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Hilary S. Howes

The Race Question in Oceania

A. B. Meyer and Otto Finsch
between metropolitan theory
and field experience, 1865-1914

12



PETER LANG
EDITION

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Acknowledgements

Readers are advised that this book contains names and images of people who have passed away.

The PhD thesis on which this study is based was written in association with the ARC Discovery Project on ‘European Naturalists and the Constitution of Human Difference in Oceania: Crosscultural Encounters and the Science of Race’, based in the Division of Pacific and Asian History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (now School of Culture, History and Language) at the Australian National University, under the direction of Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard. The project focused on the reciprocal significance of metropolitan racial ideas and actual regional encounters in representations of indigenous Oceanian people by European naturalists from the late 1760s to the late 1880s. Its main collective outcome, the 2008 edited collection *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*, has been an important source of information and theoretical insight for my own work.

My first debt of gratitude is to the Project’s Chief Investigators, Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, Chair and member of my supervisory panel respectively. This study has benefited enormously from Bronwen’s fierce intellect and meticulous scholarship, from Chris’s holistic vision and breadth of knowledge, and from the time, advice, support and encouragement, generously given, of both. I am also grateful to the members of the Race Reading Group and Writers’ Workshop, organised by Bronwen and Chris, for stimulating discussion and critique: Brett Baker, Andy Connelly, Karen Fox, Elena Govor, Vicki Luker, Sandra Manickam, Carlos Mondragón, Ashwin Raj and Tiffany Shellam. Further thanks go to Matthew Champion, Stewart Firth, Tim Rowse, Miranda Stan-
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Earlier versions of some of the material presented here have appeared in *Historical Records of Australian Science* and *The Journal of Pacific History*. I would like to thank the editors and readers of those publications for their comments and suggestions.

This study is based principally on detailed analyses of written records produced by the German traveller-naturalists Adolf Bernhard Meyer and Otto Finsch. These include published and unpublished materials written before, during and after their authors' travels in Oceania, ranging from private and professional correspondence to scholarly and popular monographs, journal articles for lay and specialist audiences, print versions of public lectures, translations into German of other authors' works, circulars, catalogues, and even a short biography. Works by authors consulted by Meyer and Finsch, as well as works written in response to Meyer's and Finsch's Oceanian travels and publications, have also been considered. In addition, I have examined a smaller number of relevant visual and material records, predominantly maps, photographs, reproductions of field sketches, and plaster casts of human heads and faces. The two-volume *Entdeckungsgeschichte von Neu-Guinea* ('History of the discovery of New Guinea', 1909-12) compiled by the Netherlands-based German geologist Carl Ernst Arthur Wichmann (1851-1927) has been an invaluable source of information on early European contacts with New Guinea.¹ Given Wichmann's personal and professional peculiarities, however, it is a resource that must be used with caution.

Library, museum and archival collections I accessed in Australia include the Asia-Pacific (Menzies) collection of the Australian National University Library, the Australian Museum in Sydney, the National Library of Australia, the State Library of New South Wales, and the State Library of Victoria. In Germany I conducted research primarily in the Archiv der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, the Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Müncheberg, the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden, the Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden and the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden.

Beyond Berlin and Dresden, I consulted materials in the Stadtarchiv Braunschweig, the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen, the Übersee-Museum Bremen, the Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg in Frankfurt am Main, the Institut für Ethnologie und Ethnologische Sammlung and the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Göttingen, the Stadtarchiv and Stadtbibliothek in Hannover, the Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München and the Universitätsbibliothek München. In London, I accessed the collections of the British Library and the Wellcome Library. Bronwen Douglas kindly

1 Arthur Wichmann, *Entdeckungsgeschichte von Neu-Guinea (1828 bis 1885)* (2 vols, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1909-1912).

made available to me a number of letters held in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris. I am deeply obliged to the staff at these institutions, many of whom took great pains to assist me, and wish to express my particular gratitude to Horst Junker (Archiv der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte), Petra Martin (Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden), Marion Melk-Koch (GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig), Editha Schubert (Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Müncheberg), Wilfried Steenken-Eisert (Übersee-Museum Bremen), Melanie van Olffen (Australian Museum, Sydney) and Anja Zenner (Ethnologisches Museum Berlin). In addition, I would like to thank Rainer Buschmann and Rolf Hertel for generously sharing their research and expertise.

The shape of this study has been determined not only by what I found in these archives but by what I did not. While some of Meyer's and Finsch's letters contain draft copies of articles which later appeared in published form, I was unable to access original field notes for most of their publications. The Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna holds a substantial collection of materials from both of Finsch's Oceanian voyages, including diaries, field notes, vocabulary lists, sketches, photographs and artefacts; however, this collection was closed to external researchers during my PhD candidature, as museum staff were then in the process of preparing the major exhibition 'Aus dem Pazifik: Ein Sammler aus Leidenschaft – F. H. Otto Finsch (1839-1917)' ('From the Pacific: A passionate collector – F. H. Otto Finsch (1839-1917)'), open from 16 May – 8 October 2012.² I have not been able to trace Meyer's personal papers. In 1910, shortly before his death in Berlin, he wrote to the chemist Ludwig Darmstaedter (1846-1927), who in 1907 had donated to the Preußische Staatsbibliothek ('Prussian State Library', also known as the Königliche Bibliothek or 'Royal Library', now the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) his substantial personal collection of original documents written by prominent naturalists.³ Meyer described in this letter his own collection of correspondence from English, French, Dutch, Italian, German and Austrian 'zoologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, linguists [and] explorers, among others'; he acknowledged that 'the whole [collection] must go to a library at some stage', but added that in the Royal Library 'manuscripts are buried [and] accessible only with difficulty, or not at all, by the uninitiated, as the cataloguing does not keep pace with the acquisitions ... For this reason I am not so willing to deposit anything into this giant "stomach", since it will not be di-

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- 2 Gabriele Weiss and Ildikó Cazan-Simányi, *Aus dem Pazifik: Ein Sammler aus Leidenschaft – F. H. Otto Finsch (1839-1917)* (Wien, Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, 2012).
 - 3 Georg Lockemann, 'Darmstaedter, Ludwig', in: Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1957), vol. 3, pp. 516-517.

gested'.⁴ Unfortunately, I do not know whether Meyer did in fact feed his collection into the Library's giant stomach, or, if not, whether he decided to deposit it elsewhere. If it remained in Berlin after his death, it may well have succumbed to the ravages of the Second World War.

While this study focuses primarily on German-language texts, I have also utilised records written in Dutch, English, French, Latin and Russian. My readings of these texts have benefited from discussions with the following people: Robert Cribb and the members of the Dutch Reading Group (Dutch); Bronwen Douglas (French); Elena Govor (Russian); John Howes (Latin); and Conny Schüritz (German). Unless otherwise indicated, however, all translations are my own. With regard to stylistic and orthographic matters, inverted commas are included on first mention of problematic terms such as 'Papuan' and 'Negrito' and implied thereafter. Where the place names given by Meyer and Finsch differ from those commonly used today, I retain the historical version and give the current one in parentheses. I quote verbatim and omit [sic] in all but glaring instances or where misunderstanding is possible.

