

Transactions and Transformations: artefacts of the wet tropics, North Queensland

Edited by Shelley Greer, Rosita Henry, Russell McGregor and Michael Wood



Memoirs of the Queensland Museum | **Culture**

Volume 10

Transactions and Transformations: artefacts of the wet tropics, North Queensland

Minister: Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

CEO: Suzanne Miller, BSc(Hons), PhD, FGS, FMinSoc, FAIMM, FGSA , FRSSA

Editor in Chief: J.N.A. Hooper, PhD

Editor: Geraldine Mate, PhD

Issue Editors: Shelley Greer, Rosita Henry, Russell McGregor and Michael Wood

© Queensland Museum
PO Box 3300, South Brisbane 4101, Australia
Phone: +61 (0) 7 3840 7555
Fax: +61 (0) 7 3846 1226
Web: qm.qld.gov.au

National Library of Australia card number

ISSN 2205-3220

COVER

Cover image: Rainforest Shield. Queensland Museum Collection QE246, collected from Cairns 1914.
Traditional Owners, Yidinji People

NOTE

Papers published in this volume and in all previous volumes of the *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* may be reproduced for scientific research, individual study or other educational purposes. Properly acknowledged quotations may be made but queries regarding the republication of any papers should be addressed to the CEO. Copies of the journal can be purchased from the Queensland Museum Shop.

A Guide to Authors is displayed on the Queensland Museum website qm.qld.gov.au

A Queensland Government Project

Design and Layout: Tanya Edbrooke, Queensland Museum

Printed by: Fergies

CONTENTS

GREER, S., HENRY, R., MCGREGOR, R. & WOOD, M. Aboriginal Artefacts, Collectors and the Wet Tropics: an introduction	1-8
MCGREGOR, R. Making the Rainforest Aboriginal: Tindale and Birdsell's foray into deep time	9-22
BUHRICH, A., GOLDFINCH, F. & GREER, S. Connections, Transactions and Rock Art within and beyond the Wet Tropics of North Queensland	23-42
MCGREGOR, R. & FUARY, M. Walter Edmund Roth: Ethnographic collector and Aboriginal Protector	43-58
HENRY, R. From Flame to Fame: Transformation of firesticks to art in North Queensland	59-76
WOOD, M. Dudley Bulmer's Artefacts as Autobiography	77-92
ERCKENBRECHT, C. The Politics of Time: Hermann Klaatsch in the Wet Tropics and the fate of his ethnographic collection in Europe	93-106
BARNARD, T. Indigenised Souvenirs and Homewares in the Glenn Cooke Collection	107-116
OTTO, T. & HARDY, D. Transforming Artefacts into Digital Heritage: Developing interactive databases for use by Aboriginal communities	117-132



The ARC Discovery project 'Objects of Possession: Artefacts Transactions in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland 1870-2013' research team standing next to some *Bagu* in the Cairns institute.
Left to Right: Bard Aaberge (PhD candidate on the ARC project), Shelley Greer, Russell McGregor, Maureen Fuary, Trish Barnard, Mike Wood, Corinna Erkenbrecht, Rosita Henry.

The Politics of Time: Hermann Klaatsch in the Wet Tropics and the fate of his ethnographic collection in Europe

Corinna ERCKENBRECHT

Erckenbrecht, C. 2016. *The Politics of Time: Hermann Klaatsch in the Wet Tropics and the fate of his ethnographic collection in Europe. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum – Culture 10: 93-106. Brisbane. ISSN 2205-3220*

This article examines the scientific and political background and the multiple changes in ownership of the Aboriginal artefacts from Australia collected by the German physical anthropologist Hermann Klaatsch. Originally, Klaatsch travelled to Australia in 1904 in search of the origins of humanity. However, the lack of evidence for the 'Out of Australia' theory and the requests by German Museums of Ethnology to collect artefacts for their institutions led to Klaatsch becoming a full-time collector of cultural artefacts, especially during his time in the Wet Tropics. He inscribed the artefacts and sent them to Germany in several shipments to various museums where they were later re-united, displayed and redistributed. Upon his return to Germany in 1907 Klaatsch was appointed professor of anthropology at Breslau University. He took there a portion of his artefact collection for his own teaching and study purposes. Due to political changes in central Europe after the Second World War, this collection was transferred to Warsaw, Poland, in 1953. New ownership insignia were applied while others were (partly) erased. Through these transformations the artefacts became encoded with a rich history and new meanings. A detailed study of Klaatsch's historical documents allows cross-referencing of the artefacts to the original localities and circumstances of their acquisition. Thus, more than one hundred years after first being collected, the artefact transactions and property claims can be re-assessed.

□ Hermann Klaatsch, ethnographic collecting, North Queensland, museums, Aboriginal artefacts, German Museums of Ethnology, European history

Corinna Erckenbrecht
University of Heidelberg, Junior Research Group
The Transcultural Heritage of Northwest Australia: Dynamics and Resistencies

During the early 1900s, the German medical doctor, comparative anatomist and physical anthropologist, Hermann Klaatsch (1863-1916), travelled around Australia, spending his entire first year in North Queensland. Here, he increasingly focused on the collecting of cultural artefacts due to requests from German Museums of Ethnology and his need to finance his travels. Klaatsch's accumulation of objects grew rapidly and he developed a means of marking his ownership of the objects via personalised lists, numbering and naming; a system that was later subjected to dissociation and division of the collection as a consequence of further transactions conducted on personal, institutional, political and international levels. While becoming a full-time collector of cultural artefacts during his time in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland from November 1904 to January 1905, Klaatsch sent his collections to several museums and academies of ethnology in Germany, in several consignments at different times. He clearly differentiated his various shipments after carefully considering where best to send them, taking into account his own as well as third parties' academic and financial interests. After Klaatsch's return to Germany in 1907 his whole collection was re-united for an exhibition in Cologne, but re-distributed again in 1908 in very different proportions to the three museums of ethnology in Germany (Leipzig, Hamburg, Cologne) which had all contributed to the financial support of the collector (see Erckenbrecht, 2010).

