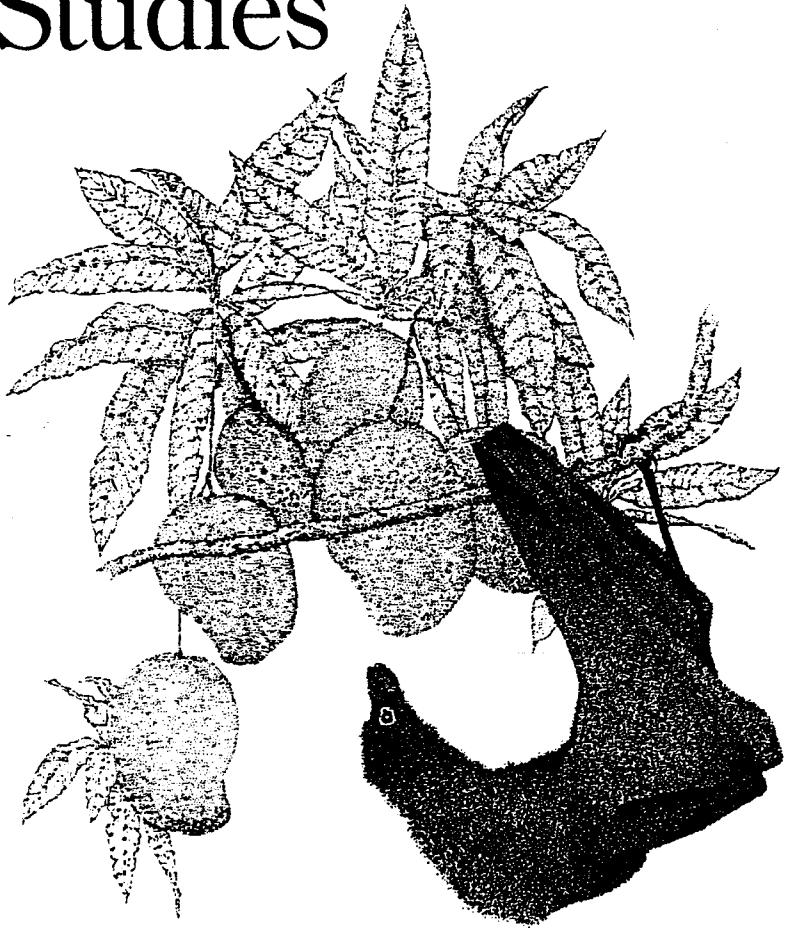


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Tobi Captured: Converging Ethnographic and Colonial Visions on a Caroline Island

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Although the voluminous ethnographic material generated by the 1908–1910 Hamburg South Sea expedition still informs anthropological and historical research in Micronesia, the historical context of the expedition has received little attention. This article addresses that context, relating it to theoretical issues involved in current critical inquiries concerning ethnological museums, specifically their competitive politics and collecting and publishing practices. By focusing on the expedition members' visit to just one island, Tobi, the expedition's aims and accomplishments are examined against the backdrop of German colonialism in the Caroline Islands.

After years of being neglected by university-based anthropologists, the topic of museum anthropology is once again appearing in the pages of scholarly journals. The now-expanding literature on ethnological museums (see Jones, 1993, for a concise overview) is primarily the result of a two-pronged critical examination of these institutions over the past two decades. On one hand, museum anthropologists have found themselves embroiled in bitter battles with indigenous people around the globe over the ownership of artifacts. The struggle over the display, handling and, in some cases, repatriation will remain important issues facing ethnological institutions in North America and Europe for some time to come. On the other hand, the literary turn in anthropology (cautiously termed “postmodern” at times; see Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer, 1986), which calls into question the very epistemological foundations of the discipline, also has severe repercussions for ethnological museums. Much like the texts produced by anthropologists, museums, too, are

now perceived as cultural manifestations where indigenous artifacts are not merely exhibited but in addition they are infused with entirely new meanings (Pearce, 1992).

