: 69-70.

39 Thomas 2019 (see FN 22), 11-12.

40 Serge Reubi: Gentlemen, prolétaires et primitifs. Institutionnalisation, pratiques de collection et choix muséographiques dans l’ethnographie suisse, 1880-1950, Bern 2011, 553.

41 Reubi 2011 (see FN 40), 553.

42 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 6.

43 For example, shell scraper, see Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 6; pestle for pounding foodstuffs see Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 9-10; for whetstone see Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 13.

44 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 8.

45 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 99.

In the early 1930s, the people of Hiva Oa were plagued by hunger and sickness; the population figures had sunk to a low. Villages were either deserted or yet merely inhabited by a few elderlies.<sup>46</sup> It was during these challenging times that the two men from Basel compiled their collection. Their companions knew the location of important cultural sites, but the way how to approach these – for example, in terms of observing taboos – had long been forgotten. Given this, Lucas Staehelin could ‘dig up’ deserted feast grounds and ‘sift’ old graves. Often these sites had already been searched by others, but occasionally he did ‘find’ something:

*“After much effort and sweat, we finally reach it [the cave], but it is empty. We continue searching; all empty. But a level higher, hey presto, another cave, difficult to reach, 2 metres above our location. One dangerous passage and we’re there. One club [...] then another, but broken & a small bowl with the rounded side on a small base, gashed by the rain. On the cave floor, a few rotting old bones. We search the ground but find nothing but soil.”<sup>47</sup>*

They not only ‘investigated’ graves but also cultural sites such as Tohua Upeke which consisted of a collection of ceremonial platforms.

*“I’m up before sunrise & saddle Léon. I ride to Taaoa, the paepae in question. It is roughly 100 metres long and raised, next to giant old trees. On one, under some leaves, I come across a skull, a tooth from a necklace & a shell cutter. Now the ‘tromer (tourner) du paepae’ [excavating the house ruins] starts, as Johnny calls it; profuse sweating. To cool off, I walk upwards a bit and find, hidden near a fast-running stream, a huge feast ground with the largest tree I have ever seen. This is the genuine, the yet unknown & the untouched. I’m thrilled & ready for some hard work! Towards evening at sundown, I ride back to Atuona, loaded with many important secrets! Yes, it seems treasures still do exist, it’s only a matter of knowing where!”<sup>48</sup>*

46 Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, 20th February 2022; Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 27; Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 29-31; Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 32-35.

47 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 33.

48 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 65.

The search for the ‘primordial’ ran counter to other developments: serious ethnographic research only commenced after Marquesan culture had undergone radical and far-reaching changes, so, at best, one could speak of a reconstructed culture of remembrance.<sup>49</sup> An aspect that was underestimated at the time were the options for action on part of the local population. People knew what kind of objects were in demand, and geared production accordingly, at least to a certain extent.<sup>50</sup> This means that even by the late 19th century, there were many items in circulation which had been purposefully produced for sale to Europeans, above all stone *tiki* figures.<sup>51</sup>

It is quite likely that Lucas Staehelin believed that he had come across ‘original’ items. In the end, this also led to a dispute with the MKB concerning the price of the objects, and to a splitting-up of the collection. We know that some objects were sold to the Bernisches Historisches Museum (BHM),<sup>52</sup> others remained with the respective families.<sup>53</sup> Where the rest went to remains unknown.

Today, the MKB holds approximately 600 objects collected by Staehelin and Meier in the Marquesas (mostly from Hiva Oa). In addition, the museum possesses roughly 1.050 photographs (in different formats) taken by Lucas Staehelin. They were consigned to the museum between 1934 and 1975.<sup>54</sup>

49 Kirch 1991 (see FN 23), 122.

50 Chris Gosden / Chantal Knowles: *Collecting Colonialism. Material Culture and Colonial Change*, Oxford 2001, 1-25.

51 Carol Ivory: Personal Communication, 12th January 2022.

52 The BHM bought 10 objects from the MKB belonging to the Meier-Staehelin collection from 1933. The biggest part of the collection (105 objects) entered the BHM in 1935.

53 Andrew Staehelin: Personal Communication, 13th January 2022.

54 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisitions 1934-1975: Vc\_0066, Vc\_0068, Vc\_0069, Vc\_0076, Vc\_0077, Vc\_0138, Vc\_0139, fot\_0957.





Fig. 4: Our large shipment to the museum [Picture (F)Vc 1217].