One part of the collection, however, Klaatsch took with him to Breslau University where he was appointed professor of anthropology in 1907, Breslau then being a German city. After Klaatsch's sudden death in 1916 his Australian collection of cultural artefacts remained there, although not displayed in later years. As a result of political changes in central Europe after the Second World War, Breslau became Polish and all cultural artefacts originally collected by Klaatsch (together with other collections) were moved in 1953 from Wroclaw (as Breslau was renamed) to Warsaw, the Polish capital, because of the fear of a revisionist German policy during the Cold War. The collector's name and numbers and the previous numbers of the German museums on the artefacts were erased and

new numbers of the Polish museum in Warsaw were applied, the artefacts thus receiving a new national identity inside Europe.

However, not all artefacts were completely re-numbered and some of the old numbers and labels signs survived. Research on the historical documents, photographs and artefact lists of the collector in addition to the post-war political history of the two neighbouring countries in central Europe has revealed a multiplicity of transactions and ownership changes from the beginning of the artefacts' acquisition in the Wet Tropics more than 100 years ago until today, each transaction being related to the politics of its time.

This research also helps to reveal the models and methods of collecting in terms of temporality and (processual) fluidity, the impact of various political developments and strategies as well as the implicit implementation of Western categories of work and value. More specifically, the study shows how time and history became encoded and encapsulated in Indigenous cultural artefacts over more than 100 years while the artefacts themselves remained physically unaltered. Through various spacio-temporal transactions they became increasingly charged with time, history and meaning. New signs and symbols of ownership were added whereas others were scratched off. Yet even these blank spots or scratches on the artefacts can still 'speak' to us. By deciphering, decoding and cross-referencing the symbols, codes and numbers on these time capsules, we can finally open and reveal their rich history and meaning. Thus, cultural artefacts from overseas kept by European museums today can be important transmitters of knowledge about the cultural and international politics of their time.

KLAATSCH'S AIMS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR HIS AUSTRALIAN TRIP

Hermann Klaatsch (figure 1) travelled to Australia in 1904 with no lesser aim than finding the origin of humanity. During the second half of the nineteenth century, archaeological, biological and anatomical research suggested more and more that

the diversity of species – including *Homo sapiens* – was an outcome of natural selection processes, not of divine creation. Klaatsch and his friend and colleague Otto Schoetensack, lecturer in prehistory at Heidelberg University, were both primarily influenced by Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley, the latter having emphasized the importance of Australia and the Australian Aborigines in this respect (Huxley, 1863). Klaatsch and Schoetensack both firmly believed that they were on the brink of finding the origin of mankind. Schoetensack in particular was convinced that the crucial evolutionary step had taken place under the special eco-climatic and zoo-geographic conditions of prehistoric Australia (Schoetensack, 1901, 1904). At the turn of the twentieth century it was generally



FIG. 1. Hermann Klaatsch in Australia 1907. Image: Private archive of the Klaatsch family, USA

believed that anthropogenesis had taken place somewhere in the tropics.¹ No-one in the contemporary literature mentioned Africa in this context. So the level of knowledge at that time, the hope of making revolutionary discoveries about the emergence of humanity, the geographical orientation towards the tropics, and the politics in archaeology, anatomy and physical anthropology with their key method of comparative analysis, may have all contributed to Klaatsch's decision to travel to Australia.

The opportunity to implement his plans arose suddenly when Klaatsch met the German representative of a Queensland mining company, the Lancelot Freehold Tin & Copper Mines Ltd, at an anthropological meeting in the German city of Worms in 1903. Francis E. Clotten, a businessman from Frankfurt interested in science and anthropology, was going to travel to Australia to inspect the Lancelot mine in the Silver Valley near Herberton (see Erckenbrecht, 2010: 52; Kerr, 1991, 2000). At a second meeting of the two men around Christmas 1903, Clotten offered Klaatsch to accompany him to Australia, indicating that he was willing to pay for his trip and finance his photographic equipment. Klaatsch jumped at the opportunity. He did not hold a salaried position at a university at that time and had no family obligations to take care of. So, quite spontaneously in February 1904, he set out on this journey which had no planned time limit, but which would change the course of his life.

ARTEFACT ACQUISITION AND MUSEUM POLITICS IN THE GERMAN EMPIRE

Klaatsch spent his first year in Queensland attempting to find evidence for Schoetensack's 'Out of Australia' theory, but was soon disappointed. After only a few months, in June 1904, he began to lament that the 'prehistoric fountain did not bubble' as he and Schoetensack had thought it would.² However, while living in Australia Klaatsch grew genuinely interested in Aboriginal people and their social and material culture. He remained in Australia for almost three years, interrupted only once for a six-month stay on Java, prolonged involuntarily by a bout of malaria.

Klaatsch constantly sought money and sponsors to finance his travels. Clotten, his original supporter, left Australia in September 1904, quite to Klaatsch's surprise. Since his arrival in Queensland Klaatsch had been a good friend of Walter E. Roth, to whom Clotten had introduced Klaatsch in the Department of Public Lands in Brisbane. As Queensland's Chief Protector of Aborigines, Roth supported Klaatsch in many practical ways, like allowing Klaatsch to use the government sailboat *Melbidir* for a trip to the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1904. However, during 1904 Roth became involved in an investigation into the maltreatment of Aboriginal people in Western Australia, subsequently losing his job and influence and finally leaving Australia in 1906. So Klaatsch, unwilling to return to Germany probably because of the lack of employment prospects there, was on his own in Australia, dependent on whatever new resources he could find to finance the continuation of his journey. In this situation the request from a German Museum of Ethnology took on great significance. Only a few days after Klaatsch's departure from Germany the director of the German Museum of Ethnology in Leipzig, Hermann Obst, had written him a letter asking if he would collect artefacts for his museum. This letter was forwarded to Klaatsch in Australia where he received it many months later in Townsville (Erckenbrecht, 2010: 67-69). Other contacts and inquiries by other museums and academies followed during the subsequent months and years.

