

# ExpoTime!

Double issue  
Jan Feb 2023

The international magazine  
for museum professionals

66 pages

64 links

2 videos

93 referred institutions







Sebastian Möllers, Lea Maria Steinkampf

## Museen Stade: a colonial era collection is being researched together with partner institutions in Tanzania

Museen Stade have been researching a colonial era inventory from their collection since May 2022. This venture is funded by the German Lost Art Foundation, which has had a special funding focus on collections from colonial contexts since 2019. The city of Stade received the collection as a gift in May 1934 from the botanist Karl Braun (1870-1935), who headed the research center for fruit tree diseases at the „*Biologische Reichsanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft*“ [Biological Imperial Institute for Agriculture and Forestry] in Stade until he retired.

Before Braun came to Stade in 1921, he had worked from 1904 to 1920 at the Amani Institute, a research station set up by the “*Reichskolonialamt*” [Imperial Colonial Office] in the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania in what was then “*Deutsch-Ostafrika*” [“German East Afrika”]. In the course of his work, he meticulously collected ethnographic objects, which he appropriated through purchases and donations in the context of colonial injustice. He brought this extensive collection to Germany in 1920 when he had to leave the meanwhile British colony.

The historic Amani Institute still exists today. It is maintained by the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), which created a new research facility at the foot of the Usambaras after the end of the British colonial period, which is dedicated to malaria research and ethnomedicine, among other things.

### The Karl Braun Collection and the role of the Amani Institute during the German Colonial Period in Tanzania

In 1902, the “*Reichskolonialamt*” [“Imperial Colonial Office”] founded the „*Kaiserliche Biologisch-landwirtschaftliche Amani Institut*“ [“Imperial Biological-Agricultural Amani Institute”] in the Usambara Mountains of present-day Tanzania. In accordance with the imperial competitive mind set of the European colonial powers, the declared goal was to establish the largest botanical garden in the world. As part of a far-reaching network of agricultural and botanical research institutions that emerged in the course of European colonial expansion



Panorama postcard of the Amani Institute with personal notes by Karl Braun.  
© Stadtarchiv Stade, StadtA STD VI 168

since the 19<sup>th</sup> cent., the Amani Institute also contributed significantly to the global transfer of (invasive) plant species and enforced the economic interests of the German colonial power. Research, identification, and classification by scientists aimed to make plants useful for medicine, agriculture, and industry.

During his time as a leading botanist at the Amani Institute (1904-1920), Karl Braun amassed a collection of items now held by the Museen Stade. Following his time in the colony, Braun headed the „*Biologische Reichsanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft*“ [“Biological Imperial Institute for Agriculture and Forestry”] in Stade and, shortly before his death, donated the collection of nearly 600 objects to the city.

Braun acquired the objects on his official travels through the former German East Afrika, but also profited from the fact that the village of Amani was valued by numerous colonial actors as a “place of recreation” due to the climatic conditions and thus functioned as a transshipment point for objects from the entire colony. Behind the diverse collection which include everyday objects, weapons, instruments, or textiles, Braun’s botanical interest in processing techniques of local materials emerges. Accordingly, the objects can tell us not only about pre-colonial cultures, but also about their contexts of acquisition and the power asymmetries of a colonial transfer of knowledge.

The project “The Karl Braun Collection and the role of the Amani Institute during the German Colonial Period in Tanzania” is realized by the *Museen Stade* in cooperation with the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), which today operates the Amani Hill Station in

the Amani Nature Reserve. The aim is to highlight the power asymmetries in the network of object transfer in the context of the Amani Institute and to approach the histories of domination and sacrifice of the colonial institution. The object histories, their possible violent contexts of acquisition, and the role of Karl Braun will be reappraised in the context of the German colonial history of the Amani Institute. At the end of the project, the results of the provenance research will be published in three languages in an online database (German, English, Swahili) and made accessible in the context of an exhibition.