Many people helped make my time at the Australian National University a pleasant one; I think particularly of Takemasa Ando, Andy Connelly, Mike Cookson, Paul D'Arcy, Laura de la Cruz, Dawn Duensing, Karen Fox, Lena Heinzmann, Jacqueline Homel, Alan and Arlene Howes, Stephen Howes, Clare Holberton and family, Rob Hurle, Masato Karashima, Arunajeet Kaur, Gaik Cheng Khoo, Yasuko Kobayashi, Minseon Lee, Vicki Luker, Lou Merrington, Haruka Nomura, Jamie Shanks, Carolyn Strange, Matthew Stuckings, Keiko Tamura and Graeme Whimp. Special thanks to Sandra Manickam, my sometime office mate, fellow coffee drinker and general partner in crime: without your companionship and your sense of humour I would have been lost. Jo Bushby, Dorothy McIntosh, Indranee Sundanam, Sandie Walters and Marion Weeks smoothed administrative and technological hurdles. Friends and relatives elsewhere also offered advice and encouragement: to Ted Beard, Leisa Buckley, Benita Champion, Michael Champion, Sarah Gador-Whyte, Cat Gomes, John and Margaret Howes, Antje Kühnast, Joyce Leigh, Marian Madder, Philippa Maddern, Laura Maran, Nicholas Prindiville and Martin Wright, my sincere thanks.

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4 Letter from A. B. Meyer to Ludwig Darmstaedter, 15 March 1910, Sig. Darmstaedter, Australien (1870): Meyer, Adolf Bernhard, Handschriftenlesesaal, Staatsbibliothek Berlin.

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3. Cornelis de Jode (1593) ‘Novae Guineae forma, & situs’, in: Gerard de Jode, *Speculum orbis terrae*, 2nd edn (Antwerp, Cornelis de Jode, 1593), MAP RM 389. Reproduction courtesy National Library of Australia.
4. J. Kollmann, J. Ranke and R. Virchow (1884) ‘Untitled’ [cranial measures recommended by the Frankfurt Agreement], in: ‘Verständigung über ein gemeinsames craniometrisches Verfahren’, *Archiv für Anthropologie*, 15, p. 7. Reproduction courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

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16. Johannes Ranke (1912) 'Das Papua-Mädchen Kandaze. Nach Photographie von C. Günther in Berlin', in: *Der Mensch*, 3rd edn (2 vols, Leipzig und Wien, Bibliographisches Institut), vol. 2, p. 319. Reproduction courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

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Volume 12



PETER LANG
EDITION

Introduction

The inhabitants of Rubi [south Cenderawasih Bay, West Papua] ... led me to the conviction that there are in New Guinea, alongside bloodthirsty and untamed savages, also men of milder customs, and that they have raised themselves to these [customs] without external influence. (Adolf Bernhard Meyer)

From all that I have seen so far of human races ... I come more and more to the conviction that they cannot be distinguished by characteristics on a natural historical basis, but merge into one another to such an extent that the difference between Europeans and Papuans ultimately becomes completely unimportant. (Otto Finsch)

Adolf Bernhard Meyer (1840-1911), a German traveller-naturalist who spent five months of 1873 in north-west New Guinea, credited the indigenous inhabitants of Rubi, a small temporary settlement at the southern tip of Geelvink (Cenderawasih) Bay, with convincing him that New Guinea was populated not only by 'bloodthirsty and untamed savages' but by 'men of milder customs'.¹ Less than a decade later, his contemporary Otto Finsch (1839-1917), who approached New Guinea via Hawai'i, Micronesia and the Torres Strait Islands, declared that what he had 'seen ... of human races' during his travels had persuaded him that they 'merge into one another to such an extent that the difference between Europeans and Papuans ultimately becomes completely unimportant'.² Both men found that their received ideas about human difference were challenged and transformed as a result of their encounters with actual indigenous people in Oceania; both struggled to communicate these transformations to their scientific colleagues in Europe's metropolises. This study investigates the written, visual and material records of Meyer's and Finsch's experiences in Oceania. I probe these records for traces of indigenous agency and discuss the impacts of their authors' personal encounters with particular Oceanian people on their understandings of human difference, locating this discussion within the broader context of racial thinking in late nineteenth-century Europe and the convoluted and difficult relationship between field experience and metropolitan publication and reception.

Like many of their contemporaries, Meyer and Finsch were intensely interested in the physical, linguistic and cultural diversity of the earth's human in-

1 Adolf Bernhard Meyer, *Auszüge aus den auf einer Neu Guinea-Reise im Jahre 1873 geführten Tagebüchern ...* (Dresden, Königl. Zoologisches u. Anthropol.-Ethnogr. Museum, 1875), pp. 7-8.

2 Otto Finsch, 'Die Rassenfrage in Oceanien', *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 14 (11 March 1882), p. 166.

habitants, specifically those people occupying New Guinea and other parts of Oceania. In the second half of the nineteenth century, both men paid extended visits to these regions, where they travelled, collected, sketched, observed and experienced. During their travels, and following their return to Germany, both published extensively on these experiences. Each tried, on the basis of his personal impressions, to make sense of the human diversity he had encountered: to describe and classify the people seen, to identify connections between certain groups and distinctions between others, to locate each group geographically, and to speculate on their possible origins. The epistemological tools available to them included the theories, methodologies and frameworks supplied by the scientific disciplines of natural history, geography, comparative anatomy, physical anthropology, ethnology and linguistics. A fundamental idea informing their understandings of human diversity was the concept of race.

Although both Meyer and Finsch drew on existing works, discourses and theories to assist them in making sense of Oceania's human diversity, a crucial factor in shaping their understandings of the people they encountered was the people themselves. This study, therefore, is not merely about Meyer and Finsch. It is also about Tapinowanne Torondoluan, a young Tolai boy from New Britain who climbed aboard the brigantine bearing Finsch to Sydney, Australia, and voyaged with him thence as far as Germany, remaining in Finsch's company for a total of almost three years. It is about Marcus and Materi, two indigenous New Guineans engaged by Meyer as translators, and about Sremma, a 'sturdy older man' from the settlement of Hattam in the Arfak Mountains, whose profile Meyer sketched. It is, in fact, about all those people, both named and unnamed, whom Meyer and Finsch encountered during their travels in Oceania: people whose food they shared, whose hands they shook, whose bodies they measured, whose faces they cast in plaster, whose languages they attempted to record, whose activities they observed, whose ancestors' or enemies' skulls they collected. It is about people with whom they traded, talked and travelled; people who accompanied them as translators, hunters, insect-catchers, fishers, personal servants, bodyguards and guides; people who attacked them, avoided them, or welcomed them. It is about people whose appearance they found attractive or repugnant, people whose customs they considered admirable or perverse, and people whose behaviour amazed, amused, impressed or intimidated them. It is about people whom they thought they understood, and others whom they acknowledged they could not understand.

Colonial texts, indigenous countersigns

I accept that it is not possible for me to know with any precision which beliefs, understandings and agendas motivated the actions of these Oceanian persons

during their moments of encounter with Meyer and Finsch. They are separated from me by time, space and culture, and by the limitations of the texts which record their existence and their doings.³ However, these very texts – the written, visual and material records of encounter – necessarily contain conscious and inadvertent impressions made upon their authors, Meyer and Finsch, by Oceanian actions, behaviours and demeanours. Close comparative analysis of these records has the potential to reveal embodied traces of encounter: what Bronwen Douglas has described as ‘indigenous countersigns’.⁴ These countersigns – ‘oblique traces of the imprint of local or subaltern agency on foreign or elite perceptions, reactions, and representations’ – can then shed light upon the ways in which Meyer’s and Finsch’s personal experiences of particular Oceanian people did or did not influence their subsequent work and thoughts on human diversity in Oceania, as well as the work and thoughts of others who received their letters, read their publications, attended their public lectures, studied their collections, and challenged or corroborated their conclusions.⁵

According to Douglas, European travellers’ ‘representations and evaluations of indigenous people’, far from recording objective and unbiased observations, were ‘significantly imprinted by native actions and demeanour’. This recognition therefore suggests that the written and visual representations produced by such travellers ‘should be read not merely as reflexes of dominant metropolitan discourses, but also as personal productions generated in the volatile stew of cross-cultural encounters’. Indigenous agency, defined as active (though not

