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Colonialism in Karokynká?

The history of an osteological collection from Tierra del Fuego in the Natural History Museum Vienna.

Introduction

The Inventory Book of the Department of Anthropology at the Natural History Museum Vienna (DA-NHMW) is currently referring to more than 40,000 inventory numbers for human remains, the first being inventoried in 1877. Almost 3,000 of these inventory numbers, the so-called "International Osteological Collection", are of of non-European origin, most of them integrated into the department between 1877 and 1935. Among them are also acquisitions from potential colonial contexts.[1] Therefore, their origin should be closely examined to ensure that they have been included in the collection in a legal and ethically justifiable[2] way. There is a sensitive character inherent in human remains that is not only subjected to the *zeitgeist*, but also to cultural variations: what are justifiable research and collection practices for Europeans with "Western" or "Christian" views does not necessarily apply to the descendants and communities of origin of the individuals concerned. The confrontation with a deceased person as well as the implications and consequences of a possible unlawful acquisition of human remains are getting a literal face. It is therefore the task of (biological) anthropologists to not only research the provenance of human remains, but also to proceed here in a methodologically sensitive manner.

In 2021, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Public Service and Sport (BMKÖS) launched a project with the aim of obtaining an overview of the holdings of colonial collections in Viennese federal museums, including the NHMW. During this project called KolText, the Archive for the History of Science with Martin Krenn, and the Anthropological Department including Sabine Eggers and Margit Berner,

worked closely together with external researchers Verena Pawlowsky, Katharina Buttinger, and the author herself to gain insights into colonial acquisition contexts and backgrounds present at the NHMW. The results from this work are presented in further contributions in this volume.

The Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego collection (PTdF collection), containing 25 individuals, was included into the KolText research not only since colonial acquisition contexts were suspected, but also because it is one of the most requested collections by external researchers from the DA. At the beginning and at the end of the research, it was actively reached out to communities of Indigenous representatives whose ancestors' remains are present in the collection.

This text focuses first on situating the origins of the individuals (meaning their provenance) in the PTdF collection in a colonial context and presents a biographical analysis of the two collectors through whom the human remains came to the NHMW. Then it is examined how they were displayed in the museum by analyzing the exhibitions the 25 individuals were presented at since its founding, and how they were integrated into scientific publications. In the end, it is discussed if a colonial context can be observed in the acquisition, presentation and use of this collection.[3] First, however, it is necessary to situate the origin of the individuals of the PTdF collection in a colonial context and therefore to go into more detail concerning the underlying historical background in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia at the beginning of the 20th century.

Colonial powers in Karokynká

Karokynká is the Indigenous name for Tierra del Fuego, a stretch of land encompassing the southern tip of South America, which is today a part of Argentina and Chile. Both Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia were inhabited by culturally distinct marine and terrestrial hunter-gatherer groups, the Selk'nam, Yaghan and Kawésqar, as well as the Aónikenk and Tehuelche in Patagonia. Since Fernando Magellan's first documentation of Tierra del Fuego for the "western" world during his circumnavigation in 1520, it was consequently exploited and colonized by Europeans at the end of the 19th century, with politics and the church working closely together.[4] Argentina declared itself independent from Spain as early as 1816, Chile two years later in 1818. Especially in the late 19th century, acts that today may be classified as genocide[5] against the Indigenous Natives intensified[6]: not only having to fight for the land so important to their nomadic lifestyle, which the European colonists claimed for their livestock, but they were also hunted down by bounty hunters like Julio Popper (1857–1893)[7] and killed

by new, European-introduced diseases such as syphilis and tuberculosis.[8] Indigenous inhabitants were also shot purely for their allegedly very large skeletons.[9] Another essential part in the colonization process were the mission houses where the Indigenous were brought to: partly deported, partly "voluntarily" in the background of the aggravating living conditions.[10] According to Egon Freiherr von Eickstedt (1892–1965), a leading racial scientist and representative of German interwar and Nazi anthropology,[11] it was here tried to "lift the primitive peoples culturally".[12] Today, descendants of the Indigenous tribes still live in Tierra del Fuego, mainly following a "western" lifestyle, whereas at the same time advocating for the visualization of their history and culture.[13]

Martin Gusinde (1886–1969), an Austrian ethnographer and member of the Roman Catholic Order of the *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD), travelled Tierra del Fuego extensively between 1918 and 1924. During his four expeditions he collected human remains and material objects,[14] with an approach of acting as a "participant observer", which was unusual for the time and presumably the reason he gained the trust of the Indigenous communities.[15] Gusinde documented and published his findings, which contained ethnographic, linguistic and somatometric data as well as photos, in three volumes focusing on each tribe in Tierra del Fuego.[16] A fourth anthropological volume focuses on the analysis of the body measurements he collected on both human remains as well as the living and tried to find racial markers typical for these tribes.[17] In all monographs, Gusinde also provides information in varying detail on how he acquired the human remains themselves. The ethnographic descriptions of the daily life and history of the Indigenous tribes here are generally understood to be just as detailed and precise as they are thought to be objective.[18] Gusinde is responsible for the collection of 17 of the 25 individuals in the PTdF collection, purchased by and donated to the DA during the 1930s and partly personally excavated by him. In his writings, he often speaks of having "found", "lifted", or "excavated" crania from the earth.[19] Nothing is known about direct purchases made by him in Tierra del Fuego for the DA-NHMW or on their behalf. His four expeditions to Tierra del Fuego were, according to his biography, financed and supported by both private individuals, mostly families from Santiago, as well as clerics and the Chilean government.[20]

For the acquisition of the other eight individuals making up the PTdF collection, Robert Lehmann-Nitsche (1872–1938), a German physician and anthropologist who later became one of the pioneers of physical anthropology in Argentina, is to be made responsible.[21] Similar to Gusinde, he was interested in linguistic data, recording vocabulary and taking photographs,[22] but he also collected human remains. These were partly dug out by Lehmann-Nitsche himself or obtained through an intermediary

(see Table 1). Both Lehmann-Nitsche and Gusinde were interested in the Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia because of the alleged "primitiveness" or "nativeness" projected onto them by Europeans.[23]

Besides Gusinde's monographies, the second valuable source in the reconstruction of the human remains' provenance, the circumstances of their excavation and information like age-at-death, sex and tribal affiliation are the Inventory Books of the DA-NHMW. This information has been recorded in handwriting during inventory by DA-NHMW scientific staff.