This interest in a German scientist travelling abroad and his possible collecting activities for German museums at home was due to the founding of many municipal museums in the second half of the nineteenth century in Germany. The dissolution of the feudally class-structured society and the emergence of an emancipist bourgeoisie or middle class in the urban centres — often also port cities — led to an interested and open-minded civil society dedicated to science, culture and education in a general way (Felt, 2000; Laitko, 1996, Laukötter, 2007). In the relatively prosperous era before the First World War when the German Empire had its own colonies,³ there was a desire to fill the museums with

artefacts from all over the world (Penny, 1998, 2002; Penny & Bunzl, 2003). The political and economic processes of industrialization and urbanization, plus the new experiences in the colonies, led to an interest in folklore as well as in the lives of indigenous peoples around the world who were categorized primarily in historical and evolutionist terms (see for example Foy, 1909; Graebner, 1911). Large and attractive new museum buildings were erected either in the city centres or in the well-to-do suburbs where members of the educated middle-class had their homes (see Laukötter, 2007: 32-33). Museum directors were eager to obtain as many artefacts as possible in competition with other museums and cities, thus enhancing the importance of their own institution and providing the necessary proof for their legitimacy. It was 'a race to rake the treasure' (Schmeltz, 1888: 135) and sometimes even a 'collecting mania' as some of the municipal administrators who ran the museums complained (Laukötter, 2007: 159).

Moreover, many researchers and scientists at that time believed in 'salvage anthropology' (Gruber, 1959, 1970), an attempt to record and preserve the remnants of native cultures considered to be under threat of disappearing. During Klaatsch's time in Australia it was commonly believed that the Australian Aborigines would soon die out (McGregor, 1997). Klaatsch, too, saw his collecting activities as salvage work which would give him the opportunity to bring together a large collection, to be eventually sold to German museums.⁴ According to the strategies of 'salvage anthropology', artefacts had to be brought to the 'centres of civilisation' to be rescued and stored in orderly facilities where staff members could conduct scientific research on them according to the latest theories or display them to the public for educational purposes. In the meantime, the indigenous peoples — the creators, manufacturers and users of the artefacts — were believed to be doomed to extinction. This further increased the attractiveness and value of the artefacts. They received an aura as what he thought of as 'the last artefacts of the last Aborigines' and were therefore considered scarce and special.

In order to facilitate these aims and direct the stream of artefacts to their institutions, the German museums were prepared to at least partly pay collectors and scientists abroad to collect artefacts for them. Klaatsch was paid by the Museum of Ethnology in Leipzig, the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg, the Academy of Science in Berlin and the Museum of Ethnology in Cologne. All these institutions asked him at various stages of his travels to collect artefacts and they sometimes provided considerable sums (between 1000 and 4000 old German Reichsmark) for his artefact collecting.

These political, scientific, colonial, emancipist and educational developments at home, together with his need to generate financial support for his continuing travels, contributed to Klaatsch's important metamorphosis into a full-time collector of cultural artefacts in the course of his first year in Australia. He underwent this transformation while in North Queensland.

COLLECTING IN THE WET TROPICS

Having returned from a trip around the Gulf of Carpentaria from July to October 1904 (on board the government sailboat *Melbidir* which was normally used for Roth's trips to this area in his capacity as protector) Klaatsch stayed in the Wet Tropics from November 1904 to January 1905, first in Cooktown and then mainly in Cairns. During this time he made several trips into the surrounding countryside in order to find Aboriginal people and to collect cultural artefacts directly from them. He was especially interested in the Bellenden Ker Range for several reasons. Firstly, he had studied articles and photographs by Archibald Meston⁵ in the *Australasian* and the *Queenslander*, one photo depicting a 'warrior party of the wild Bellenden Ker blacks'.⁶ From these articles and reports Klaatsch concluded that Aboriginal people were still living 'wild' and 'naked' in the Bellenden Ker Range. This was one of the reasons he wanted to meet with them there.⁷ Another reason why Klaatsch made his excursions into this area and why he chose a particular travel route into the range was his

acquaintance with the Anglican Archdeacon of Cairns, Joseph Campbell. Klaatsch was introduced to Campbell by Clotten when they were both in Cairns in June 1904. Clotten donated money to the church (via his wife) so that the archdeacon would be favourably inclined towards Klaatsch's collecting interests.⁸ In return, Campbell advised Klaatsch where to go to in the Bellenden Ker Range. Campbell had chosen places for the scientist and had already talked to some local farmers. So arrangements had already been made by a network of third parties to introduce and guide Klaatsch as a travelling collector.

Moreover, Klaatsch was well aware that other collectors and scientists were active in the field. In particular he regarded himself as in competition with Roth – although they always remained friends. This competition is illustrated by his persistent comparison with what Roth had already collected, where Roth had already been etc., thus acknowledging at the same time Roth's leading role in the fields of anthropology and collecting. Since Roth had not been to the Bellenden Ker Range himself, Klaatsch saw a special opportunity as a scientist and collector here: to go to places where few had been before and where no-one else would go in the future because soon, as was generally expected, there would be no Aboriginal people left and no artefacts to collect.