## Institutions

Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier had to manoeuvre between the expectations of the museum in Basel and the administrative requirements stipulated by the French colonial authorities. They got into trouble with both. The agreement concluded on 26th April 1934 between Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier on the one side, and Fritz Sarasin, the chairman of the museum commission on the other side,<sup>55</sup> put an end to the back-and-forth concerning the collection compiled by the two ‘South Seas travellers’, at least for the time being. Possibly, it was the completely differing appraisal of the collection that had caused the dispute to escalate. Anyhow, after some of the objects had been retracted by the collectors and new lists and suggestions had been made, the two parties finally reached an agreement.

What had actually been agreed upon before the two young men left for the ‘South Seas’ is not known. However, the preparatory course, the letters of recommendation, and the close contact the two had maintained with Fritz Sarasin on their journey (telegrams of 11th October 1932, 12th October 1932, and 30th November 1932) suggest a more detailed arrangement.<sup>56</sup>

55 Archives, Museumsarchiv Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Contract between Lucas Staehelin/Theo Meier and the MKB, dated 26.4.1934, Basel 1934 (unpublished).

56 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 12; Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 2, 8.

At the time, the MKB was in a process of expansion: from roughly 2.500 objects in 1896, the collections grew to around 40.000 in 1917, reaching 83.261 in 1942.<sup>57</sup> In the ‘interwar years’, too, the main focus of investigation lay on cultures in their ‘original state’. This helps to explain why collecting trips to ‘salvage’ the material testimonies of doomed cultures were the most likely to be supported. On the one hand, colonization and missionization created the structures that made collecting possible in the first place. On the other hand, it was exactly these forces that brought about changes to a people’s material culture. In the museum’s annual reports, one frequently finds references noting that a specific object had been ‘salvaged’ at the last minute.<sup>58</sup>

It was probably with this kind of salvage mentality that the two young men from Basel set out for Hiva Oa. However, colonial reality soon caught up with them in the field. For one thing, they were faced with the miserable condition of the local population which was struggling against hunger, sickness, and the loss of their culture; for the other, they had to contend with the French colonial authorities who, contrary to expectations, did not support them in their collecting activities, but ‘hindered’ them whenever they could.

Initially, the two Swiss collectors were allowed to go about their work unimpeded. But this changed from mid-November 1932 onward. One day, the administrator in charge, Dr Benoît, medical officer of the colonial troops in Hiva Oa,<sup>59</sup> detained Matuu, accused him of stealing in ‘lieux publics’, and threatened him with prosecution. “It’s an absolute disgrace that we are being hindered in our work”,<sup>60</sup> the two Swiss complained, but their Marquesan companions had evidently taken fright. Staehelin and Meier felt hindered in their work by the French authorities and did not shy from telling them so. In turn, the latter began interrogating even more individuals. “We lodged our complaints with Benoît, who then assured us in a long conversation, that we were not to be blamed personally, but that our presence was etc. etc.”<sup>61</sup> In order to

57 Reubi 2011 (see FN 40), 161.

58 Cladders 2015 (see FN 1), 9-10.

59 Michel Bailleul: *Les îles Marquises. Histoire de la Terre des Hommes du XVIIIème siècle à nos jours*, Papeete 2001, 208.

60 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 68.

61 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 73.

escape from this tricky situation, Lucas Staehelin decided to make a tour of the island. But the general mood had changed. Wherever he went, he was met with hostility. He was unable to purchase even a single object, as the locals were now demanding astronomical prices for such petty things as bowls, pounders or ornaments. It soon became evident that they had been ‘instructed’ to act in this way.

On 25th November 1932 – Theo Meier was alone at home, busy with painting, while Lucas Staehelin was on his island tour – their house was searched. Dr Benoît and gendarme Loebby, both in uniform, entered the house and confiscated a *tiki* head on the grounds that it would be involved in a land dispute. “To put it shortly: what a bloody cheek & infamy!”<sup>62</sup> From then on, the two Swiss were under observation along with all the Marquesans they had dealings with. Some of them were even arrested and received no food while being detained. Whenever the two young men happened to meet Dr. Benoît on the street, they no longer greeted him. On the other hand, commissioner Loebby, a man from Alsace, was still open for a conversation: “Personally I don’t care, but then again I have to do what I’m told; but I wouldn’t tell those ‘little shits’ anything.”<sup>63</sup> A *tapa* stone was also seized. The matter caused a great stir in Hiva Oa. When, one day, an American schooner docked on the island, Staehelin and Meier decided immediately to seize the opportunity, and joined the crew: “Theo asks, how about going home to Papeete? There’s no other ship until April! – Matter decided on in a minute. We pack like mad. 12 crates & 15 bags – all full to the brim!”<sup>64</sup>