The collection and its geographic origins

The 25 individuals of the PTdF collection were inventoried between 1930 and 1961 (see Table 1 for more details) and originate mostly from Isla Grande, but also Rapa Nui and the Chubut region in Argentina (see Figure 1). Other, non-osteological material in the collection includes seven samples of pubic and scalp hair,[24] illustrating the diversity of objects in "sensitive collections",[25] and providing an idea of the extent of the degrading treatments during research in colonial contexts. Other examples of non-osteological objects in the collection include three casts made from two crania filed under two inventory numbers (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6032a, 6038a), one bust (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21420) modelled by the Austrian painter and sculptor Erna Engel-Baiersdorf (1889–1970) and another (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21360) by the Austrian artist Friedrich "Fritz" Fahrwickl (1896–?). While the reconstruction by Engel-Baiersdorf resulted from a close collaboration with Gusinde and is based on NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6037, it is unclear if the bust by Fahrwickl was also modelled after this individual or other osteological material and not only photographs by Gusinde.[26] Copies of the bust modelled by Engel-Baiersdorf for the DA were available for purchase through the DA-NHMW as it was possible for other busts in the 1930s, ranging between 50 to 70 Schillings.[27]

During the course of the provenance research, the osteological individuals' age-at-death and sex estimations were re-assessed. Sex is a variable to be understood as a spectrum and is influenced by various biological processes and features like chromosomes and hormones. It is differently expressed in skeletal features more pronounced as biological male or female, and must not be confused with the socially constructed concept of gender.[28] Sex estimation was carried out according to Ferembach's methods. Age-at-death was estimated using the methods by Meindl & Lovejoy, using Ubelaker's classification into age groups (young adult: 20–34 years; middle adult: 35–49 years; old adult: 50+ years).[29]

Inventory number: DA-NHMW	Associated collector(s)	Ethnic affiliation by collector	Status	Sex estimation	Age-at-death estimation	Suspected geographic origin and further details	Literature
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6030	MG	Kawésqar	Cranium	Female (Male)	Middle adult	No Data “	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 255 Inventory book 4, 242
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6031	MG	Kawésqar	Cranium	Female	Young adult	No Data	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 257 Inventory book 4, 242
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6032	MG	Kawésqar	Cranium	Male	Old adult	No Data	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 254 Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6033(c)	MG	Kawésqar	Cranium	Female	Middle adult	Puerto Muñoz Gamero, Canal Smith ~	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 258 Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6034	MG	Kawésqar	Cranium	Female	Young adult	No Data	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 257–258 Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6035	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Indeterminate	Middle adult	Isla Dawson, San Rafael cemetery, excavated between the 1st – 15th of January 1919 among 40 other crania and three skeletal remains *	Bornemann, Pater Martin Gusinde, 45 Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 225 Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6036	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Caleta Josefina, sand °	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 211 Inventory book 4, 243

Inventory number: DA-NHMW	Associated collector(s)	Ethnic affiliation by collector	Status	Sex estimation	Age-at-death estimation	Suspected geographic origin and further details	Literature
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6037	MG	Selk'nam	Calvarium	Male	Middle adult	Caleta Josefina, eastern of Altos de Boquerón	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 208 Gusinde 1975
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6038	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Shores of Bahía Inútil	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 225–26 Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6039	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Shores of Bahía Inútil	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 211 Inventory book 4, 244
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6040	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Indeterminate	Middle adult	Caleta Josefina	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 225 Inventory book 4, 244
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6041	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Isla Dawson, San Rafael cemetery, excavated between the 1st – 15th of January 1919 among 40 other crania and three skeletal remains *	Bornemann, Pater Martin Gusinde, 45 Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 225 Inventory book 4, 244
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6042	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Indeterminate	Middle adult	Isla Grande	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 208 Inventory book 4, 244
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6043	MG	Selk'nam	Calvarium	Female	Middle adult	Caleta Josefine, sand °	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 212 Inventory book 4, 244

Inventory number: DA-NHMW	Associated collector(s)	Ethnic affiliation by collector	Status	Sex estimation	Age-at-death estimation	Suspected geographic origin and further details	Literature
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15351	RLN, (Heinreich Wodak)	Patagonia, possible Tehuelche	Cranium	Indeterminate	Young adult	Part of a skeleton found on the coastline 7km north-north-east of Comodoro Rivadavia near train tracks. Burial included glass pearls. Probably donated to RLN by engineer H.Wodak in 1914.	Inventory book 6, 66
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15352	RLN	Patagonia/ Rapa Nui (?)	Cranium	Female	Young adult	No Data	Inventory book 6, 66
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15353	RLN	Patagonia	Cranium	Female	Young adult	Chubut	Inventory book 6, 66
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15354	RLN	Patagonia	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Chubut, Lago Musters	Inventory book 6, 67
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15357	RLN	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Old adult	Northeast Isla Grande: battlefield far away from the coast, excavated 26th of March 1902 '	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 218 Inventory book 6, 67
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15358	RLN	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Northeast Isla Grande: battlefield far away from the coast, excavated 26th of March 1902 '	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 218 Inventory book 6, 68
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15359	RLN	Selk'nam	Cranium	Male	Middle adult	Northeast Isla Grande: battlefield far away from the coast, excavated 26th of March 1902 '	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 218 Inventory book 6, 68
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15360	RLN	Selk'nam	Calvarium	Indeterminate	Old adult	Northeast Isla Grande: battlefield far away from the coast, excavated 26th of March 1902	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 218 Inventory book 6, 68