Thus Klaatsch was motivated to begin the first of his three excursions into the Bellenden Ker Range shortly after his arrival in Cairns, on horseback and on foot with the help of a guide⁹. The first expedition was from 2 to 13 December 1904 via Harvey's Creek and Babinda Creek to Mt Bartle Frere; the second trip from 17 December 1904 to 3 January 1905 was via Kuranda and Atherton to a place called 'Boenje' (a gold digger's camp) on the Upper Russell River Gold Fields; and the third expedition was from 21 to 30 January 1905 via Mulgrave and Aloomba to the Pyramid Mountain. Between these excursions Klaatsch also visited the nearby mission station of Yarrabah in January 1905.¹⁰

According to his own notes, Klaatsch tried to get to places where hardly any colonist from Cairns had

been before – and he found that there was little interest in what he was doing. People in Cairns did not talk about Aboriginal people or did not expect them to be still living in their camps, which were well hidden on the slopes of the Bellenden Ker Range. Klaatsch found and visited many of these Aboriginal camps and observed, for instance, how the Aboriginal people built their huts (*bunja*); he tried to learn their language, compiling several word lists which he later tested and cross-checked; and he drew some quite good portraits of individuals (Erckenbrecht, 2010: 95-104). The breadth of his activities shows that Klaatsch was not only an artefact collector interested in material culture but also a multi-faceted researcher with many interrelated and overlapping research interests in accordance with the German tradition embodying the Humboldtian educational ideal. He was an interdisciplinary, independent scholar with a 'radial' research perspective, paying attention to many different topics at the same time.

COLLECTING IN THE BELLENDEN KER RANGE

Through these excursions into the Bellenden Ker Range and his direct contact with Aboriginal people, Klaatsch was able to observe the actual living conditions of local Aboriginal groups. They differed greatly from Meston's descriptions. Klaatsch found that Aboriginal people were living at gold digger's camps or in hidden camps in the scrub, afraid that visitors like himself were from the police and were trying to take their children away, especially when he approached the camps on horseback. They mostly hid, Klaatsch noted, shy, fearful and intimidated (see Erckenbrecht, 2010: 100).

Klaatsch also perceived clearly the wider political framework and the complicated political, ethnic, demographic and health situation in north Queensland at that time: the multi-ethnic and multi-national mixture of the local population with Anglo-European settlers, Melanesian workers on the sugar-cane farms, Chinese shop-keepers and businessmen (many of whom he considered to be

opium dealers), and, amongst the mixture, the small, fearful groups of Aboriginal people trying to hide in camps in the rainforest. They were marginal groups.¹¹ Sometimes Klaatsch felt guilty for compounding their problems 'by taking away the last artefacts they had'.¹² Yet he apparently did exactly that and collected several hundred artefacts from his three trips to the Bellenden Ker Range (the exact figure is not discoverable). He applied a wide variety of methods in obtaining artefacts including purchase, exchange for tobacco, food or clothes, arrangement by friendly whites, but also took artefacts from deserted camps. In addition, Klaatsch bought artefacts from commercial traders, received gifts from police inspectors and (German) missionaries and exchanged artefacts with white local inhabitants interested in Aboriginal culture.¹³ These additional activities of acquiring cultural artefacts show, first, that there was a considerable market for Indigenous artefacts, the artefacts having become a commodity for local traders, interested individuals, private collectors and professional travelling collectors like Klaatsch. Secondly, as he was in touch with several German museums and academies, Klaatsch needed sufficient sets of artefacts to meet the demands of more than just one customer. Because of his high travel expenses and the limited financial possibilities of the museums in Germany he needed several supporters who would finance him. Thus, he always aimed at getting as many artefacts from as many sources as possible to satisfy the inquiries of more than one museum. Consequently, he collected great numbers of each artefact type simultaneously, although these numerous sets of artefacts led to the complaint of the 'great monotony of material', for instance by the director of the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg, Georg Thilenius.¹⁴

So in this phase of political, economic and cultural change in the Wet Tropics – encountered and observed by a travelling collector from overseas – there was a multi-faceted network and 'micro-climate' affecting the demand for cultural artefacts. The same factors influenced the attributed value and availability of the artefacts.

CLAIMING AND NEGOTIATING OWNERSHIP RIGHTS

As soon as Klaatsch had acquired an artefact he wrote his name and/or his number on it, thus claiming his personal property rights. He also compiled long inventories of artefacts, the personalised headings of which maintained that all artefacts listed therein would be his property – although he was prepared in some cases to acknowledge that he had received some artefacts from others (for instance, Clotten in the Silver Valley or police inspector Durham in Cairns). As mentioned above, Klaatsch was aware of several other collectors in the region, such as Walter Roth, Carl Lumholtz, P. G. Black (in Sydney), and G. Fritsch (another German scientist). These were collectors and scientists who were either engaged in or planning to undertake collecting activities; thus it was very important for him to distinguish ‘his’ artefacts from ‘theirs’. So the ‘race to rake the treasures’ took place not only inside the European museums but also in the field. Roth especially seemed to be a competitor since Klaatsch often claimed that he had been able to collect certain artefacts that Roth had not been able to obtain. To some extent, he

saw Roth as setting the standards which were to be met, or outdone, by extra efforts or detours (see McGregor and Fuery this volume for more information on Roth).

Klaatsch sent the artefacts to Germany as soon as possible after he had obtained them. There were practical reasons for this as it would have been impractical to carry around hundreds of artefacts while still travelling. At the same time, according to Klaatsch, it was a way of saving the artefacts from possible seizure by others. When sending the artefacts away, he clearly indicated where in Germany to send them. He first sent them to Leipzig, as that museum had asked (and paid) him first; then to Hamburg to secure this new customer by sending what he considered to be excellent examples to them. Later he discussed payment and collecting conditions with the Berlin Academy of Science, which tried to impose an exclusivity clause on him – a nightmare for Klaatsch (Erckenbrecht, 2010: 91-93). Finally, some artefacts were sent to Cologne, because the museum director at that time, W. Foy, had also offered the possibility of a special exhibition of Klaatsch’s entire Australian collection at the newly founded Museum of Ethnology in Cologne (figure 2). Klaatsch sent smaller numbers of artefacts



FIG. 2. Bicornual baskets in the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne, Germany. Photo: Rosita Henry

to other places and to friends and colleagues and also a large collection to his own home in Heidelberg which he kept throughout his time in Australia. So the initial act of collecting quickly moved into a process of dissociation, division and distribution, determined by the collector's personal, economic and academic choices.