In Papeete, the capital of Tahiti, the accusations of desecration of graves again caught up with them. The crates containing the objects were retained by the authorities. In a letter of 18th October 1934 to Minister Dunant (Swiss envoy) in Paris, the MKB pushed for the release of the confiscated crates, arguing that Mr. Bodin, the curator at the Musée de Tahiti et des Îles – Te Fare Manaha, had approved the inventory list but that the authorities in Papeete were “causing difficulties”. In the letter it was implied that ‘certain

people’ had been conniving.<sup>65</sup> The official reason for the impoundment was that the two collectors had ‘desecrated grave sites’. Already on 25th May 1935, news reached Paris that the crates had now been cleared and were ready for shipment.<sup>66</sup>

In 1932, the legal situation may still have been unclear, as were the motives of the French authorities in Hiva Oa to act in the way they did. In private conversation, Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier were assured that the measures taken were by no means personal, but, outwardly, the colonial authorities put on a show of strength, including repressive measures against the local population. The snow-white uniforms and holstered revolvers formed part of this show.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the French colonial government did not demonstrate any real interest in the respective cultural sites. In fact, it was Lucas Staehelin who had discovered the ‘birthing’ Tiki Maki’i Tau’a Pepe at the *me’ae* l’ipona in Puamau in the northern part of the island, today one of Hiva Oa’s most important cultural sites:

*“Drenched, almost bitten to death, and just about having lost all hope, we by chance come across this huge block of stone almost two metres in length while turning over the rocks. It is completely overgrown, covered by a kind of moss, fireweed, and coffee shrubs. Underneath we see a spot of light stone with a greenish hue. We tear down everything, really everything, and now, to my utter surprise: the birthing woman, a long-held dream comes true! Nobody had been able to tell us her whereabouts, she had simply disappeared. My God, I thought this government was interested in art. I wonder whether all these ancient deities have been turned into artificial fertilizer? My first impression is very strong & goes deep.”*<sup>68</sup>

62 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 2, 8.

63 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 2, 8-9.

64 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 2, 13.

65 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Correspondence between MKB and the Légation de Suisse en France, 18.10.1934, Basel 1934 (unpublished).

66 Archives, Museumsarchiv Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Correspondence between MKB and the Légation de Suisse en France, 21.5.1935, Basel 1934 (unpublished).

67 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 2, 11.

68 Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 91.

Both sides claimed to have the right to dispose of Marquesan culture. At the same time, local contacts were instrumentalized and also intimidated for this purpose.



Fig. 5: A cave in Hanamenu where the dead were buried [Picture (F)Vc 806].

## Conflicts

Classified as objects, many ethnographic collections hold human skulls and bones along with grave goods. The handling of human remains is always a sensitive matter as shows the following story: after visiting the collections of the Burgdorf Castle Museum (Bern) and with the certainty that the item the Basel museum was looking for was there, MKB curator Susanne Haas wrote a letter to Mr. Schibler, the curator of the ethnographic collection in Burgdorf, on 5th October 1970: “And now with regard to the trepanned skull<sup>69</sup> from the Marquesas which you have in your collection and which we would like to reunite with the remaining grave contents which are lodged in Basel.”<sup>70</sup> According to Susanne Haas’ report “Reuniting the grave contents from the Marquesas Islands”, objects from the grave had been in storage at the MKB since 1935, gifted to the Basel museum by Lucas Staehelin in 1969. However, the skull that belonged to the assemblage – although it had been

deposited at the Basel museum for a while – was not part of the deal after having been withdrawn by the collectors. Theo Meier had promised the director of the Ethnographic Museum in Burgdorf a painting and had received an advance payment in return. At the same time, the skull in question went to Burgdorf as a deposit. Since the painting was never delivered or was judged as not being up to standard, the Burgdorf museum withheld the skull. Towards the end of the 1960s, Lucas Staehelin approached the MKB with the wish that the contents of the grave be fully reunited: “Personally, I’m not out to make a profit, nor is the museum, but I’m simply obsessed with the idea that the contents of the grave be held together in one location; from a scholarly point of view, this is an absolute necessity.”<sup>71</sup> In the end, the two museums agreed on an exchange.<sup>72</sup> An interesting fact is that the Burgdorf museum received a cast of the trepanned skull.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, just 40 years after their removal, the contents of the grave were back together. On 27th October 1932, Lucas Staehelin, together with his three local assistants Matuu, Tona, and Nao, had taken them from a burial cave in the Hanamenu Valley in Hiva Oa. The cave had been very difficult to reach and Matuu had, at the risk of his life, abseiled down to the entrance. Tona and Nao had positioned themselves at the opposite of the gorge and directed him, while Lucas Staehelin had remained at the foot of the cliff. Matuu ‘salvaged’ a triton shell, a spear, a club, whale teeth that had probably belonged to a necklace, a fan handle, a cord, and a few unspecified bones along the trepanned skull. But, hanging from a rope on the face of the cliff, Matuu refused to lower down the wrapped skull while Lucas Staehelin stood at the bottom, urging him to do so.