Inventory number: DA-NHMW	Associated collector(s)	Ethnic affiliation by collector	Status	Sex estimation	Age-at-death estimation	Suspected geographic origin and further details	Literature
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21462	MG	Selk'nam	Cranium	Indeterminate	Middle adult	Isla Grande	Inventory book 7, 30
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21463	MG	Yaghan	Calvarium	Female	Young adult	Isla Navarino	Inventory book 7, 30
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6032a	MG	Kawésqar	2 Casts of cranium 6032	-	-	No Data	Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6038a	MG	Selk'nam	Cast of cranium 6038	-	-	No Data	Inventory book 4, 243
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6033(pa)	MG	Kawésqar	Postcranial elements	-	Old adult	No Data "	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 114, 255
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6033(pb)	MG	Kawésqar	Postcranial elements	-	Old adult	Puerto Muñoz Gamero, Canal Smith ~	Gusinde, Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer, 258
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-12420	No Data	Selk'nam	Bust based on 6037	-	-	Artist: Erna Engel-Baiersdorff	Inventory book 5, 262
NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21360	No Data	Selk'nam	Bust	-	-	Artist: Fritz Fahrwickl	Inventory book 7, 12
MG: Martin Gusinde; RLN: Robert Lehmann-Nitsche							
Individuals marked with ~, " ,*, °, ' are from the same burial context.							
Sex estimation was done according to Ferembach's methods. Age at death was estimated using the methods by Meindl & Lovejoy, and using Ubelaker's classification into age groups (young adult: 20–34 years; middle adult: 35–49 years; old adult: 50+ years).							
One individual (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE6030) was estimated to be female, although there is evidence (mentioning of a first name) that this individual is in fact male. This may be due to the advanced age of the individual, as the markers used to determine sex here become more gracile with age. It was decided to not mention the first names of two individuals (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6030, NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6033) since they do not contribute to the clarification of the provenance and are not Indigenous, but Spanish first names. Additionally, they are freely accessible in the cited literature.							

Table 1 Inventory numbers of all entries for individuals associated with Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia at the DA-NHMW.

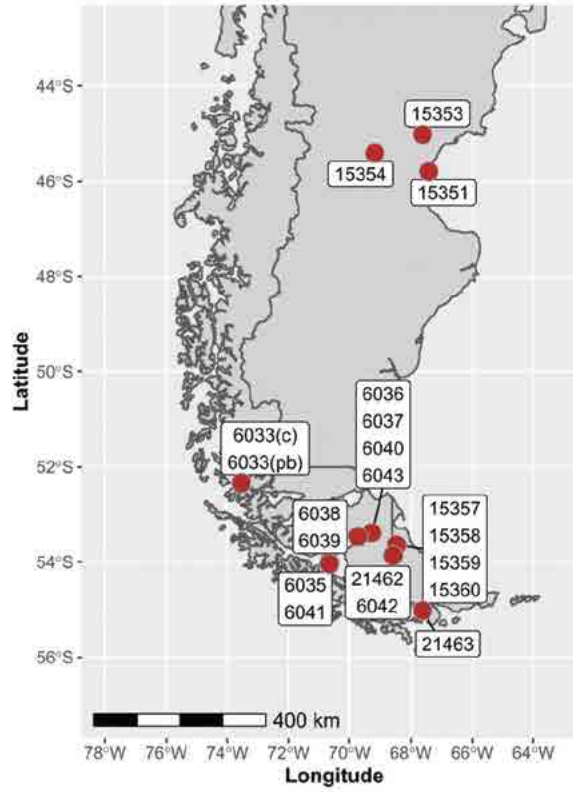

Fig. 1 Map illustrating the places of origin of the individuals of the Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego collection at the Natural History Museum Vienna. The individuals are indicated by their inventory numbers. Missing are the five individuals for which the geographic origin could not be determined, including the individual supposedly from Rapa Nui.

The first 15 individuals of the PTdF collection were purchased in 1930 for a price of 3,800 Austrian shillings from Gusinde[30] or, according to another receipt, 3,500 shillings.[31] Although at this time the DA faced structural and financial problems,[32] nevertheless a special loan to the Federal Ministry of Education to purchase the first collection was granted. This was not only due to the rarity value of these humans remains, but also because Gusinde offered the Department these individuals for sale in the first place by being "particularly accommodating".[33] Two additional individuals were donated to the Department three decades later, in July 1961, by Gusinde according to their entry in the Inventory Book.[34]

According to the Inventory Book of the DA-NHMW, the remaining eight individuals were donated by Robert Lehmann-Nitsche at an unknown time and inventoried in 1935.[35] Four of them are from an unknown battlefield in the north-east of Isla Grande, where Lehmann-Nitsche had excavated them on March 26th in 1902.[36] It was neither possible to reconstruct the exact place nor the reason for the suspected armed conflict, since there were numerous violent encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples at this time. The other four of the eight individuals that belong to the Lehmann-Nitsche subconvolute at the DA-NHMW were not mentioned in Gusinde's Monograph. According to the Inventory Book, NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15351 is supposed to have had a note stating that the individual is "Native" and was found in 1914 as a complete skeleton with grave goods approximately seven kilometers north-east of Comodoro Rivadavia, gifted to Lehmann-Nitsche by an engineer named H. Wodak.[37] As the note itself is no longer present, it can now only be assumed that H. Wodak could be referring to the German engineer Heinrich Wodak (?–?), who indeed was working on a construction site in Chubut at this time.[38] Another case of unclear provenance is represented by NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15352. This individual had the inscription of being from Rapa Nui written on the left parietal, which was later crossed out: an only slightly legible inscription with graphite pencil, starting with "Baia". In an attempt to reveal more of the inscription, special light photography was used. However, due to interferences with a preservative coat applied to the bone surface during curational processes, this method was unsuccessful.[39] It remains therefore not determinable whether the individual NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15352 even originates from Rapa Nui. The other two individuals of the Lehmann-Nitsche subconvolute that were not described in Gusinde's monograph are originating from Chubut (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15353) or Lago Musters in Chubut (NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15354), and were inventoried without any further detailed information regarding their provenance.