When Klaatsch sent portions of his continuously growing collection back home to Germany, he always emphasized in his letters that he sent them to the museums on the assumption that they were still his property and that they were to be stored at the museums on a temporary and provisional basis only. In his correspondence with the museum directors he repeatedly discussed this issue, sometimes quite frankly and in detail, sometimes — especially in the beginning — subtly and cautiously while inquiring about artefact and payment transactions in general. However, he always maintained that the collections remained his property no matter where they were stored. The fact that he sent them to a particular museum for storage did not mean that they were the property of this museum — or that those artefacts were already the equivalent of the money that the museum had sent him. Their money was not a payment yet, but merely a deposit. He pointed out over and over again in his correspondence that the museums could not conclude from the fact that they stored *his* collection that they now would be the owners. Rather, Klaatsch regarded himself as still engaged in the process of collecting. Only when he stopped collecting after his return would his whole collection be evaluated for its monetary worth, and only then would parts of his collections belong to the three museums which had financed him in the first place.¹⁵

These negotiations with German museums and academies show that Klaatsch, originally a university professor with pure academic research interests and high-minded aims of finding the origin of humankind in Australia, had turned into an entrepreneurial collector and salesman of artefacts. He developed his own economy of collecting in which the cultural artefacts became commodities and the business of collecting took on a commercial purpose. The collection had become his 'capital', needed desperately for his economic survival. Collecting had become the *basis* of all his continuing travels in Australia without which he

would not have been able to carry on. These economic and financial negotiations and considerations continued until after Klaatsch's return to Germany in 1907 when he still had high debts at his bank. Only when he succeeded in selling a large part of his collection to the Cologne museum, where the director had found wealthy sponsors, was his project of collecting Australian artefacts finally completed. He then, again, became a university academic solely interested in scientific and non-commercial research.¹⁶

TEMPORALITY, VALUE AND THE LOCKEAN CONCEPT OF LABOUR

When looking at Klaatsch's collecting methods and strategies as well as his distribution policies several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, collecting was a fluid and temporal process for Klaatsch. He collected artefacts, carried them with him — albeit for a very short time — then sent many of them home, collected new ones, and so the process was repeated. Over the years, more than 2000 artefacts went through his hands in that way. The artefacts remained with him only temporarily. Secondly, he left no doubt that they were his property as soon as he had collected them. He wrote his name and number on them and used the written evidence of his own artefact lists to assert his property claims. Thirdly, the artefacts were not mere material things in his eyes, but their value increased according to the effort involved in obtaining them. He often emphasised that it took him a lot more labour and extra expense to travel to those areas where Aboriginal people could be actually met and the artefacts obtained direct from their makers. So he added his own work to the pre-existing artefact itself — his own effort on top of the 'real' work of the original Indigenous owner and producer who manufactured the artefact in the first place. Thus, Klaatsch added a Lockean kind of labour to the artefacts, increasing the worth of the collected items in terms of both prestige and price.¹⁷ Another factor adding to the value of the artefact was its rare and last-chance-to-see-character, mentioned above, because the Aboriginal people were allegedly doomed to extinction and would not manufacture the artefacts any more. Also, other collectors might have been through a particular

area already and 'finished it off'. Thus, the two Western market-economy categories, work and scarcity, were applied both implicitly and explicitly to increase (or, vice versa, to decrease) the value of the artefact, for which the collector, in turn, wanted to be paid.

In addition, although he parted with the artefacts and sent them to German museums, Klaatsch always claimed to remain the legal and full owner of the artefacts until his travels and collecting activities in Australia were completed. As the collector in the field he claimed – and exercised – exclusive and indisputable ownership over his growing acquisitions. Spatial removals did not mean that ownership moved too. Rather, ownership as a symbolic and virtual order remained untouched by spatial movement. So wherever Klaatsch travelled and wherever his artefacts were stored in the meantime, he remained their owner until the final financial and spatial transactions were settled. No matter where the artefacts were physically located, they were always his in his mind – they were in his 'mental realm' as Jean Baudrillard (1994: 7) put it. Finally, the museums inventoried the artefacts that they eventually bought from Klaatsch in their entry books and catalogues. It was only at this point that the artefacts finally became the property of the museums.

So the whole transaction of turning an ethnographic artefact manufactured by an Aboriginal person into the property of a European collector and then into the property of a museum abroad was, in Klaatsch's case, a processual procedure in several distinctive stages spanning several years. At the same time these transactions were accompanied by constant negotiations over ownership rights, economic considerations and discussions in Klaatsch's extensive correspondence with various museum directors and colleagues, thus making the artefacts subject to social relationships also.

BRESLAU UNIVERSITY AND POST-WAR EUROPE

During the exhibition in Cologne in 1907 Klaatsch's complete collection was re-united. Following the exhibition, it was re-distributed to the museums

involved. However, each received quite different proportions to those they had previously received from Klaatsch's original shipments. In the same year, Klaatsch was appointed professor of anthropology at Breslau University. He took a selection of up to 400 cultural artefacts with him to his new home city. It remains unclear whether Klaatsch just took the remainder of artefacts that no museum wanted, or whether he actively chose a good selection for himself for his study and teaching purposes. His notes are inconclusive and/or contradictory on this point.

At Breslau University Klaatsch established his own anthropological institute with a special individual profile that included ethnography. After his sudden death in January 1916 at the age of only 52, the chair remained vacant for several years. Egon von Eickstedt (1892-1965) was appointed professor of anthropology at Breslau from 1933 until 1945, but his role during the fascist regime in Germany was controversial both at that time and today. Today, it is mainly von Eickstedt's name that is connected with the professorship of anthropology at Breslau University, whereas Klaatsch is largely forgotten.