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- 3 Compare Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography’, in: *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York, Routledge, 1988), pp. 197-221; idem, ‘Can the subaltern speak?’, in: Cathy Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271-313; Gyan Prakash, ‘The impossibility of subaltern history’, *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1 (2000), pp. 287-294.
 - 4 See Bronwen Douglas, ‘Science and the Art of Representing “Savages”: Reading “Race” in Text and Image in South Seas Voyage Literature’, *History and Anthropology*, 11:2 (1999), pp. 157-201; idem, ‘Art as Ethno-Historical Text: Science, Representation and Indigenous Presence in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Oceanic Voyage Literature’, in: Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche (eds), *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 65-99; idem, ‘Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 38:1 (2003), pp. 3-27; idem, ‘In the Event: Indigenous Countersigns and the Ethnohistory of Voyaging’, in: Margaret Jolly et al. (eds), *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence* (Canberra, ACT, ANU E Press, 2009), pp. 175-198.
 - 5 Bronwen Douglas, ‘Encountering Agency: Islanders, European Voyagers, and the Production of Race in Oceania’, in: Elfriede Hermann (ed.), *Changing Contexts – Shifting Meanings: Transformations of Cultural Traditions in Oceania* (Honolulu, University of Hawai’i Press in association with the Honolulu Academy of Arts, forthcoming), note 2.

necessarily intentional) manifestations of the cultural and strategic desires of particular indigenous people, ‘challenged visitors’ predispositions and conventions and left its imprint in what they wrote and drew’. These writings and drawings, then, can be understood as co-productions between the people who authored them and those whom they purported to represent. Through their appearances, actions, demeanours and desires, indigenous Oceanians thus ‘dialectically helped constitute the very texts in which they were themselves constituted historically’.⁶

Douglas’s theory of indigenous countersigns aims to ‘foreground indigenous presence and agency’ by ‘conceptualis[ing] the distorted textual traces of [indigenous] agency as ... an intrusive local element in the formulation and content of voyagers’ perceptions and representations of indigenous people’, thereby ‘decentring the colonizers and colonizing their texts’. She critically deconstructs the discourses and interests which represented indigenous Oceanians in essentialised, stereotypical or denigratory ways, together with the texts (both written and visual) in which these representations were expressed. In this study I extend Douglas’s concepts of indigenous agency and countersigns to address not only written and visual texts but ethnographic and anthropological collections, including those of cranial and skeletal materials. This ‘emancipatory historical strategy’, which draws on insights from feminist literary critique, resonates with other forms of oppositional history, including women’s and subaltern studies, which approach the study of ‘historically suppressed categories of persons’ through provocative readings of materials produced by historically dominant groups.⁷

In order to trace indigenous countersigns in ‘colonial’ texts,⁸ Douglas explains, it is necessary to take into account both what the authors and artists who produced them were thinking *about* and what they were thinking *with*. *About* refers to an ‘ethnographic and spatial grasp of [the] people and places depicted’, a grasp based on contemporaneous texts which simultaneously constructed ‘past indigenous people and their worlds’ and were significantly shaped by their authors’ experience of those persons and contexts. *With* describes ‘particular

6 Douglas, ‘Science and the Art of Representing “Savages”’, pp. 159, 163, 189; idem, ‘Seaborne Ethnography’, p. 4.

7 Douglas, ‘Science and the Art of Representing “Savages”’, pp. 162, 194; idem, ‘Seaborne Ethnography’, p. 4 note 5; see also Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Subaltern Studies and Critique of History’, *Arena*, 96 (1991), pp. 105-120. Douglas fully develops the theory of indigenous countersigns in the introduction to her forthcoming monograph *Indigenous Presence and the Science of Race: Savants, Voyagers, and Encounters in Oceania 1511-1840*.

8 Where ‘colonial’ refers broadly to ‘all kinds of texts, both verbal and visual, produced about indigenous people by Europeans and their affiliates from first contacts until decolonization’ (Douglas, ‘Art as Ethno-Historical Text’, p. 93 note 4).

equations’ of ‘system’ (the conventions and tropes structuring understanding and providing ‘grammar and vocabulary for the description and evaluation of reality’), ‘idiosyncrasy’ (the ‘agenda, interests, capabilities and personality’ of individual artists and authors) and ‘circumstance’ (‘pragmatic contexts ... which enable and constrain experience and representation’).⁹ Consequently, my analyses of the textual, visual and material records of Meyer’s and Finsch’s Oceanian travels necessarily consider elements helpful in understanding what these traveller-naturalists were thinking *about* and *with* during their time in the field. These include their research interests and theoretical leanings, the ethnographic, spatial and temporal contexts within which they travelled, the pragmatic factors – for example, language difficulties, inhospitable terrain, ill health, shortages of supplies or finances, and the limitations of technologies available for recording observations in the field – constraining their interactions with indigenous people, and the constellation of prior and contemporaneous field experiences which informed those interactions. I ask: what had they studied? Whose works had they read? Whose theories did they attempt to apply, or to test? Where and when did they travel? Who accompanied them? What did they hope to achieve? How did they represent their experiences during these travels – at different times in their lives, within different representational genres, to different audiences? How did they understand the concept of race? And, importantly: how, if at all, did their understandings of this concept develop and change during the course of their careers? In short, how and how far was racial knowledge about Oceania’s inhabitants generated through their encounters with actual Oceanian people?

Parallel lives: Adolf Bernhard Meyer and Otto Finsch

At this point it is worth explaining why I selected Meyer and Finsch as the particular subjects of this study. On one level, the answer is simple: both men produced a substantial and diverse body of records, very few of which have attracted any sustained scholarly attention. Both were prolific correspondents, maintaining a steady flow of letters and reports with friends and colleagues before, during and after their Oceanian travels: their letters to Rudolf Ludwig Karl Virchow (1821-1902), the celebrated cellular pathologist, left-liberal politician, public health reformer and first President of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (‘Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory’, hereafter Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie), have been particularly illuminating to my research. Both men also delivered

9 Douglas, ‘Art as Ethno-Historical Text’, p. 68; idem, ‘Science and the Art of Representing “Savages”’, p. 163.

lectures on their travels to learned societies, including the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie and other assemblages of geographical and anthropological enthusiasts in Berlin, Vienna and Dresden. Print versions of their lectures, along with articles written specifically for publication, appeared in the journals and transactions associated with these societies. As well, reports of their travels and digests of their publications appeared in English-, French-, Dutch- and Italian-language journals, ensuring the two men international exposure. Both Meyer and Finsch also assembled considerable collections of visual records (maps, photographs, portrait and landscape sketches) and material objects (human remains, plaster casts or moulages of human body parts, weapons, utensils, artistic productions, ornaments, items of clothing) from their voyages, and both produced monographs on various aspects of their field experiences. They collaborated with colleagues within and beyond Germany and engaged in active debate with some of the principal scientists and scholars of their day.