The acknowledgment of museums as inherently cultural and politically contested institutions allows for a reexamination of the collection process, whereby artifacts end up in ethnological institutions (Schindlbeck, 1993). Challenged then is the notion that artifacts represent unchanging, timeless entities whose meanings are simply transferred from sites of collection into museum display cases. Artifacts, critics argue, are "entangled objects" (Thomas, 1991) that reflect meanings that transcend their respective sites of origin. Hence, a call has emerged for new modes of analysis, modes that would include agendas of collection, transportation, and display.

By focusing on the Hamburg South Sea expedition, a 2-year ethnographic survey (1908–1910) of large areas in New Guinea and Micronesia, I explore in this article some of these contemporary issues concerning museum anthropology. The Hamburg expedition resulted in the collection of a large number of artifacts that are especially significant to the ethnography of Micronesia. The expedition also generated artifacts in the form of ethnographic monographs (25 volumes), which are still standard works for researchers who focus on the Caroline and Marshall Islands (Berg, 1988). However, historical information about this expedition, its collections, and its edited monographs is scarce at best. Still unsurpassed is Hans Fischer's book-length treatise (1981) on the topic. His thorough analysis of the unpublished diaries and correspondence available at the Hamburg museum has provided a vivid image of the expedition's scientific and colonial aims and execution. But, much like the monographs themselves, Fischer's book is accessible only to those who have extensive German language abilities.

In an effort to expand on Fischer's analysis, I center attention here on one Micronesian island, Tobi, which attracted the full notice of the expedition members. Tobi, located in westernmost Micronesia in Palau, was subjected to a week-long (August 27 to September 4, 1909) ethnographic survey by four members of the expedition. Using the encounter between the ethnographers and the Tobi Islanders as a point of departure, I discuss the stages leading from the planning of the expedition to the publication of a monograph on Tobi about 30 years later. This discussion ultimately speaks to the larger issues underlying current historical inquiries into the nature of museums, their collections, and publications. Elaboration of the larger issues is predicated, first, upon an understanding of the formation of the ethnographic texts out of what has been regarded as the most crucial aspect of anthropological research—the field

notes (see, e.g., Sanjek, 1990) and, second, on the context of the ethnographic undertaking in terms of the larger backdrop of German colonial expansion in the Caroline Islands after the turn of the century. In the course of this discussion, I am guided by Nicholas Thomas's work (1994), which sought an understanding of colonialism not as a monolithic phenomenon, but as a series of simultaneously converging and diverging projects.

TOBI AS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC "PRIZE"

On the afternoon of August 27, 1909, the German steamer *Peiho* came in full sight of Tobi Island. Aboard the ship, four members of the Hamburg South Sea expedition team were busily preparing themselves for a week's stay on the island. The expedition leader was Augustin Krämer who, although by vocation a German navy surgeon, had earned his ethnographic fame through the publication of a two-volume monograph dealing with the German territory of Samoa (Krämer, 1902–1903). Krämer was accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth, whose task was to describe the life of Micronesian women, a research area largely ignored by her male counterparts. Paul Hambruch, an assistant at the Hamburg Ethnological Museum, was to collect information regarding the physical anthropology of the Micronesian people. He was equipped with an array of instruments designed to measure the desired anthropometric data. The fourth expedition member, F. E. Hellwig, was to locate, collect, and classify indigenous artifacts. Two other expedition members did not make the trip to Tobi: Wilhelm Müller spent the period of the *Peiho* journey through Micronesia conducting research on the island of Yap, and Ernst Sarfert, an assistant at the Leipzig Ethnological Museum, spent August 27–September 4 doing ethnographic research on the island of Sonsorol.