Klaatsch's Australian collection remained in Breslau throughout von Eickstedt's professorship. In 1944, one year before the end of the Second World War, the German authorities planned to evacuate several collections from Breslau, so they were gathered at the Botanical Gardens where they were packed and listed. However, this evacuation was never carried out, probably because the German authorities had more pressing problems than moving artefacts in the last year of the war. The German list, however, survived and was analyzed in detail by the author (see below).¹⁸ After the war a new political order was established in central Europe and many national borders were rearranged. Breslau became Polish, and renamed Wrocław. At the beginning of the 1950s the Cold War set in and the Polish government and people were afraid of a revisionist policy in Germany. This in turn caused a political move to centralise many cultural artefacts in Warsaw, the Polish heartland. So in 1953 Klaatsch's collection of cultural artefacts from Indigenous Australia was moved to Warsaw for political reasons. The German list from 1944 was used again for this purpose.

When an inventory of the new artefacts at the Museum in Warsaw was compiled, the old numbers inscribed first by Klaatsch, then by the German museums where they first arrived in Europe, and finally at Klaatsch's former Breslau institute, were erased in order to delete all German traces. New numbers were attached according to the Polish museum numeration system. But this did not happen in all cases, perhaps merely because they were overlooked. Some artefacts still carry the old inscriptions on them. So in some cases the cultural artefacts originally collected from Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland in 1904-1905 can be cross-referenced and re-identified with the help of the collector's own notes and artefact lists. These artefacts still document their marks of provenance, their ownership claims and changes, and the broader transoceanic and trans-European transactions, including the post-war political history in Europe, spanning a period of more than 100 years.

THE COLLECTION IN WARSAW TODAY

The Klaatsch collection in Warsaw is kept by the Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne (PME) or State Ethnographical Museum. It is the largest museum of the kind in Poland with altogether 80,000 artefacts. However, in Poland (as in many other countries) 'ethnography' includes the study of local, traditional folk art from the various ethnic and cultural groups of Poland as well as of cultural traditions from inside Europe. Thus, the collection at the PME contains 58,000 artefacts from Poland and Europe, while only 22,000 artefacts are from overseas. Of the latter, 4,000 are from Oceania and Australia, with over 400 from Australia itself. This is the largest Australian collection in Poland (Dul, 2008; Glowczewski, 2012).

According to the original German list from 1944, 379 cultural artefacts from Australia collected by Klaatsch were transferred from Wrocław to Warsaw in 1953. Today, 312 of these artefacts are still kept at the PME (a normal average loss over the years)



FIG 3. Boomerang PME 5156, collected by Klaatsch and now in the Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne (PME) or State Ethnographical Museum, Warsaw, Poland. Photo: Corinna Erckenbrecht.

and I examined these during a research visit to the museum in 2005 (Erckenbrecht, 2010: 221-223). Most are very well preserved and in good condition. It is an almost representative selection from all those places that Klaatsch visited and where he collected, with an emphasis on men's weapons and tools.¹⁹

During research in Warsaw in 2013, 42 artefacts could be identified as being from the Wet Tropics.²⁰ They are mainly boomerangs, but include a number of other interesting artefacts such as rainforest shields, clubs, a sword, a spear thrower, a basket, a child's toy, an amulet and a stone axe blade. Some of the artefacts are outstanding since they still have the whole history of their transactions inscribed on them, as discussed above. These include Klaatsch's name (or his abbreviation 'K' or 'KI'), the number from his own artefact list, then, in some cases, the number from the Leipzig museum where the artefacts were first inventoried (or the blank spots where these Leipzig numbers once had been and were later erased), Klaatsch's official number, probably from Breslau (in most cases together with the repeated provenance), and finally the new Warsaw museum abbreviation and number.

One artefact in particular sums up quintessentially this history and time-depth. It is a boomerang, now catalogued PME 5156, which Klaatsch collected via direct contact with Aboriginal people at Babinda Creek (figure 3). We know when, why and how. Klaatsch's first trip to the Bellenden Ker Range was from 2 to 13 December 1904. He travelled via Harvey's Creek and Babinda Creek up to Mt Bartle Frere. Klaatsch recorded the exact locality where he collected it (Babinda Creek), wrote his artefact number on it (309) and put it on his artefact list.²¹ He sent this boomerang together with other artefacts to Leipzig where it was inventoried and numbered. Then it was sent to Cologne for the special exhibition in 1907. Later it was not re-distributed to Leipzig or any other museum, but Klaatsch took it with him to Breslau. Either in Cologne or in Breslau the former Leipzig number was scraped off. Another number in red colour was put on it, probably by Klaatsch himself, and also the provenance was repeated (Babinda Creek, Bellenden Kerr). Then later again, in 1953 when the artefact was transferred to Warsaw, the new number of the Warsaw museum was put on it.²²

CONCLUSION

As shown by the above analysis and examples, political history became encoded and encapsulated in cultural artefacts across a range of spatio-temporal transactions. The artefacts changed their individual, ethnic, political and national owners over time and space for various reasons: the collecting of cultural artefacts from Indigenous people by a German scientist (as an income to finance travelling); for exhibition (as displays at recently-founded German museums); in the course of a professional appointment (as a professor at a university with an ambition to keep and to display his own ethnographic collection); during a world war (with two neighbouring countries whose national territories and borders were changed after the war); and the post-war fear of a revisionist policy. Despite bearing over 100 years of annotations and inscriptions that added multiple layers of history and meaning, the artefacts remained otherwise unaltered.

During this process the original producers, owners and users of the artefacts seem to have been almost forgotten. However, the story remains alive and accessible today, since the original notes of the collector still exist and can tell us where and why he travelled and who he met. So by cross-referencing and interpreting the various signs, codes, symbols and numbers associated with these objects, this time capsule can finally be opened and we can read in it the Indigenous, the transoceanic and the trans-European histories alike.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank other members of the Objects of Possession team, especially Shelley Greer, Rosita Henry, Russell McGregor and Mike Wood, for their advice and comments on earlier versions of this paper.