Significantly, both Meyer and Finsch were also path-breakers in their field. Meyer was one of the first German-born naturalists to visit New Guinea and was certainly the first to publish extensively in German on his experiences there. Finsch, though his first entry into Oceania postdated Meyer's by almost a decade, had made an earlier debut in the field of Oceanian anthropology with his monograph *Neu-Guinea und seine Bewohner* ('New Guinea and its inhabitants', 1865), the first such work on the topic to be published in the German language.¹⁰ Much of the existing historiography discussing Germany's presence in Oceania focuses on the colonial period, an understandable emphasis given the substantial increase in source material.¹¹ However, the early contacts and experiences of

10 Otto Finsch, *Neu-Guinea und seine Bewohner* (Bremen, C. Ed. Müller, 1865).

11 This applies not only to studies of German colonial rule, including Evelyn Wareham, *Race and Realpolitik: The Politics of Colonisation in German Samoa* (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2002), Peter J. Hempenstall, *Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A Study in the Meaning of Colonial Resistance* (Canberra, ACT, Australian National University Press, 1978) and Stewart Firth, *New Guinea under the Germans* (Carlton, Vic., Melbourne University Press, 1982), but to accounts of particular individuals and expeditions, e.g. Hans Fischer, *Die Hamburger Südsee-Expedition: Über Ethnographie und Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, Syndikat, 1981); Sven Mönter, *Following a South Seas Dream: August Engelhardt and the Sonnenorden* (Auckland, Research Centre for Germanic Connections with New Zealand and the Pacific, The University of Auckland, 2008); Marion Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche nach der menschlichen Gesellschaft: Richard Thurnwald* (Berlin, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989); Andrea E. Schmidt, *Paul Wirz: Ein Wanderer auf der Suche nach der „wahren Natur“* (Basel, Ethnologisches Seminar der Universität und Museum der Kulturen Basel, in Kommission bei Wepf & Co., 1998); to historical overviews, notably Hermann Joseph Hiery (ed.), *Die deutsche Südsee 1884-1914: Ein Handbuch* (Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001); and to critical studies of European-Oceanian contacts, especially

such men as Meyer and Finsch were influential in shaping German perceptions of Oceanian people and in setting the terms for subsequent expeditions and colonial enterprise.

Meyer and Finsch were contemporaries; they were also, albeit in a restricted sense, research collaborators. In 1885 they co-authored an article describing a number of bird specimens collected in south-eastern New Guinea by Karl Hunstein (Carl von Hunstein, dates unknown), a German naturalist who had assembled them during his expeditions with the Scottish naturalist and merchant Andrew Goldie (1840-1891).¹² Despite the similarities in their ages and research interests, however, the two men also differed in important ways: in their family and educational backgrounds, in the purposes and trajectories of their Oceanian travels, and in their subsequent careers. These differences, which I summarise below, have allowed me to consider a broader range of activities, experiences and encounters than those which would have pertained to either figure in isolation. Dividing my research between two individuals has also made it easier to focus on the themes linking Meyer and Finsch – their search for well-defined racial types in Oceania, the destabilisation of their received ideas by recalcitrant experience, their insistence on the priority of presence in the formation of anthropological and ethnographic knowledge, and the difficulties they experienced in communicating their altered understandings to a metropolitan audience – rather than become excessively immersed in their biographical details. Having said this, I have also drawn inspiration from several recent biographical studies of German-speaking individuals with connections to New Guinea and/or to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnology and physical anthropology, all of which have very successfully combined discussion of the individual with consideration of his broader socio-historical context. I think particularly of Marion Melk-Koch's monograph on Richard Thurnwald (1869-1954) and Andrea E. Schmidt's study of Paul Wirz (1892-1955), both of which recount the lives of travelling ethnologists with an abiding interest in New Guinea, as well as Con-

Karl Neumann, *Not the Way it Really Was: Constructing the Tolai Past* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1992).

- 12 O. Finsch and A. B. Meyer, 'Vögel von Neu Guinea zumeist aus der Alpenregion am Südostabhange des Owen Stanley-Gebirges ...', *Zeitschrift für die gesammte Ornithologie*, 2:4 (1885), pp. 369-391, Taf. XV-XXII; idem, 'On some new Paradise-birds', *Ibis*, 28:3 (1886), pp. 237-258; Otto Finsch, *Kaiser Wilhelms-Land: Eine friedliche Kolonialbewerbung. Separatabdruck aus Lohmeyer-Wislicenus „Auf weiter Fahrt“*, *Deutsche Marine- und Kolonialbibliothek Band IV* (Leipzig, Wilhelm Weicher, 1905), p. 19; H. J. Gibbney, 'Goldie, Andrew (1840-1891)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Carlton, Vic., Melbourne University Press, 1972), vol. 4, sourced from the online version maintained by the National Centre of Biography at the Australian National University (adb.anu.edu.au; last accessed: 18 January 2011).

stantin Goschler's biography of Virchow and the edited collection on Felix von Luschan (1854-1924) by Peter Ruggendorfer and Hubert D. Szemethy.¹³

Adolf Bernhard Meyer (Fig. 1), the son of a prosperous German-Jewish family in Hamburg, studied medicine and natural sciences at the universities of Göttingen, Vienna, Berlin and Zürich, obtaining his doctorate in 1867 with a dissertation titled 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der electrischen Nervenreizung' ('Contributions to the theory of electrical stimulation of the nerves').¹⁴ His decision to go abroad was triggered principally by his interest in the works of the British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), especially *The Malay Archipelago* (1869), which he translated into German the same year it first appeared in print.¹⁵ Like Wallace, whose travels had compassed much of maritime Southeast Asia, Meyer approached New Guinea from the west, passing first through Celebes (North Sulawesi, Indonesia) and the Philippines. His particular interest in the so-called 'Negrito' groups inhabiting these areas was influential in shaping his perceptions of the New Guinean 'Papuan' he subsequently encountered during five months of explorations in Geelvink (Cenderawasih) Bay and the Schouten Islands (Kepulauan Biak). Meyer's experiences during these five months in New Guinea are the subject of Chapter One.

In 1874, only a year after returning from New Guinea, Meyer was appointed Director of the Naturhistorisches Museum ('Museum of Natural History') in Dresden, Germany, a position he held until 1904.¹⁶ From 1879 this institution was known as the Königlich Zoologisches und Anthropologisch-Ethnographisches Museum ('Royal Zoological and Anthropological-Ethnographic Museum'), its new name reflecting the broad interests of its director and the Museum's expanded focus under his leadership. The bulk of Meyer's private collections, including some 350 anthropological and 450 ethnographic objects assembled during his travels, were incorporated into the Muse-

13 Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche nach der menschlichen Gesellschaft*; Schmidt, *Paul Wirz: Ein Wanderer*; Constantin Goschler, *Rudolf Virchow: Mediziner – Anthropologe – Politiker* (Köln, Weimar, Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2002); Peter Ruggendorfer and Hubert D. Szemethy (eds), *Felix von Luschan (1854-1924): Leben und Wirken eines Universalgelehrten* (Wien, Köln, Weimar, Böhlau Verlag, 2009).

14 Adolf Bernhard Meyer, 'Beiträge zur Lehre von der electrischen Nervenreizung', Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doctorwürde in der Medicin, Chirurgie und Geburtshülfe, mit 9 Thesen (Zürich, Zürcher, 1867).

15 Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise ...* (2 vols, London, Macmillan, 1869); Adolf Bernhard Meyer, *Der Malayische Archipel. Die Heimath des Orang-Utan und des Paradiesvogels ...* (Braunschweig, George Westermann, 1869).

16 Letter from A. B. Meyer to Rudolf Virchow, 4 October 1874, NL R. Virchow, Nr. 1429, Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.