Few islands in the Carolines were deemed important enough to warrant a visit by four researchers; the majority of these low-lying atolls were surveyed by only one or two members of the expedition. What, then, prompted the relatively large-scale investigation on Tobi? A closer look at the scientific aims of the expedition offers some clues in answer to this question.¹

Georg Thilenius, the ambitious new director of the Hamburg Ethnological Museum, had outlined a twofold task for the expedition members. First and foremost, the expedition was to explore the settlement of the Pacific Islands. Thilenius had little doubt that the prehistoric navigators who reached these islands originated in Indonesia; therefore, he was hoping to uncover clues about the subsequent movement of the Oceanic migrants. The second area of interest

guiding the expedition was the nature of outside influences on island communities. Thilenius, less interested in the better documented European intrusions in the region, requested that the expedition members focus instead on influences that originated in Southeast and East Asia. This request, however, does not mean that Thilenius should be placed entirely in the diffusionist camp, which was then making headway in cultural sciences in Germany (Smith, 1991, pp. 154–155); his intention was to generate a well-rounded account of the post-contact Melanesian and Micronesian areas that took into consideration both the adaptation of Oceanic societies to their island environments and the ensuing outside influences (Thilenius, 1927a). Nevertheless, Thilenius saw himself not so much as a theoretical innovator as one who would revolutionize the data collection process in the Pacific Islands. Following Adolf Bastian's lead (Smith, pp. 103–104) that called for an anthropological salvage action to save rapidly disappearing non-Western cultures, Thilenius envisioned that only a fast-moving expedition equipped with its own ship could perform such a task. The Hamburg South Sea expedition thus amounted to what is commonly known as salvage anthropology. The expedition was conceived to preserve the heritage of the contacted societies for future generations (Thilenius, 1927b).

A complete survey of the German colonial possessions in New Guinea was out of the question because of the enormous size of the territory. Micronesia, on the other hand, with its limited land area and small population, promised to be an ideal target for the expedition. Moreover, the long history of contact between Euro-American agents and the Micronesian people (Hezel, 1983) had precipitated tremendous changes in the area. In many cases, Thilenius argued, precontact Micronesian culture was a dim memory in the minds of a few elderly individuals (Thilenius, 1927b, pp. 26–28).

But there were exceptions. Owing to their relative remoteness from colonial district centers, the southwest islands of Palau promised to yield distinct societies that were comparatively less disturbed by outside influences. In particular, Tobi was rarely visited by outsiders because of the reported ferocity of its inhabitants. This island's negative image probably derived primarily from the narrative of Horace Holden (1836), who had been a castaway on Tobi. Holden, along with some fellow American sailors and adventurous Palauans, had drifted to Tobi in the early 1830s. The Tobi Islanders had attacked their small craft and seized the crewmen and their meager possessions. Imprisoned on the island, Holden and his companions suffered immensely from starvation and repeated physical abuse. Many of them perished, but Holden miraculously escaped his tormentors. It is understandable that Holden's account, published not long after the event, condemned the island's inhabitants. Trade between

the Tobi Islanders and outsiders was a rare occurrence and, when conducted at Tobi, was usually done only from a safe distance offshore (however, there were some exceptions; see Black, 1978, pp. 311–312).

The negative image that attached to Tobi and its inhabitants served the expedition members' aims well. With outside influence having been kept to a minimum, Tobi promised to reveal a great deal about precontact Micronesian life. This was the ethnographic prize the German researchers were after when they arrived on August 27. Tobi's exceptional potential thus warranted a visit by the majority of the ethnographic team. But in addition to the scientific interests they brought with them, the four members embodied in microcosmic fashion the museum entanglements and political maneuverings that had enveloped the planning of the expedition in Germany.

MUSEUM POLITICS ON THE *PEIHO*

The financing of Thilenius's vast undertaking, which amounted to 600,000 marks² (Thilenius, 1927b, p. 38), required a bold move on his part. Although he may have conceived of the expedition at an earlier date, it was not until Thilenius assumed the directorate of the Hamburg Ethnological Museum in 1904 that carrying out the idea became a distinct possibility. But would Hamburg's wealthy citizens be willing to fund such an expensive undertaking for the sole sake of ethnology? Thilenius decided to appeal to their Hanseatic civic pride to garner their good will and financial support.