69 Trepanation refers to a surgical technique by which the cranial vault is opened.

70 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisition 5.10.1970: Vc 143/1971.

71 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisition 5.10.1970: Vc 143/1971.

72 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisition 9.12.1970: Vc 143/1971. The MKB received the skull and a Bayaka mask from the Congo, the Burgdorf Museum a woven mask from the Maprik area of Papua New Guinea, a club from Santa Cruz, Solomon Islands, a slit-gong from the Murik area of Papua New Guinea, and a Kabré water pot from Togo.

73 Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Acquisition 2.2.1972: Vc 143/1971.

*“I have to have this, cost it what it may. ‘Bring it with you, I want to look at it’. ‘No’. I ponder, trembling and sweating. ‘Just bring it down, I want to photograph it.’ [...] He: ‘No’. I: ‘Just bring it, I take photo, then put it back’. He: ‘Why?’ I: ‘Now!’ He: ‘Why photograph?’ I: ‘To study it’. He: ‘Not good, no bring’. For God’s sake, I need it, I have to have it. ‘No, you bring, I take photo [...]’. [...] Matuu approaches me: ‘Have you taken photo?’ For Heaven’s sake, I want to take it home with me. ‘Look’, I say, ‘It’s raining, I can’t take photo. It’s a pity, but I can’t do it here’. Then he replied, ‘Okay, you take it home & then bring it back; but you must carry it!’ [...] I mention wine & vermouth & immediately the worried look on the faces of the three natives vanishes.”<sup>74</sup>*

The incidence represents a clash of incompatible attitudes and views. The Swiss foreigner, committed to Western science, wishes to acquire the contents of the grave for the museum at home, while Matuu, the local Marquesan, has serious qualms. So, he simply drowns his misgivings in vermouth, and wants nothing more to do with the matter.

Today, the contents of the grave have once more been scattered. The skull is held by the Natural History Museum for study reasons. When exactly the skull was consigned to the NMB is not known, but such transfers between the two neighbouring museums were common practice. In 1967, it was decided that all ‘physical anthropological materials’ should be consigned to the NMB since they belonged to the field of natural science.<sup>75</sup>

For many years, human remains were treated as ethnographic objects. In the 19th and early 20th century, anthropology was strongly shaped by biological determinism. Human remains, like made objects, were regarded as testimonies of ‘disappearing cultures’. In the early 20th century, some countries began banning the export of human remains, or at least required a special permit to do so. The first campaigns demanding the return of human remains emerged in Australia in the late 1960s, and in the 1970s, museums in Australia began modifying their practices regarding the handling of human remains. Beginning in the

<sup>74</sup> Staehelin 1932 (see FN 14), vol. 1, 53.

<sup>75</sup> Archives, Museum der Kulturen Basel (MKB) [Museum für Völkerkunde und Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde]: Minutes, 9.11.1967, Basel 1967 (unpublished).

1980s, the first human remains were repatriated and buried in the respective country of origin. In 1990, NAGPRA, a U.S. federal law concerning Native American cultural property, came into force.<sup>76</sup>

In reaction to the existence of ‘problematic’ collections in museums, restitution has become a highly topical issue in many places. Although there are a few examples of actual restitution,<sup>77</sup> it has not yet become common practice in the museum world.<sup>78</sup> When human remains are returned to their place of origin, they undergo a transformation from ‘object’ to ‘deceased person’. In the course of their history, from collection to restitution, they were many things: ancestor, find, object, trade goods, artifact.