Figure 1: Bruno Geisler (c. 1898-1904) 'Adolf Bernhard Meyer – Gründer und Direktor des Museums von 1875 bis 1905'. Reproduction courtesy Archiv des Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden.

um's holdings.¹⁷ His collection of 135 Papuan skulls, which was considered particularly valuable by Virchow and other contemporaries, formed the basis of several substantial craniometrical publications and underlay a series of vigorous exchanges between Meyer and the French anthropologists Armand de Quatrefages (1810-1892) and Ernest-Théodore Hamy (1842-1908), who held very different views on the value of craniological data and the existence of boundaries between particular races. Meyer's craniometrical studies and the debates resulting from them are discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

In addition to his contributions to comparative anatomy, Meyer retained a broad interest in all areas of natural history and continued to publish on anthropological, zoological, ethnographic and linguistic topics. He also instituted three separate in-house series of scientific publications, the *Publicationen aus dem Königlichen Zoologischen Museum zu Dresden*, the *Publicationen aus dem Königlichen Ethnologischen Museum zu Dresden* and the *Abhandlungen und Berichten aus dem Königlichen Zoologischen und Anthropologisch-Ethnologischen Museum zu Dresden*, which together provided a forum for scholarly discussion of matters of zoological, anthropological and ethnographic interest.¹⁸

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- 17 Petra Martin, 'Meyer, Adolph [sic] Bernhard', sourced from the online database Sächsische Biografie maintained by Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde e.V. (saebi.isgv.de; last accessed: 29 April 2013).
- 18 For further biographical information, see Martin, 'Meyer, Adolph [sic] Bernhard'; Anon., 'Zur Geschichte des Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden', sourced from the online database maintained by Staatliche Ethnographische Sammlungen Sachsen (www.voelkerkunde-dresden.de; last accessed: 29 April 2013); A. Jacobi, *1875-1925: Fünfzig Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde zu Dresden* (Berlin, Julius Bard; Dresden, Wilhelm und Bertha v. Baensch Stiftung, 1925), pp. 16-19, 23-51 passim; Heinz Israel and Peter Neumann, 'Hundert Jahre Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden', *Abhandlungen und Berichte des Staatlichen Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden*, 35 (1976), pp. 7-8; Rolf Hertel, 'Er diente Forschung und Lehre: Adolf Bernhard Meyer – einem großen Museologen zum 150. Geburtstag', *Die Union*, 235 (8 October 1990), p. 11; Petra Martin, 'Beginn einer Institutsgeschichte: Der Grundstein zum Dresdner Völkerkunde-Museum', *Die Union*, 235 (8 October 1990), p. 11; Siegfried Eck, 'Dresdens bedeutendster Ornithologe', *Die Union*, 235 (8 October 1990), p. 11; Ingrid Wustmann, 'Biologische Sachzeugen zum Menschen: Die Bestände der anthropologischen Sammlung', *Die Union*, 235 (8 October 1990), p. 11; Anon., 'Notes and News', *Auk*, 28 (October 1911), p. 519. Partial lists of Meyer's publications may be found in Meyer, *Auszüge*, pp. 18-19; idem, *Verzeichniss der Schriften von Adolf Bernhard Meyer 1867-1881* (Leipzig, W. Drugulin, c. 1881).

Otto Friedrich Hermann Finsch (Fig. 2), born in Warmbrunn, Silesia (now Cieplice Zdrój, south-eastern Poland),¹⁹ was essentially an autodidact. As a child he attended only the local elementary school, but demonstrated an early interest in observing, sketching and collecting the natural world and its products, particularly birds. His father, a glass painter and trader, intended his son to join the paternal business and took him on as a commercial apprentice. Finsch, however, who had little inclination for a career in trade, gave up the apprenticeship in 1857 and travelled first to Pest (now Budapest, Hungary), where he studied briefly at the university, supporting himself through the production and sale of natural historical specimens, then onward to Rustchuk (Ruse) in Bulgaria. He returned to Germany in 1859; his first scientific publication, ‘Beiträge zur ornithologischen Fauna von Bulgarien’ (‘Contributions to the ornithological fauna of Bulgaria’), appeared in the same year.²⁰ From 1861 Finsch pursued his interest in ornithology as an assistant at the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie (‘Imperial Museum of Natural History’) in Leiden, Holland. In 1864 he joined the Gesellschaft Museum (‘Museum Society’) in Bremen, Germany, as curator of the collections of ethnology and natural history.²¹ Four years later, in 1868, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Bonn, in recognition of his contributions to ornithology.²² In 1876 Finsch became Director of the Städtische Sammlungen für Naturgeschichte und Ethnographie (‘Municipal Collections for Natural History and Ethnography’) in Bremen, resigning in 1879 in order to undertake his first Oceanian voyage. During his time in Bremen he undertook several research trips, including six months (July – December 1872) in the United States and nine months (March – November 1876) in Western Siberia; the latter expedition, which he led, was made under the auspices of the Ver-

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- 19 Anna Sluszkiewicz, ‘Index of German-Polish and Polish-German names of the localities in Poland & Russia’, sourced from the online database ATSnates maintained by Anna & Tom Sluszkiewicz (www.atsnotes.com; last accessed: 29 April 2013).
- 20 Otto Finsch, ‘Beiträge zur ornithologischen Fauna von Bulgarien ...’, *Cabanis’ Journal für Ornithologie*, 7:41 (September 1859), pp. 378-387; idem, *Systematische Uebersicht der Ergebnisse seiner Reisen und schriftstellerischen Thätigkeit (1859-1899)* (Berlin, R. Friedländer & Sohn, 1899), p. 42.
- 21 See Herbert Abel, ‘Otto Finsch: Ein deutscher Kolonialpionier’, *Der Schlüssel* (Bremen), 3 (1938), p. 318; idem, *Vom Raritätenkabinett zum Bremer Überseemuseum: Die Geschichte einer hanseatischen Sammlung aus Übersee anlässlich ihres 75jährigen Bestehens* (Bremen, Verlag Friedrich Röver, 1970), pp. 22, 26-28, 32, 37; Anon, ‘Geschichte’, sourced from the online database maintained by Übersee-Museum Bremen (www.uebersee-museum.de; last accessed: 29 April 2013).
- 22 Letter from Otto Finsch to F. H. Troschel, 19 August 1868, NL Troschel, No. 118, Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Abel, ‘Otto Finsch: Ein deutscher Kolonialpionier’, p. 318; Friedrich Cunze, ‘Professor Dr. Otto Finsch †’, *Braunschweigisches Magazin*, 23:3 (March 1917), p. 23.



Figure 2: Anon. (c. 1870) 'Mr Otto Finsch, Bremen', part of G. M. Mathews collection of portraits of ornithologists, vn3798240. Reproduction courtesy National Library of Australia.

ein für die Deutsche Nordpolfahrt ('Association for the German Voyage to the North Pole'), of which he had been a founding member.²³

From 1879-1882 Finsch travelled and collected in Hawai'i, Micronesia (Marshall, Gilbert and Caroline Islands), New Britain, south-east New Guinea, New Zealand and Java. These travels were supported by a grant from the Humboldt-Stiftung für Naturforschung und Reisen ('Humboldt Foundation for Natural History Research and Travel') in Berlin.²⁴ Although Finsch's selection for financial assistance was evidently based on his museological activities and his leadership of the expedition to Western Siberia, both of which centred on ornithological studies, the records of the Humboldt-Stiftung suggest that its members were interested chiefly in the anthropological and ethnological possibilities of such an expedition. They mentioned the investigation of 'flora, fauna and geological formation[s]' as secondary activities, but implied that Finsch's primary purpose in visiting the South Seas should be to collect 'evidence and memorials, as complete as possible', of the 'autochthonous population[s]' of Polynesia and Micronesia, whom they believed to be 'rapidly declining, in consequence of a melancholy law of nature', following their contact with 'European civilised peoples [*Culturvölkern*]'.²⁵

Shortly after returning from his first Oceanian voyage, Finsch became involved with the Konsortium zur Vorbereitung und Errichtung einer Südsee-Insel-Compagnie ('Consortium for the Preparation and Establishment of a South Sea Island Company'), later the Neu Guinea Compagnie ('New Guinea Company'),²⁶ a small group of influential men chaired by the banker and entrepreneur