Although the directorate position at the Hamburg museum was a prestigious assignment, the fact was that this institution could not compare itself favorably with other museums in Germany. Ironically, Hamburg had once housed one of the largest collections of Oceanic artifacts in all of Germany. In the second half of the nineteenth century, because of the financial strength of the Godeffroy Company, the curator of Hamburg's Godeffroy Museum, Johann D. E. Schmeltz, had amassed an outstanding collection of Pacific objects. He also issued the prestigious *Journal des Museum Godeffroy*, which featured articles by renowned European scholars. So it is not surprising that the creation of a city-owned ethnological museum in 1879 went largely unnoticed around the country. But as the financial strength of the Godeffroy Museum began to wane in the same year, even the skills of curator Schmeltz could not keep the museum's collection together. By 1885, the Leipzig Ethnological Museum had bought the majority of the Godeffroy objects for the rumored sum of one million marks.³ Only a small fraction of the Godeffroy collection was acquired by the

Hamburg museum (Drost, 1971, pp. 22–23; Finsch, 1899, p. 15; Schmack, 1938, pp. 282–284; Thilenius, 1916, p. 12).

One prominent institution that quickly filled the void left by the Godeffroy Museum was the Royal Ethnological Museum in Berlin. In 1889, only 4 years after the dispersal of the Godeffroy collection, the Berlin museum's director, Adolf Bastian, managed to negotiate a deal with German imperial authorities by which the German Federal Council decreed that all artifacts collected by German colonial officials or otherwise acquired by imperial funds had to be sent to the Berlin museum. Other German ethnological institutions had to content themselves with discarded duplicates from the Berlin museum (Westphal-Hellbusch, 1973, p. 16). The hegemony thus established made ethnographic activity in the German colonies a difficult and potentially explosive undertaking.

Thilenius was well aware of this situation when he laid out his expedition plan in a long letter to two prominent Hamburg luminaries, the banker Moritz Warburg and the shipping business-owner Adolph Woermann. The deplorable state of the Hamburg museum, Thilenius argued, was in no way in keeping with the city's long-standing prominent position in global trade and commerce. Something had to be done to restore the lost ethnographic glory to its museum, and only a unique collection of Oceanic artifacts could accomplish this.

The issue is . . . to create an extensive collection unique enough to compel the permanent attention and occasional visit of the foreign scientists. In practice this would mean the conception of a special collection that would completely exhaust a selected area, so that any attempt aimed at replicating this collection by another party is rendered a futile enterprise from its very beginning. (Thilenius, 1905)

His arguments met with success, and by 1907 funding for the expedition was approved by the newly established Hamburg Scientific Foundation.

Thilenius's challenge to the Berlin museum's hegemony was bound to trigger a reaction, which came about when Felix von Luschan, who had succeeded Bastian as director of the Berlin museum, appealed to the colonial authorities to put a halt to the expedition. But a half-hearted attempt by the colonial office to inquire into the matter failed Luschan's purpose when the Hamburg officials denied any knowledge of the undertaking.⁴

Thilenius nevertheless realized that a powerful ally was needed to further his project. He therefore offered the Leipzig Ethnological Museum, which had already acquired the majority of the Godeffroy collection, a significant part of the ethnographic spoils in return for its patronage. This explains how Ernst Sarfert, an assistant at the Leipzig museum, found his way aboard the *Peiho*.

The museum entanglements of the Hamburg expedition were further compounded by the emergence of another regional ethnological institution—the Stuttgart museum. Augustin Krämer, a seemingly neutral party to this conflict on account of his association with the German navy, had close ties with southern Germany. It was in Stuttgart that the resourceful Count Karl von Linden, in his function as chairman of the Württemberg Society for Geography and Ethnology, sought to establish a large ethnological museum. Krämer, eyeing a possible director's post at this institution, deeply regretted that he was unable to collect artifacts for the Stuttgart museum while on the Hamburg expedition (Schleip, 1989, pp. 49–53).