Together with this national institution, *Museen Stade* are now setting out to further research the collection. For this purpose, a cooperation agreement was signed in Dar es Salaam on February 6, 2023 by Prof. Said S. Aboud, Director General of the NIMR, and me as Director of the *Museen Stade* which sets out the common goals and the form of cooperation.

### The new approach

Among other things, it is about creating a change of perspective with regard to the objects and the history of the institute. Since there are almost exclusively German sources on German colonial history, this period of history has so far been viewed primarily from the perspective of colonial actors. This should now change as a result of the cooperation. It is also about including the questions of today’s Tanzanian academic colleagues.







Prof. Said S. Aboud, General Director of NIMR, signs the memorandum of understanding.  
© Museen Stade



So far, the function of the scientific institutions of the colonial organs has been researched only very insufficiently. Their role in the colonial power structure is much larger than one might think at first glance. Often the well-known names and their supposedly great life achievements were looked at instead of their crimes.

For example, Robert Koch also worked in Amani before setting up his own station on Lake Victoria. But what is the background of the research activities in the institutions? Among other things, it was about acquiring knowledge from the subjected local population, who, for example, were questioned to a point of exhaustion by Karl Braun, as he describes in his diaries which are an important subject of the research project.

Another aspect is the effective exploitation of the colonies. Which raw materials can be processed and how, which plants can be cultivated, which animal species can be used, etc.? Karl Braun was also concerned with these questions. He has selected many of the objects in his ethnographic collection against this background.

### “Mainland Galapagos” and invasive species

The largest botanical garden in the world was to be created in Amani, in colonial competition with a botanical garden of the Netherlands in Java. Over 3000 species

of plants from all over the world were brought to Amani and cultivated. In return, the institute supplied the German botanical gardens and research institutes with seeds and material for their herbaria.

The effects of the German gigantomania can still be clearly seen in the Amani Nature Reserve today. The former botanical garden has taken on a life of its own. Countless plant species which do not actually belong in the ecosystem are crowding out the local species. On the other hand, the region is referred to as “the mainland Galapagos”, as it is one of the 20 places in the world with the greatest biodiversity and most endemic species. This status was threatened by the German colonial rule, which also brought with it the large-scale plantation system, combined with immense deforestation – a change in ecological systems, guided by economic interests, which continues to have an impact today.

The consequences of German colonial history are still causing a variety of problems. The processing of this part of German history is long overdue and is now finally coming into focus. However, it can only take place together with partners from today’s Tanzania. *Museen Stade* and the German Lost Art Foundation have decided to enter a common way of coming to terms with the past. “An essential part of the research projects in the field of cultural and collection property from colonial contexts



At first glance a lush tropical vegetation in the Amani Nature Reserve. In fact, the majority of these are invasive species from the German colonial period, which are still threatening the partially endemic native flora today. © Museums Stade





Selection of objects from the collection of Karl Braun © Museen Stade

is the inclusion of local knowledge and partners from the countries of origin of the collections,” says Jan Hüsgen from the German Lost Art Foundation. “We therefore expressly welcome the exemplary cooperation between the Museen Stade and the National Institute of Medical Research, which also includes the provision of personnel costs for research in Tanzania.”

In order to include other voices beyond the cooperation with the National Institute of Medical Research, a workshop took place in Dar es Salaam in February 2023, which was also attended by representatives of the National

Museum of Tanzania, the University of Dar es Salaam and the Amani Nature Reserve. The event was prepared together with the local Goethe Institute.

The aim is to also develop ideas for subsequent exhibition projects that present the results of the research project to a broad public in Germany and Tanzania. In this context, artistic contributions from both countries are intended to broaden the scientific horizon.

Christian Mueller-Straten (ed.):

# KONSERVATIVE

The critical online dictionary for libraries, translators, curators and conservators

German-Englisch, English-German

Now with more than 780,000 words from all parts of cultural heritage, 15,600 cross-references and notes and 4,287 wrong entries from other dictionaries (VF).