## Conclusion

Since the 1980s, efforts have been made to decolonize ethnographical museum collections. Although Switzerland was never a colonial power, the country – and with it its museums – was undoubtedly part of the ‘colonial project’. MKB is acknowledging its colonial legacy and is adopting decolonizing methodologies. In collaborating with Indigenous communities, MKB tries to gain a deeper understanding for how local people make sense of things, inside and outside the museum. Even though the Hiva Oa collection of the 1930s at the MKB does not contain any early colonial ‘masterpieces’, it does represent an important part of the island’s cultural heritage. The fact that their cultural heritage is held in a museum thousands of miles away is a fate shared by many Pacific communities. As in the case of the Staehelin-Meier collection at MKB, local people are often not even aware of the existence of their cultural items in a foreign place. Thus, creating transparency was the main goal of this research.

Before travelling to Hiva Oa, I made sure to contact the Musée de Tahiti et des îles *Te Fare Manaha* in Tahiti, the mayoralty in Hiva Oa as well as

<sup>76</sup> Cressida Fforde: *Collecting the Dead. Archaeology and the Reburial Issue*, London 2004, 89–103.

<sup>77</sup> Beatrice Voirol: *Decolonization in the Field*. Basel – Milingimbi back and forth, in: Tsantsa – Journal of the Swiss Anthropological Association 24 (2019), 48–57, here: 54

<sup>78</sup> Howard Morphy: *Contested Values in the Curation of Human Remains*, in: Lilia McEnaney (ed.): *Museums, Infinity, and the Culture of Protocols: Ethnographic Collections and Source Communities*, New York 2020, 52–75, here: 53.

local organisations that might have an interest in the Staehelin-Meier collection. In my luggage, I brought three big folders holding printouts of the objects and photos taken by Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier that I left at the mayoralty in Hiva Oa once I left the island. The news of the collection provoked different aspirations. A little bit like Lucas Staehelin and Theo Meier themselves, I found it challenging to deal with (post-)colonial structures on the one hand and indigenous positions on the other. The differing regulations and competences of the 'state', i.e. the French Republic, the 'country', French Polynesia, and the administrative subdivision of the Marquesas Islands are complex.

Once arrived in French Polynesia, I tried to share the documentation in the folders with everyone interested. Except from local artists studying carefully the details in the pictures of the museum objects, also people engaged in tourism had an interest in seeing the documentation. The mayor-ess Joëlle Frébault and her staff were very helpful. With their support and network, we were not only able to localize the grave that Lucas Staehelin excavated, but also to identify some of the local people the two Swiss dealt with. Still today, some of the people on the photos could be recognized.


For a place like Atuona, in between the demands of tourism and the needs of local people, it is probably a memorable moment when a Swiss curator arrives, telling the locals about their cultural heritage held in a museum in Basel. There are two cultural institutions in Atuona – the Centre Culturel Paul Gauguin and the Espace Culturel Jacques Brel – dedicated to two of Hiva Oa's most famous residents. But there is no museum that covers the island's original culture and people.

This article illustrates the provenance research done so far. It also sheds light on the 'beyond', on what might be to expect in the future. Dealing with the Staehelin-Meier collection today, it reflects on typical aspects of the 1930s, like salvage ethnography or assembling collections by non-professionals. However, dealing with the collection almost one hundred years after it has been assembled also raises questions of sharing, dialogue, and self-determination.

The question is now where a collaboration between Hiva Oa and MKB could lead to. To a new museum in Atuona? To a restitution of the extracted

grave goods and human remains? To a future place where all islanders can actively live their cultural heritage? Who will participate in this project? Can it become a site where tourists can experience more than Gauguin's 'South Seas' images of the island? What a postcolonial museology is about, we have to find out now, the MKB in collaboration with the people of Hiva Oa.

#### ORCID®

Beatrice Voirol 

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5618-4836>

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Fig. 2: The old road of Hanauaia [Foto (F)Vc 839] © Museum der Kulturen Basel.

Fig. 3: Our "collection" by 11th October 1932 [Foto (F)Vc 766] © Museum der Kulturen Basel.

Fig. 4: Our large shipment to the museum [Foto (F)Vc 1217] © Museum der Kulturen Basel.

Fig. 5: A cave in Hanamenu where the dead were buried [Foto (F)Vc 806] © Museum der Kulturen Basel.

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Beatrice Voirol: Provenance Research and Beyond – Dealing with a Collection from Hiva Oa (French Polynesia) from the 1930s, in: *transfer – Zeitschrift für Provenienzforschung und Sammlungsgeschichte / Journal for Provenance Research and the History of Collection* 1 (2022), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48640/tf.2022.1.91512>, 44-56.