The competitive interests among the various German ethnological institutions would periodically complicate the expedition to the Pacific. The *Peiho* became, in many respects, a microcosm of this intense, rivalrous atmosphere that permeated German ethnological institutions in the first decade of the twentieth century.

TOBI AS A DEMOGRAPHIC “PRIZE”

The ethnographic interest in Tobi was paralleled by an equally important German administrative interest in the same island. The German administration did not manifest its presence in the area until April 1901 when district official Arno Senfft arrived on Tobi. A German imperial flag was hoisted, and a triple salute from the rifles of Senfft's small police force concluded what was essentially a standard procedure throughout the Caroline Island chain. Senfft, however, was impressed by the large population size of the island, which he estimated was approximately 500 to 600 individuals and which led him to suggest that this number had a potential to replenish the declining population on the high islands of Yap and Palau. To test the aptitude of Tobi's people, Senfft took an unspecified number of individuals back to Yap (Senfft, 1901).

Senfft was not alone in his recommendation. For example, in Germany, H. Seidel concluded a brief ethnographic survey article on Tobi Island in the geographical journal *Globus* with a similar suggestion to the colonial administration (1905a, pp. 117–118; see also 1905b, pp. 38–39). He advocated a large-scale relocation of a significant proportion of Tobi's population to Yap or Palau. This, he argued, would compensate for the demographic decline of the Yapese and Palauan populations, thus revitalizing the economic potential of these islands. Moreover, Seidel maintained that the high islands would supply the Tobians

with a better diet and safer protection from the unpredictable elements of the Pacific.

Seidel's assertions concerning Tobi's vulnerability proved to be correct. In 1904 a typhoon of devastating strength hit the southwest islands of Palau, which forced the administration to investigate the damage. Tobi, although probably affected, was not directly hit by the typhoon, which passed the island a good distance to the north. But when Saipan district official Georg Fritz arrived at Tobi 2 years after the event, he found that the people were suffering from malnutrition. Stunned by Tobi's large population size, which he estimated to be no less than 1,000 individuals, Fritz concluded that the carrying capacity of the island had been greatly surpassed. Only a large-scale relocation action, reported Fritz, could save Tobi's population from further disaster. The district officials appealed to the high chief, who gave Fritz permission to take some Tobians to the district centers of Yap or Saipan; but only 48 individuals agreed to go, and many did so against the will of their relatives. Moreover, only two women agreed to follow Fritz, and their relatives demanded eight sticks of tobacco for each of them (Fritz, 1907, pp. 667–668).

Although humanitarian concerns may have guided the initial relocation of Tobi Islanders, Tobi was ultimately designated to play a prominent role in the nascent colonial economy. Augustin Krämer, too, was instructed to further the goal of bringing about an exodus from the island.

TOBI INSCRIBED

The traditional polity on Tobi⁵ (see Black, 1994, pp. 6–11, for a detailed overview) was too complex to lend itself to adequate description in only the one week available to the ethnographers. However, Anneliese Eilers's (1936) compilation of the information gleaned during the expedition remains an important source of information about certain political structures on the island in 1909. (The German version scarcely accords with present-day Tobian versions of their political structure; Justin Andrew, personal communication, March 1, 1996). If nothing else, the Eilers monograph serves as a good illustration of the local political dynamics that further complicated the ethnographic venture.

According to Paul Hambruch's 1909 survey (1909–1910), 968 individuals were residing on Tobi, a single coral island of roughly triangular shape. Political authority was vested in the *tamor* (high chief) Makiroa. Assisting Makiroa were 13 lesser chiefs, one of whom was a woman (Eilers, 1936, p. 86; Hellwig, 1927, p. 201). There was, however, an important counterweight to their authority.

The execution of religious ceremonies and rituals was, according to the ethnographers, firmly in the hands of religious specialists who could appeal only to the main deity, Rugeiren, in a set of elaborate rituals.⁶ Rituals were undertaken in a ghost house (*fare kikak*) or spirit dwelling (*galis*). The former seems to have been more important than the latter because it contained a large, double-hulled canoe dedicated to Rugeiren. This deity would assume temporary residence in the canoe to observe the proper execution of rituals and food sacrifices (Eilers, 1936, pp. 106–107).