It should be noted that Gusinde assumed the ethnicity of the human remains to one of the tribes living in Tierra del Fuego based on both the cranial morphology and the region the skeletal remains were excavated from. Especially regarding the individual NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6037, Gusinde was uncertain regarding the tribal affiliation due to the geographic overlap of the settlement area of the tribes and later revised this affiliation.[40] Because of this and the nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the tribes, these ethnic assignments are not absolute. Therefore, these labels should be used with caution in further research happening in the fields of evolutionary anthropology and bioarchaeology.

In-house history: exhibitions of human remains from Tierra del Fuego 1931–1996

One of the peculiarities of (museum) collections in the natural sciences is that their significance is rarely reflected in the financial value of the objects, but is rather based on the importance of the objects to the scientific community.[41] This also applies to osteological collections. The PTdF collection is one of the most requested collections by external researchers at the DA-NHMW. This is not only because it consists of a collection of human remains from hunter-gatherer individuals whose lifestyles and adaptations are studied in evolutionary anthropology, but also because they are evaluated as a contrast to agricultural and farming societies as an outgroup for analyses. There were also at least three exhibitions where documentation about the integration of individuals from this collection is available. This includes the special exhibition "Die Feuerländer – Rasse und Kultur eines Urvolkes" ("The Firelanders – Race and Culture of a Primitive People") from 1931, another special exhibition "Die Menschheit – eine Familie" ("Man – One Family") from 1948–1949, and a permanent exhibition of the DA within the NHMW between 1978 and 1996. The last two have also been documented with photographs. Additionally, internal communication and correspondence between DA-NHMW members and, for example, Martin Gusinde, as well as his extensive monographs about Tierra del Fuego could be used for reconstructions.

Just a few months after the receipt of the PTdF collection, the first exhibition displaying individuals from the collection was opened in January 1931. It is also the one of the three exhibitions where the least documentation and material is available. It was opened by the then director of the Anthropological and Prehistoric Department, Josef Bayer (1882–1931), as a special exhibition called "Die Feuerländer – Rasse und Kultur eines Urvolkes" in parts of Hall 10 of the NHMW. Gusinde was invited to give the keynote lecture.[42] The exhibition should provide an overview of the way of life of the so-called "primitive people", including the tribes from Tierra del Fuego.[43] Here, NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6044 was, among other human remains, exhibited with illustrative objects, including objects originating from Gusinde's private collection and which are now in the collections of the Weltmuseum Wien.[44] Photographs that Gusinde took of Fuegians were also included so that they "could be shown in the picture with a description of their character"[45], as the contemporary correspondence of the museum puts it, reflecting racial stereotypical thinking patterns prevalent at this time. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the DA housed a special exhibition at the NHMW, based on a design by the head of the DA-NHMW, the anthropologist Robert Routil (1893–1955), and under the artistic direction of Austrian graphic designer Victor Slama (1890–1973). The exhibition, which ran

from December 1948 to June 1949 using the title "Die Menschheit – eine Familie" ("Man – One Family"), highlighted biological and cultural aspects of anthropology. Basic biological concepts such as cell division were dealt with as well as the spread of *Homo sapiens* on earth. As the name of the exhibition almost conciliatory implies, the thematically broad exhibition intended to "heal wounds" and "warn" from the consequences of a misinterpretation of the "arrogant master race theory"[46] previously spread by the Nazis and to re-position anthropology as an alleged neutral science. Yet the concept of the human race continued to be propagated and conveyed as scientifically unambiguously demonstrable.[47] The alleged scientific neutrality of physical anthropology's ability to measure, categorize and hierarchify into races was still being emphasized, and only the political misuse of the concept of race was strongly condemned during the whole exhibition.[48]

The hierarchical or even general classification of humans into races is strongly rejected today. Individual regional adaptations are no markers that would justify the categorization of human races, and the human genome is too similar on the molecular level for unique genes or even base pairs to be present, which would allow the subdivision into races.[49] In the exhibition from 1948 to 1949, individual "human races" were selected seemingly at random together with cultural objects and human remains in showcases. This included the Fuegians, who were placed in the large hall next to Tasmanians and Inuit. Among the pieces displayed in the showcase of the Fuegians were cultural objects such as bows, quivers and arrows as well as the stylized bust of a Selk'nam, NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-21430. This bust was based on not further disclosed photographs by Gusinde, modeled by Fahrwickl, and was exhibited together with NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-6037.[50] As the bust modelled by Engel-Beiersdorf was based on the same calvarium, it may be assumed that both busts were using this individual as a base. After the death of the previous head of department of DA, Viktor Lebzelter (1889–1936), Robert Routil and Gusinde jointly conducted investigations in the prisoner of war camps of the German *Wehrmacht*, Kaisersteinbruch and Wolfsberg, in 1940 and 1942.[51] Previous to his time at the NHMW, Routil had also been active in the Anthropos Institute, an ethnographic institute founded by the SVD, and would have liked to be seen by Wilhelm Koppers and Wilhelm Schmidt (both *Societas Verbi Divini*) in the post of head of the DA.[52] In a letter dated April 1952, Routil tells Gusinde in detail about plans for a new permanent exhibition, planned in three halls of which only the paleoanthropological was realized, and asks him to send him his pictures of the Bambuti, "Bushmen" and Fuegians.[53] It is not clear from the following correspondence whether these pictures arrived – only a message from the curator of the division of physical anthropology, Thomas Dale Stewart (1901–1997) at the Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum in Washington, D.C.

dated January 1953 speaks of the successful sending of photographs of other Indigenous groups through Gusinde's mediation.[54]

The last exhibition in which human remains from the PTdF collection were displayed was the permanent exhibition of the DA from 1978–1996, that took place in two halls. The visitors were taught the basics of anthropology, which, according to the collection guide, was "the most important task of the department".[55] Hall 16 presented the "Evolution of Man", with a focus on hominid evolution but also showcased on the Neolithic period through the Middle Ages in the 15th century. In Hall 17 followed the "Races of Man". In the introductory explanation of the contents of Hall 17, the visitor was then introduced to the concept of race defined by the UNESCO in their "Statement of Race", that was adapted various times after its first publication in 1950. The exhibition guide refers to the later versions of 1951 and 1962 (1967). Both versions are clearly against the categorization of races.[56] Nevertheless, examples for racial categorizations through body size, head shape and behavior were provided in the exhibition, a contradicting representation found in the whole exhibition.[57] So did the hall contain altogether 17 showcases, where three "races" and four of their "subraces", modified after Eickstedt, were presented.[58]