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- 23 Finsch, *Systematische Uebersicht*, pp. 11-14; Abel, 'Otto Finsch: Ein deutscher Kolonialpionier', pp. 317-318.
- 24 See letter from Otto Finsch to Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 23 April 1878, Sig. II-XI, 74: Vorgang zur Unterstützung eines Forschungsvorhabens von O. Finsch durch die Humboldt-Stiftung für Naturforschung und Reisen aus den Jahren 1878-1882, Verhandlungen der physik.-math. Klasse, Akten der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1812-1945, Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; Finsch, *Systematische Uebersicht*, pp. 14, 124.
- 25 Anon., 'Öffentliche Sitzung zur Feier des Jahrestages Friedrich's II', Auszug aus dem Monatsbericht der Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 29 January 1880, 2-3, Sig. II-XI, 74: Vorgang zur Unterstützung eines Forschungsvorhabens von O. Finsch durch die Humboldt-Stiftung für Naturforschung und Reisen aus den Jahren 1878-1882, Verhandlungen der physik.-math. Klasse, Akten der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1812-1945, Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; see also letter from Anon. to 'Eurer Excellenz', 18 December 1878, and letter of recommendation for Dr. Otto Finsch from the Secretaries of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Berlin, 19 December 1878, under the same archival signature.
- 26 The Konsortium zur Vorbereitung und Errichtung einer Südsee-Insel-Compagnie was renamed the Neu Guinea Compagnie by an imperial writ of protection issued on 17

Adolph von Hansemann (1826-1903) and interested in creating German colonies in Oceania. Finsch was made leader of an expedition sent out ‘to locate harbours, establish friendly contacts with the natives, and acquire land to the greatest [possible] extent’.²⁷ Their travels in the steamer *Samoa* between October 1884 and May 1885, including several visits to New Britain and five explorations of mainland New Guinea between East Cape and Humboldt Bay, led to the declaration of north-east New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago as German protectorates.²⁸ Despite this involvement, Finsch was subsequently unable to obtain satisfactory employment, either in the administration of the new colony or back in Germany. Greatly embittered, he returned in 1897 to ornithological work at the Museum of Natural History, Leiden. In 1904 he accepted a more palatable position as curator of the ethnological collection at the Städtisches Museum (‘Municipal Museum’) in Braunschweig, where he remained until his death in 1917.²⁹ Chapters Two and Four discuss the impacts of Finsch’s voyages on his understandings of Oceanian physical diversity and his perceptions of Oceanian societies and cultural practices respectively.

The periodisation of history invariably involves imposing an artificially-constructed order onto complex and interlinked events. Nevertheless, the dates chosen to begin and end this study do represent significant moments in Meyer’s and Finsch’s connections with Oceania. 1865 marks the appearance of Finsch’s monograph *Neu-Guinea und seine Bewohner*, the first work on New Guinea by

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- May 1885. See Otto Finsch, ‘Gedenktage der Forschungsreise mit dem deutschen Dampfer „Samoa“’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 28 (10 July 1909), p. 469.
- 27 Otto Finsch, *Samoafahrten: Reisen in Kaiser Wilhelms-Land und Englisch-Neu-Guinea in den Jahren 1884 und 1885 an Bord des Deutschen Dampfers »Samoa«* (Leipzig, Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn, 1888), p. 7.
- 28 See Otto Finsch, ‘Wie ich Kaiser-Wilhelmsland erwarb’, *Deutsche Monatsschrift für das gesamte Leben der Gegenwart*, 9 (1902), pp. 406-424; 10 (1902), pp. 570-584; 11 (1902), pp. 728-743; 12 (1902), pp. 875-889; idem, *Kaiser Wilhelms-Land: Eine friedliche Kolonialbewerbung*; Firth, *New Guinea under the Germans*, pp. 17-20, 21-43 passim; Marjorie G. Jacobs, ‘Bismarck and the Annexation of New Guinea’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 5 (1951), pp. 14-26.
- 29 For further biographical information, see P. G. Sack, ‘Finsch, Otto (1839-1917)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Carlton, Vic., Melbourne University Press, 1972), vol. 4; Herbert Abel, ‘Finsch, Otto Friedrich Hermann’, in: Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1961), vol. 5, pp. 163-164; Konsul (Carl) Singelmann, ‘Prof. Dr. Finschs Anteil an der Erwerbung des deutschen Südseeschutzgebietes’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 42 (16 October 1909), pp. 689-692; Cunze, ‘Professor Dr. Otto Finsch †’, pp. 21-25; Abel, ‘Otto Finsch: Ein deutscher Kolonialpionier’, pp. 317-322; Otto Finsch, ‘Biographische Skizze’, in: *Verzeichniss der literarischen Arbeiten von Otto Finsch 1859 – 1876*, pp. 13-16, Sig. Darmstaedter, Asien (1876): Finsch, Otto, Handschriftenabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

either man and the first German-language monograph on the topic ever published. 1914 denotes the outbreak of the First World War and the occupation of Germany's colonies in the South Seas by Allied troops. Although these dates bracket the core period covered by the study, I have also paid attention, where relevant, to works and individuals falling outside this period.

Metropolitan theory and field experience

Meyer's and Finsch's representations of their experiences in Oceania serve to illuminate the mutually constitutive relationship between metropolitan theory and field experience. By examining the indigenous countersigns embedded in their works, I trace the ways in which their experiences in the field informed their contributions to broader debates about the human in the European metropolises. These debates included questions regarding the unity or plurality of the human species, the physical characteristics, moral qualities and intellectual abilities of indigenous Oceanians, the possible connections between these people and other supposedly homogeneous 'races', including African 'Negroes' and southeast Asian 'Negritos', and the position(s) occupied by indigenous Oceanians in a hierarchical scale of human races. They also covered methodological disputes relating to the importance of field experience in the human sciences, the standardisation and mobilisation of travellers' observations for metropolitan audiences, and the relative worth of biological (somatic) and social (cultural and linguistic) data for taxonomic purposes.

I pay close attention to Meyer's and Finsch's impressions of the people they encountered, the consistency or inconsistency with which they expressed these impressions at various periods during their working lives and within the constraints of various genres, and the ways in which others responded to their work. This careful scrutiny, focusing particularly on the interplay between metropolitan theory and field experience, allows me to elucidate significant complexities and contradictions which characterised the scientific study of non-Europeans and the development of anthropology and ethnology as independent disciplines during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My approach is complementary to recent studies, notably Uwe Hoßfeld's *Geschichte der biologischen Anthropologie in Deutschland* (2005), H. Glenn Penny's *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (2002) and Andrew Zimmerman's *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (2001), which discuss the development of German anthropology and ethnology primarily within their metropolitan context.³⁰ I also draw inspiration from Rain-

30 H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 2002);

er Buschmann's *Anthropology's Global Histories: The Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea, 1870-1935* (2009) and the collection *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930s* (2000), edited by Michael O'Hanlon and Robert L. Welsch.³¹ The regional approach of these studies, which permits 'a combination of breadth and depth offered by neither of the polar opposites of "global" or "local" perspectives', has been formative, as has their emphasis on the dynamic interplay of agency between European and indigenous actors in the production of anthropological and ethnographic knowledge.³²

The 'cultural critique' of anthropology and ethnography in the 1980s took issue with precisely this question of the relationship between field and metropole. Writers including James Clifford, Michael M. J. Fisher, George E. Marcus, Mary Louise Pratt and Renato Rosaldo challenged ethnography's persistent ideological claims to 'transparency of representation and immediacy of experience', emphasising instead the partiality and constructedness of ethnographic 'truths' and their entanglement in power inequalities, including those deriving from imperial and colonial relations.³³ Expanding on Johannes Fabian's identification of the 'denial of coevalness' between observer and observed as a key aspect of anthropological theory, they discussed the contradiction between personal and scientific authority in ethnography and the tensions inherent in its 'attempt to fuse objective and subjective practices'.³⁴ They also drew at

Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2001); Uwe Hößfeld, *Geschichte der biologischen Anthropologie in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis in die Nachkriegszeit* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