Although the German ethnographers mentioned that Tobi had a large number of shamans, only two received significant attention in their reports. One of them was an aged, partially blind individual named Mantrüior, who could communicate with Rugeiren. A second, much younger shaman was Vaitop, who may have been an apprentice of his older counterpart. The shamans proved to be the main opponents of the German ethnographers, especially Mantrüior, who repeatedly challenged the actions of Krämer and the others (Eilers, 1936, pp. 108–109). The diaries and Eilers's monograph imply that a heated contest was waged between the secular (chiefs) and the religious (shamans) authorities of the island. The ethnographers were soon deeply embroiled in this contest.

THE ENCOUNTER

As the ethnographers were getting ready to disembark, they saw a large crowd gathering on Tobi's beach. Augustin and Elizabeth Krämer were the first to land and they were soon surrounded by a large assembly of Islanders. The ensuing customary dances performed by the Tobians, along with high chief Makiroa's warm welcome, seemed to portend a pleasant and problem-free visit for the ethnographic team. When the welcoming committee dissolved, it was time for the Krämers to proceed to their accommodations—the *fare kikak*. Elizabeth Krämer noted that the house was divided into three areas, the smallest of which, located next to the entrance, was to serve as their sleeping quarters. The Krämers were forbidden to enter any other areas of the house. Rugeiren, they were told, would punish any act of trespassing with a multitude of natural disasters (E. Krämer diary, Aug. 27, 1909).

Augustin Krämer directed his attention to the interior of the house, especially the area that contained Rugeiren's spirit canoe. Krämer's interpreter, Pita, satisfied the ethnographer's curiosity as to its purpose and origin; however, the arrival of the shaman Mantrüior put a sudden end to Krämer's initial ethnographic inquiries. Almost ignoring the presence of the couple, the shaman proceeded to perform a religious ceremony. Krämer described the process:

He [Mantrüior] sat in the third section of the house and started to talk and talk. He also furiously slapped against the planks [of the house] while hissing and wincing like a lunatic. His intention was to save Togo-bei [Tobi] from disease and typhoon damage. Everybody had to remain quietly seated. The whole affair was extremely repetitive and we were unable to pursue our studies. (A. Krämer diary, Aug. 27, 1909)

Although at first intrigued with the ceremony, Krämer soon became uneasy—a common reaction throughout his stay—because of the precious research time lost to the “ranting of a maniac” (A. Krämer diary, Aug. 27, 1909). The relationship between the ethnographer and the shaman was to deteriorate as the week progressed.

Meanwhile, a third member of the ethnographic team, Paul Hambruch, came ashore and was personally escorted by chief Makiroa to the galis, which was to serve as his sleeping quarters. Not allowed to unpack his equipment, Hambruch was told to wait for Mantrüior, who was still busy purifying the fare kikak from foreign influence. A younger shaman, presumably Vaitop, explained to Hambruch that he was about to witness a ceremony designed to protect him from Rugeiren's wrath. Vaitop and Makiroa went out of their way to put the ethnographer at ease, but the amicable mood changed as soon as Mantrüior made his majestic entry. To command absolute silence in the house, Makiroa pointed to the sky, a sign that the ceremony was about to begin. Becoming anxious, Hambruch cocked his revolver as a group of hissing and panting shamans, led by Mantrüior, approached him. However, before he could draw his weapon, the shamans withdrew, lapsing into severe convulsions. Makiroa explained to Hambruch that Rugeiren had now taken complete control over the shamans' bodies. Silently, Hambruch and the assembled crowd observed the spectacle until the shamans' convulsions subsided. Then the Tobian congregation exited the house, leaving behind a puzzled Hambruch (Hambruch diary, Aug. 27, 1909).