According to notes acting as placeholders with reference to the permanent position, which are still in the human remains' *Schädeltassen*[59] today, at least five crania (skulls with lower jaws) were displayed during this exhibition. For one of them, NHWM-Anthro-OSTE-6032, there is also photographic evidence that the individual was displayed on the top right corner among seven other individuals from South America.[60] It was the actual cranium that was exhibited and not one of its two casts, as the cranium shows inscriptions on the right mandible and right temporal bone that the casts are lacking. Accompanying all exhibited crania were bullet point descriptions of the appearance of the alleged "subrace" to which these individuals belonged, illustrating the alleged "racial" diversity on this continent. However, it becomes apparent here that the definitions of Eickstedt were only partially followed in the exhibition: he assigns Selk'nam and Kawésqar to different "subraces",[61] and not as the same, as it happened in Hall 17. These contradictions are further contrasted by Gusinde considering the Selk'nam to be, in fact, "a major race in the anthropological definition".[62] Additionally, there are strong discrepancies between the data in the Inventory book and those of the exhibition guide regarding the number and ethnic affiliation of individuals of the PTdF collection. A thorough search for more individuals originating from Tierra del Fuego or Patagonia in the catalogues and depot of the DA-NHMW did not reveal further individuals present in the DA-NHMW, and similar discrepancies exist regarding Māori human remains from New Zealand.

The permanent exhibition was closed in 1996 after international debates about the racist content of the anthropological showrooms conveyed to the public, triggered by a letter to the journal Nature by the English anthropologist Adam Kuper, but also by previous criticism by the Viennese anthropologist and university professor Horst Seidler.[63]

Integration of the collection into scientific publications

As mentioned before, the PTdF collection in the DA belongs to the most requested collections from external researchers. To analyze the research question(s) the collection was integrated into, a total of 20 German-, English- and Spanish-language publications were identified which had integrated the PTdF collection from Vienna in the data sets for their research (see Figure 2).[64] Journals in which the collection was published in, included "American Journal of Physical Anthropology", "Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia", "Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums Wien", "Anthropos", "HOMO – Journal of Comparative Human Biology", "Journal of Human Evolution", "Relaciones – Sociedad Argentina de Antropología", "Revista Chilena de Antropologia", "RUNA", "The Anatomical Record – Advances in Integrative Anatomy and Evolutionary Biology" and "Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie". All online resources were searched for with certain key words that would retrieve the publications and papers based on their titles and provided key words (see Table 2). The search was conducted in three languages, prospective to the collection's origin (Spanish), the location of the NHMW based in Vienna, Austria (German), as well as English being the language most commonly used in science.

English	German	Spanish
Fireland, Patagonia	Feuerland, Feuerländer, Patagonien	Tierra del Fuego, fuegian, Patagonia(n),
Osteological	Osteologisch, Osteologische Analyse	Osteología
Skull	Schädel	Cráneo
Racial/ racial science	Rassenkunde	Raza
Indigenous	Indianer/ indigen	indígena

Table 2 List of keywords used to find publications of and with Fuegian skulls belonging to the Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego collection at the Natural History Museum Vienna.

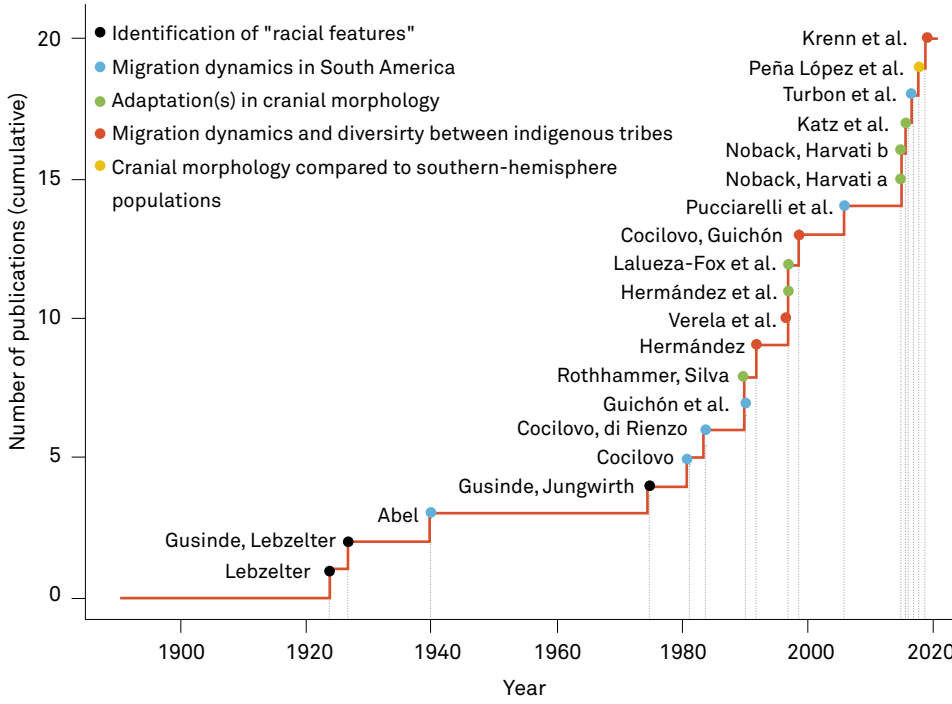

Fig. 2 A total of 20 publications, spanning from 1924 to 2019 incorporating the Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego collection in their research could be identified. Dots indicate the use of analog data sets based on cranial landmarks, publications marked with a square rely on geometric-morphometrical data using high resolution µCT scans.