Included are the larger complexes archaeology, conservation, history of art, ethnology, photography, architecture, textiles and garments, books, arms and armour, tiles and bricks, minerals, old tools and techniques, synthetic and natural colours and dyes, metallurgy, imitation products, pests and vermins, chemicals, classical iconography, Christian, Islamic and Jewish terms and motifs.

Annual license for one computer € 40,  
for institutions and companies € 160  
(activation of up to 5 IP addresses).

Verlag Dr. C. Mueller-Straten

<https://www.shop-museumaktuell.de>

Interested in  
a free test day?  
Just write to  
[verlagcms@t-online.de](mailto:verlagcms@t-online.de)

## Contributors of the issue:

### Dr. Utz Anhalt MA

Historian and political scientist. 2000 MA, 2007 PhD thesis. Journalist and lecturer for TV and press, in museums and universities. Research in Venezuela, Eastern Africa, India, Iran, and on American Indians in USA / Mexico.

[okuala@gmx.de](mailto:okuala@gmx.de)

### Dipl.-Rest. Boris Froberg

Rembrandtstr. 51, 12623 Berlin, Germany  
Ph. 0049-179 5106560

[boris-frohberg@gmx.de](mailto:boris-frohberg@gmx.de)

### Michael Miller

Public Information Officer, Media Relations and Content  
The University of Cincinnati  
Two Edwards Center, Room 3300  
49 West Corry Boulevard  
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0141  
Ph. 001-(513)556-6757

[mille7m9@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:mille7m9@ucmail.uc.edu)

### Dr. Sebastian Möllers M. A.

Director of *Museen Stade*  
Wasser West 39, 21682 Hansestadt Stade, Germany  
Ph. 0049 4141 79773-11  
Fax 0049 4141 79773-99  
Mobile 0049 176 80224205

[moellers@museen-stade.de](mailto:moellers@museen-stade.de)

### Dr. Christian Mueller-Straten

Art Historian (LMU Munich), publisher and publicist, specialized in museum documentation and fake detection

Kunzweg 23, 81243 Munich, Germany

[verlagcms@t-online.de](mailto:verlagcms@t-online.de)

### Marianne Saal

Art historian, trained restorer  
WERNER MURRER RAHMEN  
Zennerstraße 6/RGB, 81379 Munich, Germany

[www.murrer-rahmen.de](http://www.murrer-rahmen.de)

Ph. 0049 (0) 89 / 723 6 723

Fax 0049 (0) 89 / 723 6 722

[marianne.saal@murrer-rahmen.de](mailto:marianne.saal@murrer-rahmen.de)

### Lea Maria Steinkampf MA

Project Braun Collection  
Wasser West 39, 21682 Hansestadt Stade, Germany

[steinkampf@museen-stade.de](mailto:steinkampf@museen-stade.de)

We are thanking all mentioned museum teams for their important contributions.

## Imprint and contacts:

Verlag Dr. C. Mueller-Straten  
Kunzweg 23, 81243 Munich, Germany  
Ph. 0049-(0)89 839 690 – 43  
<https://www.museumaktuell.de/>

Editor in chief: Dr. Adelheid Straten  
For placing your articles, offer us your contribs via  
[verlagcms@t-online.de](mailto:verlagcms@t-online.de)  
or call us, 0049-(0)89 839 690 – 43

CEO: Dr. Christian Mueller-Straten

Ads: If you want your name, activities and solutions spread globally to at least 200,000 to 300,000 recipients worldwide, go to [https://www.museumaktuell.de/home/azpl/azpl\\_de.pdf](https://www.museumaktuell.de/home/azpl/azpl_de.pdf)

For global players wishing to reach museum specialists worldwide, please contact  
**Kultur-Promotion Mark Häcker**  
Mozartring 15, 85598 Vaterstetten/Baldham, Germany  
[kultur.promotion@gmail.com](mailto:kultur.promotion@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 0049-(0)1590 169 650 5

We unshorten abridged URLs for security reasons.