The research for this article was funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery grant for the project 'Objects of Possession: Artefact Transactions in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland, 1870–2013' (DP110102291).

LITERATURE CITED

- BAUDRILLARD, J. 1994. The system of collecting. Pp. 7-24. In Elsner, J. & Cardinal, R. (eds) *The cultures of collecting*. (Harvard University Press: Cambridge).
- DUL, R. 2008. The Australia and Oceania collections. P. 301. In Czyżewski, A. (ed.) *Zwykłe – Niezwykłe. Fascynujące kolekcje w zbiorach Państwowego Muzeum Etnograficznego w Warszawie*. (Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne w Warszawie: Warsaw).
- ERCKENBRECHT, C. 2010. *Auf der Suche nach den Ursprungen: Die Australienreise des Anthropologen und Sammlers Hermann Klaatsch 1904 – 1907*. Ethnologica N.F. 27. (Wienand Verlag: Köln).
- FELT, U. 2000. Die Stadt als verdichteter Raum der Begegnung zwischen Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit. Reflexionen zu einem Vergleich der Wissenschaftspopularisierung in Wien und Berlin. Pp. 185-219. In Goschler, C. (ed.) *Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit in Berlin 1870-1930*. (Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart).
- FOY, W. 1909. Das städtische Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum für Völkerkunde in Köln. *Ethnologica* Bd. 1: 1-70.
- GLOWCZEWSKI, B. 2012. Preliminary evaluation of the Australian collections and the exhibition 'Australia and Oceania. The culture and art of the south seas' at the State Ethnographical Museum in Warsaw. (Polish and English). Pp. 171-177. In Czyżewski, A. (publisher and project director): *Etnografia Nowa / The New Ethnography [04/2012]*. (Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne w Warszawie: Warsaw).
- GRAEBNER, F. 1911. *Methode der Ethnologie*. (Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung: Heidelberg).
- GRUBER, J. W. 1959. Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 61: 379-389.
- GRUBER, J. W. 1970. Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 72 (6): 1289-1299.
- HUXLEY, T. H. 1863. *Evidence as to man's place in nature*. (Macmillan: London).
- KERR, R. S. 1991. The German demand for wolfram, tin and copper from North Queensland 1890-1914. *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte / Journal of Business History* 36 (2): 61-75.
- KERR, R. S. 2000. *John Moffat of Irvinebank: A biography of a regional entrepreneur*. (J. D. & R. S. Kerr: Brisbane).
- LAITKO, H. 1996. Betrachtungen über den Raum der Wissenschaft. Pp. 313-340. In Kant, H. (ed.) *Fixpunkte Wissenschaft in der Stadt und der Region*. Festschrift für Hubert Laitko zum 65. (Geburstag: Berlin).
- LAUKÖTTER, A. 2007. *Von der 'Kultur' zur 'Rasse' - vom Objekt zum Körper? Völkerkundemuseen und ihre Wissenschaften zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*. (Transcript - Verlag: Bielefeld).
- MACPHERSON, C. B. 1980. *Die politische Theorie des Besitzindividualismus: Von Hobbes bis Locke*. Übersetzt V. A. Wittekind. (Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main). (Originalausgabe 1962: *The political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford Press.)
- MCGREGOR, R. 1997. *Imagined Destinies. Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939*. (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne).
- PENNY, H. G. 1998: Municipal Display: Civic Self-Promotion and the Development of German Ethnological Museums, 1870-1914. *Social Anthropology* 6 (2): 157-168.
- PENNY, H. G. 2002. *Objects of culture. ethnology and ethnographic museums in Imperial Germany*. (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill).
- PENNY, H.G. & BUNZL, M. (eds.) 2003. *Worldly provincialism: German anthropology in the age of the Empire*. (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor).
- SCHMELTZ, J.D.E. 1888. Südsee-Reliquien. *Internationales Archiv für Anthropologie* 1: 134-183.
- SCHOETENSACK, O. 1901. Die Bedeutung Australiens für die Heranbildung des Menschen aus einer niederen Form. (Vorgelegt in der Sitzung der Berliner Anthropologischen Gesellschaft vom 27. Juli 1901.) *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 33: 127-154.
- SCHOETENSACK, O. 1904. Die Bedeutung Australiens für die Heranbildung des Menschen aus einer niederen Form. *Verhandlungen des naturhistorisch-medizinischen Vereins zu Heidelberg*, 7: 105-130.