The first publication on the collection dates from 1924 and was written by the then director of the DA, Viktor Lebzelter.[65] In total, four major and one minor groups of questions could be identified, all dealing with fundamental issues and concepts from biology, most importantly migration dynamics and adaptations to climate and subsistence. Whereas in the 1930s the PTdF collection was mainly used to find supposedly "race-typical" features to classify and stereotype Indigenous populations, the individuals serve primarily as a so-called outgroup in questions dealing with differences in adaptation from hunter-gatherers to arable populations today. They are also used in works dealing with adaptations of *Homo sapiens* to extreme weather conditions or with the population and migration history of both American continents. The geographic isolation is decisive for the interest in collections of human remains from Tierra del Fuego shown worldwide and not only in Vienna.[66]

None of the publications referred to or addressed the collection contexts of the human remains. This also includes the more recent papers published in this millenium. Such uncritical adoption of data raises the question of whether the collection should be released for research at all. Here, three demands on the human remains collide: on the one hand, the curators have a responsibility towards the collection and its history. On the other hand scientists should be able to pursue the answer to their research questions without hindrance. Lastly, the descendants have the expectation that their ancestors' remains will be treated with dignity.

Summary and Outlook

The provenance of the PTdF collection at the DA-NHMW testifies to an eventful history and reflects not only changes in scientific questions, but also the *zeitgeist*. Common to all exhibitions is the categorization and representation of the Indigenous inhabitants of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego according to "races". This hierarchical categorization is one of the most effective social classifications[67] and was legitimized by disciplines like evolutionary anthropology, or as it was also called in its beginning, physical anthropology. Through the exhibitions at the NHMW, this concept of races was confirmed and anchored in visitors' minds. The racial categories and prejudices have persisted to the present day, despite modern molecular genetic analyses. These are clearly proving that such categories are without any support, according to which the concept of "race" has to be strongly rejected for various reasons and as simply wrong.[68] Colonial systems of power have contributed to the creation of racist categorizations. Peace and conflict researcher Claudia Brunner calls "racialization [even] the axis of the coloniality of power", placing it in one of the three expressions of coloniality: power, knowledge, and being.[69] Gusinde and Lehmann-Nitsche freely exploited the, as historian Linda Erker called it, "semi-colonial"[70] power structures they had as European scientists over the Indigenous population in South America to create knowledge. The ongoing publications integrating the PTdF collection, as well as its past integration into exhibitions, reflect the scientific community's constant interest in the human remains of the Indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia. This is in stark contrast to the treatment the Indigenous peoples received during their lifetime.

At first glance, this does not seem to be a "classic" case of colonialism. The individuals of the PTdF collection only arrived in Austria at the beginning of the 20th century, and then from areas that had already achieved independence from the colonial powers at that time. The provenance of the collection is nevertheless problematic. The museum has benefited from colonial structures through the acquisition of the PTdF collection: financially, through the exhibitions in which the human remains were central exhibits,

and scientifically through the publications and requests that the DA receives from the scientific side to study the collection. There is also the prestige that the house received and still receives through this collection, visible in the constant publication process of and interest in the collection. These colonial structures continue while individuals are still in the anthropological department of the NHMW. In the case of the KolText project, contact with Indigenous members and representatives was actively sought at the beginning and during the provenance research. The exchange that developed with the Selk'nam was characterized by building up mutual trust and understanding between the representatives and the scientists that only deepened further in the course of the project. This allowed both parties to openly communicate the possibilities of provenance research, its significance and its consequences to each other.[71]

At the present, provenance in the DA is discussed and evaluated, as it is generally recommended,[72] individually on a case-by-case basis. Detailed recommendations for human remains in museums, as they already exist in Germany,[73] could considerably facilitate the handling of such collections and reduce possible fears and reservations from the scientific community, possible representatives and the public. In addition, cooperation with representatives and/or descendants to integrate more diverse perspectives into the research process, insofar as this is desired by possible representatives, is highly desirable. Cooperation on an equal level would be a first step towards researching and coming to terms with colonial provenances.

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Notes

1 Sabine Eggers et al., Māori and Moriori Human Remains in the Natural History Museum Vienna. Exhumed, Shipped, Traded and Inventoried, in Pia Schölnberger, ed., *Das Museum im kolonialen Kontext. Annäherungen aus Österreich* (Vienna, 2021), 281–303.

2 Ethically justifiable can for example mean following the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) or the recommendations of the guideline *Care of Human Remains in Museums and Collections* ("Empfehlungen zum Umgang mit menschlichen Überresten in Museen und Sammlungen") proposed by Deutscher Museumsbund in 2021.

3 Fernanda Olivares/Constanze Schattke/Hema'ny Molina/Margit Berner/Sabine Eggers, "Re-telling the story of Selk'nam ancestors: From Karokynká/Tierra del Fuego to Austria", in *Human Remains and Violence* 9 (2023), 49–69, https://doi.org/10.7227/HRV.9.1.4; Constanze Schattke/Fernanda Olivares/Hema'ny Molina/Lumila Menéndez/Sabine Eggers, "Osteobiographical re-individualisation of the Selk'nam human remains at the Natural History Museum Vienna", in *Human Remains and Violence* 9 (2023), 28–48, https://doi.org/10.7227/HRV.9.1.3.

4 Josef Estermann, *Befreiung oder Unterdrückung? Mission und Theologie in der wechselvollen Geschichte von Kolonialismus und Dekolonisation* (Vienna, 2019), 38, 47.

5 In 1948, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) defined five criteria regarding the legal definition of genocide. Here, apart from "killing members of the group", Article II also includes "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UN-CPPCG), General Assembly Resolution (1948) 260 A (III).

6 Carlos Gigoux, "'Condemned to Disappear': Indigenous Genocide in Tierra del Fuego", in *Journal of Genocide Research* (2020), 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2020.1853359.

7 The Argentinian conquistador Julio Popper with Romanian roots was one of the main actors who participated in the killing of the Selk'nam Natives. Mateo Martinic, *La Tierra de Los Fuego* (Punta Arenas, 1982), 31–2; J. L. Alonso Marchante, *Selk'nam. Genocidio y Resistencia* (Santiago de Chile, 2019), sec. 3112.