- 31 Rainer F. Buschmann, *Anthropology's Global Histories: The Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea, 1870-1935* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2009); Michael O'Hanlon and Robert L. Welsch (eds), *Hunting the Gatherers: Ethnographic Collectors, Agents and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930s* (New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2000).
- 32 Michael O'Hanlon, 'Introduction', in: O'Hanlon and Welsch (eds), *Hunting the Gatherers*, pp. 6-8.
- 33 James Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in: James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1986), pp. 1-26; George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fisher, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1986), especially pp. 7-44.
- 34 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 36; idem, 'Culture, Time and the Object of Anthropology [1985]', in: *Time and the Work of Anthropology: Critical Essays 1971-1991* (Chur, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), pp. 191-206; Mary Louise Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places', in: Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, pp. 27-50;

attention to the relations of ethnographic production and the need for a ‘*specificity of discourses*’ through the questions, ‘[W]ho speaks? who writes? when and where? with or to whom? under what institutional and historical constraints?’³⁵ These questions resonate with Donna Haraway’s insistence on ‘situated knowledges’ as a responsible alternative to both radically relativistic and explicitly totalising claims to scientific objectivity, as well as with Rosaldo’s criticisms of the ethnographic detachment that consists in liberating documents from ‘the historical context[s] that produced’ them.³⁶ They also inform my analyses of what Meyer and Finsch were thinking *about* and *with* – their historical, intellectual, literary and pragmatic contexts – during their time in the field.

Drawing on the techniques of literary criticism, Clifford and others likewise called attention to ethnography as a process of writing, a transformation of ‘unruly experience’ into ‘an authoritative written account’.³⁷ Any analysis of this transformation, Clifford stressed, is necessarily an analysis of the strategies of authority employed by the writer. Given that Meyer and Finsch were writing for metropolitan audiences, this analysis must also extend to the individuals, groups and institutions who received, digested, filtered and critiqued their accounts. I focus particularly on Virchow, who acted as bridge and gatekeeper between field report and metropolitan thought for both Meyer and Finsch. Chapters Two and Four of this study discuss the ways in which travellers’ observations were standardised and mobilised to make them meaningful to metropolitan audiences, the debates which arose when field observations contradicted received metropolitan wisdom, and the degree to which metropolitan authorities such as Virchow policed the interpretation of such observations and determined the boundaries of scientific knowledge.

‘Melanesians’, ‘Polynesians’, ‘Papuan’s’: Naming Oceanian people

I turn now to a crucial aspect of the process of transforming unruly field experience into authoritative textual form, that is, the bestowing of collective names on

James Clifford, ‘On Ethnographic Allegory’, in: Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, pp. 98-121; idem, ‘Histories of the Tribal and the Modern’, in: *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA; London, England, Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 189-214.

35 Clifford, ‘Introduction: Partial Truths’, p. 13 (emphasis original).

36 Donna Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective’, *Feminist Studies*, 14:3 (1988), pp. 575-599; Renato Rosaldo, ‘From the Door of His Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor’, in: Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, pp. 77-97.

37 James Clifford, ‘On Ethnographic Authority’, in: *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 25.

Oceanian people by European traveller-naturalists and metropolitan anthropologists. The people encountered by Meyer and Finsch included inhabitants of the areas known today as Papua New Guinea, the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, the Philippines, Sulawesi, Australia (Cape York), the Torres Strait Islands, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Hawai‘i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Following other recent historiographers of European contacts with these areas, I use the term ‘Oceania’ to describe the region in general and ‘Oceanians’ to refer to its inhabitants collectively.³⁸

This usage reflects the extended meaning given to ‘Oceania’ (French *Océanie*, German *Ozeanien*) during the period covered by my study, defined by Douglas as ‘the vast insular zone stretching from the Hawaiian Islands in the north, to Indonesia in the west, coastal Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand in the south, and Easter Island in the east’.³⁹ In addition, its relative unfamiliarity in modern usage, in which ‘Oceania’ does not usually include maritime Southeast Asia, serves to emphasise the discontinuities between past and present thought, and the necessity of analysing the nomenclature of the past within its historical context.

It is important to note, however, that *Ozeanien* was not used identically by all German writers during the period under study. Virchow, for example, distinguished between *Ozeanien*, *Hinterindien* (literally ‘Hind India’ or ‘Back India’, corresponding to modern mainland Southeast Asia) and *der indische Archipel* (‘the Indian Archipelago’, corresponding to maritime Southeast Asia).⁴⁰ Refer-

38 See particularly Bronwen Douglas, ‘Foreign Bodies in Oceania’, in: Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940* (Canberra, ACT, ANU E Press, 2008), pp. 5-13; Margaret Jolly and Serge Tchekézoff, ‘Oceanic Encounters: A Prelude’, in: Jolly et al., *Oceanic Encounters*, pp. 22-23.

39 Douglas, ‘Foreign Bodies in Oceania’, p. 5.

40 Rudolf Virchow, ‘Ueber Schädel von Neu-Guinea’, *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 5 (15 March 1873), p. 65. ‘Vorderindien’ (‘Fore India’ or ‘Front India’) was used at the time to designate modern South Asia; see, for example, Emil Wendt, *Bilderatlas der Länderkunde mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Völkerkunde, Geschichte und Naturgeschichte* (Leipzig, Dörfpling und Franke, 1856). The terms ‘indischer Archipel’ (Indian Archipelago) and ‘malayischer Archipel’ (Malay Archipelago) were used interchangeably, as they were in English. See Richard Andree, *Andrees allgemeine Handatlas ... 3., völlig neu bearbeitete und vermehrte Auflage* (Bielefeld, Velhagen & Klasing, 1893); ‘Indian Archipelago, or Malay Archipelago’, in: George Ripley and Charles A. Dana (eds), *The American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge* (16 vols, New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1873), vol. 5, sourced from the online database ChestofBooks.com maintained by StasoSphere (www.chestofbooks.com; last accessed: 29 April 2013).

ents could vary even within the works of a single author: Finsch used *Ozeanien*, ‘Oceania’, in his earlier works to frame discussions of the indigenous populations of all the areas he had visited, including Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, but later applied *Ozeaniern*, ‘Oceanians’, specifically as a synonym for ‘Polynesians’, contrasting them with both ‘Malays’ and ‘Papuan’.⁴¹

As the previous example indicates, words for people and their associated connotations formed a crucial component of late nineteenth-century German naturalists’ taxonomies of Oceania. These signifiers (nouns such as ‘Oceanians’, ‘Polynesians’, ‘Melanesians’, ‘Malays’ and ‘Papuan’) and their referents (the people to whom these nouns referred) are consequently an important focus of my research, particularly as they appear in the works of Meyer and Finsch. Subsequent chapters analyse in more detail the shifting connotations of these and other names for people, together with the actual encounters underlying their application to particular individuals or groups. The following paragraphs offer an overview of the terms ‘Papua’/‘Papuan’ and ‘Melanesia’/‘Melanesian’, both of which figure prominently in Meyer’s and Finsch’s descriptions of New Guinea’s indigenous inhabitants.