□ ENDNOTES

1. Eugène Dubois, for instance, the Dutch anthropologist, geologist and military surgeon, deliberately joined the army in order to travel to the Dutch colonies in the tropics to conduct excavations there. He discovered the *Pithecanthropos* on Java.
2. Klaatsch's letter to Schoetensack, no. 8 from 17 June 1904 reads: '... und wieder concentrierte sich meine Gedankenwelt auf den sonderbaren Punkt, dass gerade hier die Documente für ein hohes Alter des Menschengeschlechts so schwierig zu erbringen sind, -gerade hier, wo doch nach Deinen und meinen Anschauungen die praehistorische Quelle am reichlichsten sprudeln müsste.' (Private Archive of the Klaatsch Family, USA)
3. The German colonies were a patchwork of several countries in Africa and the Pacific, among them the northern half of what is today Papua New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, Bougainville, northern Solomon Islands, part of Samoa, northern Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Palau, Caroline Islands and Nauru. Germany had fewer colonies than many other European colonial powers, but the total landmass of its overseas colonies was six times the size of the German state at that time.
4. In a letter to the director of the Leipzig museum on 12 November 1904 Klaatsch wrote from Cooktown: 'Bei dem rapiden Rückgang der Eingeborenen ist es jetzt die hoechste Zeit, noch zu retten, was moeglich ist und ich werde daher versuchen, eine moeglichst grosse Collection zusammenzubringen.' (Private Archive of the Klaatsch Family, USA)
5. Archibald Meston (1851-1924) had led a government expedition to the Bellenden Ker Range in January 1889 and another in 1904. He was also Queensland's Southern Protector of Aborigines from 1898 to 1903.
6. Unfortunately, Klaatsch did not provide a reference for the article and the photograph.
7. Letter no. 16, p. 3, from Klaatsch, Cairns, to Schoetensack, 17 December 1904; & letter no. 17, p. 3, from Klaatsch, Cairns, to Schoetensack, 10- 20 January 1905 (Private Archive of the Klaatsch Family, USA).
8. According to letter no. 10, p. 4, from Clotten, Herberton, to Klaatsch, 29 August 1904, this money was used partly for the cathedral in Townsville and partly for the mission station at Yarrabah (Private Archive of the Klaatsch Family, USA).
9. We don't know who this guide named 'Jack' was, and whether he was Indigenous or not.
10. He had also visited Yarrabah once before, in June 1904.
11. However, the picture varied considerably: there seems to have been a larger population and rather good relationships among the multi-national groups, especially Europeans and Aborigines, in Cairns, at the Upper Barron River and at Kuranda. Klaatsch described in his observations of the Aboriginal camps at the Barron River and Kuranda how black and white children lived and played peacefully together. This, however, was not the case at the Upper Russell River, where the Aboriginal population had been decimated by heavy fighting and dispersal. And it did not happen on the coastal side of the range where the Aborigines tried to hide from the authorities because of fear that their children would be taken away to the mission stations (see Erckenbrecht 2010: 95-104).
12. 'Diese Blacks leben unter den elendesten Bedingungen, wie wilde Tiere scheu und veraengstigt. Sie haben fast garnichts mehr von ihren alten Waffen, und es widerstrebte mir vielfach, ihnen die letzten Schilder und Schwerter abzunehmen.' Letter no. 18, p. 5, from Klaatsch, Maryborough, to Schoetensack, 19-23 February 1905 (Private Archive of the Klaatsch Family, USA).
13. For a full analysis of Klaatsch's collecting methods see Erckenbrecht (2010: 188-190).
14. Letter from Thilenius, Hamburg, to Foy, 7 January 1907. (Historical Archive of the City of Cologne)
15. Letter from Klaatsch to Weule (director of the Museum of Ethnology), from 14th August 1905 from Sydney, Archive of the Museum of Ethnology, Leipzig. See also Erckenbrecht (2010: 67-8, 144-5, 218-223) and Erckenbrecht September/October 2011, Second Report 'Research in the Klaatsch collection at the Museum of Ethnology in Cologne', unpublished manuscript for the ARC Project 'Objects of Possession: Artefact Transaction in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland, 1870-2013'.
16. The next, very interesting period in his professional career was his involvement in archaeological excavations of early man in the Dordogne, France, together with the Swiss prehistorian Otto Hauser.
17. For Locke's theories on property and labour see Macpherson, 1980. Locke claimed that everything that was taken out of nature and mingled or combined with one's own labour (thus being transformed through human work and no longer belonging to the realm of untouched nature) was then one's personal property. Because Aboriginal people were seen as part of nature – Klaatsch made this claim many times (Erckenbrecht 2010: 210f) – therefore their artefacts were part of nature. The artefacts were removed 'out of nature', that is, taken away from the 'children of nature', as Klaatsch often described the Australian Aborigines, by the act of collecting: taking the artefacts 'out of their natural state' with one's own hands.

ENDNOTES cont.d

18. This is an internal archival document with no reference number kept at the Museum of Ethnology in Warsaw where I was able to study it during my research visit.
19. This emphasis is probably due to the general tendency of male collectors to collect primarily items of the men's world. However, Klaatsch – especially towards the end of his 3-year stay in Australia – was well aware that Aboriginal women had their own profane and sacred lives including their own secret-sacred artefacts with their own gender-specific artefact terms. Since we do not know exactly how Klaatsch assembled the Breslau selection of artefacts, it is not possible to interpret its composition with certainty.
20. I would like to thank Dr Adam Czyżewski, director of the PME, Dr Bogna Lakomska and Dr Maria Wronski-Friend for the opportunity to do this research and for their kind help and support during my stay there in April 2013. While there I compiled a detailed 5-page table of those 42 artefacts which I identified as being from the Wet Tropics.
21. List B, no. 309; for Klaatsch's artefact lists see Erckenbrecht, 2010: 33-34.
22. There are other artefacts carrying a great deal of information that can tell similar stories but which cannot be detailed in this article.

CONTENTS

GREER, S., HENRY, R., MCGREGOR, R. & WOOD, M. Aboriginal Artefacts, Collectors and the Wet Tropics: an introduction	1-8
MCGREGOR, R. Making the Rainforest Aboriginal: Tindale and Birdsell's foray into deep time	9-22
BUHRICH, A., GOLDFINCH, F. & GREER, S. Connections, Transactions and Rock Art within and beyond the Wet Tropics of North Queensland	23-42
MCGREGOR, R. & FUARY, M. Walter Edmund Roth: Ethnographic collector and Aboriginal Protector	43-58
HENRY, R. From Flame to Fame: Transformation of firesticks to art in North Queensland	59-76
WOOD, M. Dudley Bulmer's Artefacts as Autobiography	77-92
ERCKENBRECHT, C. The Politics of Time: Hermann Klaatsch in the Wet Tropics and the fate of his ethnographic collection in Europe	93-106
BARNARD, T. Indigenised Souvenirs and Homewares in the Glenn Cooke Collection	107-116
OTTO, T. & HARDY, D. Transforming Artefacts into Digital Heritage: Developing interactive databases for use by Aboriginal communities	117-132