8 Martin Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer* (Vienna Mödling), III/2, 8, 19.

9 Martin Gusinde reports hearing from secondhand sources that a Selk'nam was shot to get hold of his bones due to his unusually large body height. Martin Gusinde, *Die Selk'nam. Vom Leben und Denken eines Jägervolkes auf der grossen Feuerlandinsel* (Mödling, 1931), I, 167.

10 Fernando Aliaga Rojas, *La Misión Salesiana de Isla Dawson (1889–1911)* (Santiago de Chile, 2000); Josefina María Brenda Motti et al., "Identification of the geographic origins of people buried in the cemetery of the Salesian Mission of Tierra del Fuego through the analyses of mtDNA and stable isotopes", in *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 33 (2020), 102559, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2020.102559.

11 The anthropologist Egon Freiherr von Eickstedt was one of the leading racial theorists in Nazi Germany, editing for example the *Zeitschrift für Rassenkunde und die gesamte Forschung am Menschen*.

12 Egon Freiherr von Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit* (Stuttgart, 1934), 334.

13 www.hachsaye.com

14 Anton Quack, "Mank'ácen – der Schattenfänger. Martin Gusinde als Ethnograph und Fotograf der letzten Feuerland-Indianer", in *Anthropos* 85 (1990), 149–61.

15 Wilhelm Saake, "Professor Dr. Martin Gusinde SVD: Zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag", in *Anthropos* 57 (1962), 321–4; "Gusindes Reisen (1918–1924) fallen in eine Zeit, wo 'teilnehmende Beobachtung' über einen längeren Zeitraum noch nicht allgemeingültiges Ideal der ethnologischen Feldforschung war", in Quack, "Mank'ácen – der Schattenfänger", 149–61, 149.

16 Martin Gusinde, Die Feuerland-Indianer. Ergebnisse meiner vier Forschungsreisen in den Jahren 1918 bis 1924, unternommen im Auftrage des Ministerio de Instruccion Publica de Chile (Mödling, 1931).

17 Martin Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer* (Vienna Mödling, 1939), III/ 2.

18 Fritz Bornemann, "P. Martin Gusinde S. V. D. (1886–1969). Eine biographische Skizze", in *Anthropos* 65 (1970), 737–57; Konrad Theodor Preuss, "Review to Die Selk'nam – vom Leben und Denken eines Jägervolkes auf der großen Feuerlandinsel", in *Anthropos* 27 (1932), 661–4, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40446507.

19 Crania are skulls with the mandible present, calvaria without the mandible. "Dieser Schädel wurde von Gusinde auf der Isla Grande ausgegraben", in Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer*, 208; "Im Sande bei der Caleta Josefina hat Gusinde diesen Schädel gefunden", *ibid.*, 211; "Im verlassenen Friedhof der ehemaligen katholischen Mission auf Isla Dawson hat Gusinde diesen Schädel gehoben, der möglicherweise auch einem Manne gehört hat", *ibid.*, 225.

20 Fritz Bornemann, *Pater Martin Gusinde (1886–1969) Mitglied des Anthropos-Institutes* (Rome, 1971), 39, 46–8, 56, 76.

21 Diego Ballestero, "Un exhaustivo documentador de la historia del hombre: Vida y obra de Robert Lehmann–Nitsche", in *Bérose – Encyclopédie internationale des histoires de l'anthropologie* (Paris, 2018), https://hdl.handle.net/10670/1.huiqx1.

22 Diego Ballestero, "Los espacios de la antropología en la obra de Robert Lehmann-Nitsche, 1894–1938. Tomo I" (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2013), 150, 171.

23 Diego Ballestero, "'Savages at the End of the World", in *Revista de Antropología* 62:1 (2019), 118–143, https://doi.org/10.11606/2179-0892.ra.2019.157034; María Susana Cipolletti, *Kosmospfade: Schamanismus und religiöse Auffassungen der Indianer Südamerikas* (Sankt Augustin, 2019), 61.

24 Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer*, 475.

25 See for example Margit Berner/Anette Hoffmann/Britta Lange, *Sensible Sammlungen: aus dem anthropologischen Depot* (Hamburg 2011).

26 Martin Gusinde, "Plastische Rekonstruktion eines Feuerlandindianers. Monatsversammlung am 25.10.1933", in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft Wien* (1934), lxiv, [4]–[5]; Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Department of Anthropology, Osteological collection, Inventory book 7 (23102–24958), 12.

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30 NHMW, DA, Osteological collection, Inventory book 4 (4783 – 9610), 242.

31 Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Archive for the History of Science, "Direktionsakten" [Files of the General's Office], Josef Bayer (13.6.1939), "Ersuchen um Bewilligung eines Sonderkredites von S. 3.500".

32 NHMW, Archive for the History of Science, "Direktionsakten" [Files of the General's Office], Josef Bayer (1928), "Zuweisung von Räumen an die anthropologische Sammlung"; Bayer, "Ersuchen um Bewilligung eines Sonderkredites von S. 3.500"; Verena Pawlowsky, *Quelle aus vielen Stücken: Die Korrespondenz der Anthropologischen Abteilung des Wiener Naturhistorischen Museums bis 1938*, in: Gabriel Eberhard, ed., *Vorreiter der Vernichtung? Eugenik, Rassenhygiene und Euthanasie in der Österreichischen Diskussion vor 1938* (Vienna, 2005), 139–65.

33 "Nur durch das besondere Entgegenkommen des Herrn Prof. Gusinde der Oesterreich als seine zweite Heimat ansieht, ist es möglich and die Erwerbung dieses unschätzbaren Materiales für unser Museum überhaupt zu denken", Bayer, "Ersuchen um Bewilligung eines Sonderkredites von S. 3.500".

34 NHMW, DA, Osteological collection, Inventory book 7 (23102–24958), 30.

35 "Diese und die drei folgenden Schädel übergab Prof. Dr. R. Lehmann-Nitsche dem Naturhistorischen Museum in Wien", in Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer,* 218; NHMW, DA, Osteological collection, Inventory book 6 (15100–21316), 66, 72.