The etymology of the word ‘Papua’ is uncertain, though J. H. F. Sollewijn Gelpke tentatively identifies it with *sup i papwa*, an expression meaning ‘the land below (the sunset)’ in the Biak dialect of the Raja Ampat islands.⁴² The earliest known texts to record it are Portuguese, dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century and registering knowledge derived mainly from Arab and Malay pilots. A map produced around 1513 by the pilot and cartographer Francisco Rodrigues (dates unknown), who in November 1511 set out to accompany his compatriot, the navigator and naval officer António de Abreu (c.1480 - c.1514), on a voyage from Malacca to the Moluccas, depicts a large island to the east of the Moluccas with the inscription *Jlha de Papoia e a Jente della sam cafres* (‘Island of Papoia and its people are *Cafres*’).⁴³ At around the same time, Tomé Pires (c.1468 – c.1540), a Portuguese apothecary who arrived in India in 1511 and afterwards became Portugal’s first Ambassador to China, recorded in his *Suma Oriental* (1512-1515) the existence of three islands near Banda: Ceram, Aru and Papua.⁴⁴ Sollewijn Gelpke identifies Rodrigues’ *Jlha de Papoia* as

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- 41 Finsch, ‘Die Rassenfrage in Oceanien’, pp. 163-166; idem, *Samoafahrten*, pp. 42, 61.
 42 J. H. F. Sollewijn Gelpke, ‘On the Origin of the Name Papua’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 149:2 (1993), pp. 318-332.
 43 Sollewijn Gelpke, ‘On the Origin of the Name Papua’, pp. 322-323; Armando Cortesão (ed. and trans.), *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires ... And, the Book of Francisco Rodrigues ...* (2 vols, London, Hakluyt Society, 1944), vol. 1, pp. lxxviii-xcvi, 208 note 3; Chris Ballard, ‘“Oceanic Negroes”: British Anthropology of Papuans, 1820-1869’, in: Douglas and Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies*, pp. 161-163.
 44 Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, pp. 208-209, 222.

Halmahera and notes that Pires' description of the island of Papua would place it within the vicinity of East Halmahera and the Waigéo-Gébé area.⁴⁵

As recorded by these Portuguese travellers, *Papoa*/Papua was a toponym: both Rodrigues and Pires 'unambiguously understood Papua as the name of an island, or possibly ... a group of islands'. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, the name quickly 'came to denote both the islands and their population'.⁴⁶ As early as 1521, this slippage from place to people was hinted at by the Florentine patrician Antonio Pigafetta (c.1491 - c.1534), who accompanied the Portuguese navigator Fernão de Magalhães (c.1480-1521) on his circumnavigation of 1519-1522. While in Tidore, Pigafetta noted that the island of *gailolo* (Halmahera) was inhabited by *mory*, 'Moors' or 'Muslims', and *gentilli*, 'gentiles' or 'heathens'. Pigafetta stated of the latter: *Il re de queste gentilli, detto raya Papua, e richissimo de oro et habita dentro in la ysola* ('the king of these gentiles, called *raya Papua*, is very rich in gold and lives in the interior of the island').⁴⁷ The juxtaposition of 'king of these gentiles' and '*raya Papua*' suggests that the latter could be translated as 'king of the Papuans', though 'king of Papua' cannot be ruled out as an alternative translation. Douglas identifies an early unambiguous application of the term 'Papua' to people in a history of voyages compiled by Antonio Galvão, captain of the Portuguese station in the Moluccas in the late 1530s: in his *Tratado* ('Treatise') of 1563, Galvão explained that the Portuguese, adopting the usage of 'the Moluccans [*os Maluqueses*]', called the inhabitants of the north coast of New Guinea 'Papuas [*os Papuas*]', 'because they are black, with frizzled hair [*por serem pretos de cabelo frizado*].'⁴⁸

It is not clear at what point the word 'Papua' was first used to refer to the island of New Guinea specifically. Arthur Wichmann interpreted the *Ilhas dos Papuas* described by Jorge de Menezes, the Portuguese Governor of the Moluccas, who claimed to have overwintered there when driven off course in 1526 during a voyage from Malaka to Ternate, as a reference to the island of Wiak (Biak) in Cenderawasih Bay.⁴⁹ Sollewijn Gelpke, however, asserts that the

45 Sollewijn Gelpke, 'On the Origin of the Name Papua', pp. 322-323.

46 Sollewijn Gelpke, 'On the Origin of the Name Papua', pp. 323-324.

47 Antonio Pigafetta, quoted in: Wichmann, *Entdeckungsgeschichte*, vol. 1, p. 13.

48 Antonio Galvão [Galvano], *The Discoveries of the World, from their First Original unto the Year of Our Lord 1555 ...*, ed. Charles Ramsey Drinkwater Bethune (London, Hakluyt Society, 1862 [1563]), p. 177; Bronwen Douglas, 'Terra Australis to Oceania: Racial Geography in the "Fifth Part of the World"', *Journal of Pacific History*, 45:2 (September 2010), p. 199.

49 Wichmann, *Entdeckungsgeschichte*, vol. 1, pp. 14-16; cf. George Collingridge, *The First Discovery of Australia and New Guinea* (Sydney and London, Pan Books, 1982 [1906]), pp. 15, 30-31, 42-43; O. H. K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra, ACT, ANU E Press, 2004 [1979]), pp. 3, 294 note 10.

name *Papua* was initially ‘restricted to a limited area in and near eastern Halmahera’ and that some authors, notably François Valentyn, were still applying it in this limited sense at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Douglas clarifies the situation by observing that several Portuguese maps of the 1570s applied the terms ‘Papuas’ or ‘Costa dos papuas’ to a mainland, evidently the Vogelkop Peninsula, and ‘os papuas’ to one or more islands to the north, certainly the Schouten Islands but probably also the Raja Ampat group; some simultaneously include the names ‘Nova Ethiopia’ (‘New Ethiopia’) or ‘(La) Nueva Ginea’ (‘New Guinea’) for a mainland to the east.⁵¹

The name ‘New Guinea’ itself can be traced to the Spanish captain Yñigo Ortiz de Retes, who in 1545 made contact with the mainland east of Cenderawasih Bay during an attempted voyage from the Moluccas to Mexico. He claimed possession of this territory for the Spanish crown and bestowed upon it the name ‘Nueva Guinea’, a reference to the Guinea Coast in West Africa.⁵² It is not entirely clear whether Ortiz de Retes’ choice referred to perceived similarities between the coastal geographies of the two countries or between their indigenous inhabitants. However, a map drawn in 1593 by Cornelis de Jode (Fig. 3), in which the island in question is labelled ‘Nova Guinea’, with the explanation that it was ‘[s]o named by sailors, because its shores, and the condition of the land, are very similar to Guinea in Africa’, indicates that at least some later cartographers assumed the first interpretation to be the correct one.⁵³

For the next three centuries, European cartographers referred to the island either as ‘New Guinea’ or as ‘Papua’, with additional confusion caused by uncertainties as to whether it was in fact an island or was connected to the unknown Great South Land, *Terra Australis Incognita*. Over the same period, ‘Papuan’ (French *Papou*, German *Papua*) as a word for people expanded from its origins as a local toponym to the extent that, from the late eighteenth century, it was often applied to ‘black’ Oceanian people more generally. The terms ‘Negroes of Oceanica’, ‘Oceanic Negroes’ and ‘Melanesians’ (French *Mélanésiens*, German *Melanesier*, see below) were applied more or less synonymously with

50 Sollewijn Gelpke, ‘On the Origin of the Name Papua’, p. 325.

51 Bronwen Douglas, pers. comm., 12 March 2011; Armando Cortesão and Avelino Teixeira da Mota, *Portvgaliae Monvmenta Cartographica* (6 vols, Lisboa, Comemorações do v centenário da morte do Infante D. Henrique, 1960-62), vol. 3, plates 286, 307-308, 324, 341-342.

52 Wichmann, *Entdeckungsgeschichte*, vol. 1, p. 24; Ballard, “‘Oceanic Negroes’”, pp. 162-163.

53 Cornelis de Jode, ‘Novae Guineae forma, & situs’, in: Gerard de Jode, *Speculum Orbis Terrae*, 2nd edn (Antwerp, Cornelis de Jode, 1593); cf. Douglas, ‘Terra Australis et Oceania’, p. 190 note 30.