36 Gusinde, *Anthropologie der Feuerlandindianer*, 218.

37 NHMW, DA, Osteological collection, Inventory book 6 (15100–21316), 66.

38 Bernhard Stichel, *Argentinien* (Hamburg, 1919), 135, https://doi.org10.1515/9783111413655.

39 In March 2021, the photographers Niki Gail and Judith Kreuzer (both Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Archaeological Institute) were invited to the DA-NHMW to try out their set-up for UV-fluorescent and UV-reflectographic photography on selected human remains. Together with Daniel Oberndorfer, preparator at the NHMW, Sophie Krachler and the author it was tried to make faded inscriptions on the human remains visible using this specialized photography. While successful for some individuals, this proved to be impossible for NHMW-Anthro-OSTE-15352 as a preservative coat of unknown substance interfered with the analysis.

40 Martin Gusinde, "Ein Feuerland-Schädel neu interpretiert", in *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums Wien*, 79 (1975), 665–7.

41 Alexandra Caruso et al., "'Eine naturwissenschaftliche Sammlung verhält sich eben ganz anders als ein Kunstmuseum' – Provenienzforschung im Naturhistorischen Museum Wien", in Eva Blimlinger/Heinz Schödl, eds., (K)ein Ende in Sicht: 20 Jahre Kunstrückgabegesetz in Österreich (Vienna, 2018), 123–32, https://doi.org/10.7767/9783205201274.123.

42 NHMW, Archive for the History of Science, "Direktionsakten" [Files of the General's Office], (1931), "Sonderausstellung Feuerland – Rasse und Kultur eines Urvolkes", Inventory number 173.

43 "Die Feuerländer sind primitive Jäger und Fischer, ihr Leben, ihr Hausrat, ihre Jagdtiere, ihre Feste und Zeremonien werden sowohl durch Gegenstände wie durch eine grosse Anzahl von Photographien vor Auge geführt", in NHMW, DA, Internal correspondence "Sonderausstellung Feuerland – Rasse und Kultur eines Urvolkes" (January 1931).

44 *Ibid.*, NHMW, DA, Osteological collection, Inventory book 4 (4783–9610), 244.

45 "Die Eingeborenen werden uns auch dadurch näher gebracht, dass eine grosse Anzahl von ihnen mit Beschreibung ihres Charakters im Bilde dargestellt ist", NHMW, DA, Internal correspondence "Sonderausstellung Feuerland – Rasse und Kultur eines Urvolkes" (January 1931).

46 "Sie will Wunden heilen, die Rassenwahn und Rassenhass geschlagen haben. […] Sie will warnen vor Leichtgläubigkeit, Überheblichkeit und unheilbringendem Rassenhass", in NHMW, DA, Inventory number 101282, Robert Routil (1951), *Die Menschheit – eine Familie*, 2; "Kulturleistungen der Menschheit verteilen sich über alle Länder und Rassen und widerlegen überhebliche Herrenrassentheorie", *ibid.*, 59.

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49 Martin Fischer et al., "Jenaer Erklärung – Das Konzept der Rasse ist das Ergebnis von Rassismus und nicht dessen Voraussetzung: Anthropologie", in *Biologie in unserer Zeit* 49:6 (2019), 399–402, https//:doi.org/10.1002/biuz.201970606; Agustín Fuentes et al., "AAPA Statement on Race and Racism", in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 169:3 (2019), 400–2, https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.23882.

50 Routil, *Die Menschheit – eine Familie*, 38.

51 Margit Berner, "*Die Kriegsgefangenenuntersuchungen der Anthropologischen Abteilung des Naturhistorischen Museums Wien*", in Andre Gingrich/Peter Rohrbacher, eds., *Völkerkunde zur NS-Zeit aus Wien (1938–1945): Institutionen, Biographien und Praktiken in Netzwerken* (Wien, 2021), 1063–92.

52 Carl Blaha/Johann Jungwirth/Karl Kromer, "Geschichte der Anthropologischen und der Prähistorischen Abteilung des Naturhistorischen Museums in Wien", in *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums Wien* 69 (1966), 451–61.

53 NHMW, DA, Internal correspondence 1939–1964, Robert Routil to Martin Gusinde, 9.4.1952.

54 NHMW, DA, Internal correspondence 1939–1964, T. D. Stewart to Robert Routil, 15.1.1953.

55 "Die wichtigste Aufgabe der Abteilung besteht darin, den Besuchern des Museums die Anthropologie durch Schausammlungen, Sonderausstellungen, Führungen durch die Abteilung, Kataloge

etc. nahezubringen (Öffentlichkeitsarbeit)", Johann Szilvássy, *Anthropologie: Entwicklung des Menschen, Rassen Des Menschen: Führer durch die Anthropologische Sammlung* (Vienna, 1978), 10.

56 UNESCO, *The Race concept: Results of an inquiry* (1951)*: UNESCO Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice* (1968), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000073351.locale=en. (last accessed 8 August 2022)

57 Johann Szilvássy, *Anthropologie,* 101; Mayer, "*Museale Inszenierungen von anthropologischen Fiktionen*", 73–80.

58 Szilvássy, *Anthropologie,* 102, 112; Freiherr von Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*.

59 Schädeltassen are lidless containers used to store crania and calvaria in the DA-NHMW.

60 NHMW, DA, "Photothek" [Photo collection], Inventory number 44804.

61 Von Eickstedt, *Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit*, 759.

62 "Die Selk'nam sind schöngebaute, hochgewachsene Menschen. Sie müssen als eine große Rasse im anthropologischen Sinne veranschlagt werden." Gusinde, *Die Selk'nam*, 118.

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70 Linda Erker, "Grete Mostny and the Making of Indigenous Archaeology: European Immigration, White-Racial Hegemony, and Chilean Nationalism", in *Itinerario. Journal of Imperial and Global Interactions* 46:2 (2022), in Press.

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72 Wiebke Ahrndt et al., "Empfehlungen zum Umgang mit menschlichen Überresten in Museen und Sammlungen", 7, https://www.museumsbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/dmb-leitfaden-umgang-menschl-ueberr-de-web-20210623.pdf (last accessed 27 June 2022).

73 *Ibid.*