In the meantime, the fourth member of the ethnographic team, F. E. Hellwig, was unable to come ashore. The *Peiho* was almost surrounded by Tobian canoes, and Hellwig was deeply involved in bartering for indigenous artifacts. His main trading items were small knives, other metal objects, and the much desired tobacco. The bartering process was so successful that Hellwig did not come ashore until the next day, whereupon he accepted Makiroa's offer to stay in his house.

Augustin Krämer assisted this last member of his team in settling into his sleeping quarters, after which he called Makiroa and the 13 lesser chiefs into the fare kikak for an official meeting. Krämer explained that the district officer

stationed in Yap had asked him to continue the German relocation effort of the Tobi Islanders that had been initiated by Senfft and Fritz. Although the chiefs listened patiently to Krämer, after a brief deliberation they unanimously rejected the proposal. Tobi, they argued, was their birthplace, and the island would therefore witness their burial ceremonies as well. Krämer accepted their verdict, partially because other, more pressing issues were troubling him. The meeting had provided him with an opportunity to curb Mantrüior's unpredictable actions, but the shaman, upon hearing Krämer mention his name, announced his presence to the meeting with another vociferous display. Twice he lunged at Elizabeth Krämer's painting equipment, which she had laid out in order to paint the most sacred object, Rugeiren's double-hulled canoe. Krämer, fearing another interruption of the ethnographic work, ignored the shaman's spectacle and took the assembled chiefs to a nearby cookhouse to conclude the meeting (Hellwig, 1927, p. 201; A. Krämer diary, Aug. 28, 1909).

Once the meeting was dissolved, Krämer took immediate action. Hambruch was sent to the *Peiho* to fetch additional supplies, including two rifles. The rifles became instrumental in underscoring Krämer's warning to Makiroa that the older shaman was indeed risking internment on the steamer should he continue to interfere with the ethnographic business. To demonstrate the efficiency of the weapons, one of the expedition members, presumably the leader himself, fired a few shots at an unspecified target (Hambruch diary, Aug. 28, 1909; Hellwig, 1927, p. 203; A. Krämer diary, Aug. 28, 1909).

Although it can be presumed that Augustin Krämer did not intend to issue empty threats, a conclusive interpretation of his actions cannot be made because of the nature of the participants' diaries. Having become tired of the laissez-faire attitude of Fülleborn, who commanded the expedition during its Melanesian leg, Krämer, as the new commander, closely monitored the journals of the participants by subjecting them to weekly inspections (Fischer, 1981, p. 61). A close reading of the journals indicates that several shots were fired, but they do not reveal who did the shooting. Also, a brief, almost cursory, mention is made in Elizabeth Krämer's diary (Aug. 28, 1909) of the internment of an unspecified shaman on the *Peiho*, but again the diaries do not disclose the identity of the shaman nor the duration of his internment.

We do know that Krämer's actions were swift and aroused fear among the population of Tobi. For example, a few days after Krämer's standoff, Hambruch was approached by a visibly frightened shaman (Vaitop?) who asked him to allay Krämer's anger (Hambruch diary, Aug. 30, 1909). Others expressed their uneasiness to the chief and his guest, Hellwig. One morning Hellwig was, in

his words, rudely awakened by a crowd consisting mostly of women and children. They had brought with them many gifts, such as coconuts, mats, belts, bowls, and baskets filled with fish and eggs. Hellwig, because of his interest in Tobi's artifacts and his wealth of trade items, was deemed to be more receptive than Krämer to hearing about general discontent on Tobi. The crowd urged Hellwig to accept the gifts in return for a speedy departure of the ethnographers. Hellwig tried to appease the assembly by telling them that only good intentions guided the ethnographic venture. His brief address was supported by Makiroa, who assured the assembly that they had nothing to fear from his friends. Underscoring their words, Hellwig then distributed small gifts from his own supply, an act that, according to the ethnographer, returned the accustomed smiles to the Tobian faces. Although this incident, by itself, may be of only marginal significance to the events that unfolded after August 28, Hellwig's description of the incident highlights the editorial politics underlying the writing of the expedition's official diary. In his daily journal, Hellwig expressed uncertainty as to what may have frightened the people (Aug. 30, 1909). But some 18 years later, when he wrote of his stay on Tobi in the official diary of the expedition, his doubt had all but vanished:

There is little doubt that the work of the priests [shamans] lurked behind the fearful actions of these people. The priests, now avoiding us at all cost, had incited their fellow Tobians to press for our speedy departure. Their fearful expressions readily attested to the real perpetrators of this event. (Hellwig, 1927, p. 204)

Krämer's forceful actions to silence the shamans found no mention in Hellwig's official report. It seems that Hellwig retroactively attempted to mask the wrongs committed by the expedition leader.

After Makiroa and Hellwig had addressed the assembled Islanders, Makiroa ordered the preparation of a celebration in which the whole population was to participate. The ensuing nocturnal feast and the performances, including chants and dances, served to dissipate the fear and discontent that had been expressed earlier. Consequently, the ethnographers' mood, as indicated in their writings, became more optimistic as they relaxed from the tensions experienced in the days before August 30. With the shamans well out of sight (one of them perhaps interned on the steamer), the ethnographic team could now focus their energies on the survey of the island. The only disturbing factor appears to have been the weather—rainshowers and strong winds forced some members to discontinue their efforts temporarily.

The bartering for artifacts was so successful that Hellwig could barely keep up with his regular meals and still attend to the large number of people who

wanted to participate in the exchange. By September 3, the supply of trade goods was exhausted, bringing the exchange to a halt (Hellwig diary, Sept. 3, 1909; Hellwig, 1927, p. 208), but the results were impressive. Several hundred artifacts had been collected throughout the week, including at least two small canoes, weaving equipment, bowls of all sizes and shapes and, above all, the famous Tobi caskets. Krämer had learned of these caskets before he reached Tobi when, in Palau, he was informed of the arrival of several strange canoes, the contents of which were usually bowl-shaped coffins holding male or female corpses (Hellwig, 1927, p. 201). (Little concerned about the religious meaning behind the content of the canoes, the Palauans unceremoniously dumped the corpses into the sea and put the canoes to good use.) The stay on Tobi allowed Krämer to investigate Tobian burial practices by having the ritual enacted by a living Tobian subject (Eilers, 1936, pp. 100–102).

The ethnographic team did not collect a complete inventory of artifacts. Ritual objects were typically off limits to the researchers. The most prominent example of such an object was Rugeiren's canoe that was suspended from the ceiling in the fare kikak. Mantrüior interdicted Elizabeth Krämer's initial attempts to make even a watercolor painting of the canoe; therefore, she exercised extreme caution in her effort to paint the canoe so as to maintain the delicate balance governing the interactions between the Tobian community and the ethnographers (E. Krämer diary, Aug. 31, 1909). That some objects could not be acquired by the ethnographic team indicates that the Tobians had at least some say in the expedition's collection efforts.

The team's last four days on Tobi were pleasant ones. The amicable ambiance prompted the ethnographers to redress the negative image cast on the island in Holden's narrative (1836). For example, Hellwig described the island as idyllic and peaceful (1927, pp. 206–207). In his diary, Krämer went as far as labeling Tobi the island of love, "not just in the erotic sense, but also in terms of the social interactions . . . [A] people without weapons or war, and diseases. . . . This is surely remarkable" (A. Krämer, Sept. 1, 1909). In contrast (see Fischer, 1981, pp. 60–61), he was forbidden to make any extensive entries in his private journal (as opposed to the diary); though each island he visited warranted at least a one-sentence description, for Tobi his entry was merely "*Liebesinsel*" 'island of love' (A. Krämer, n.d.). The days from September first to the fourth more than made up for the difficulties the ethnographers experienced at the beginning of their stay.

The final task of reestablishing a positive image of Tobi Island became that of the editor of the monograph, Anneliese Eilers. In her chapter on the "character and mental disposition of the natives" (1936, pp. 89–92), she took Holden

to task for his description. In her opinion, mourning the death of some of his comrades, being exposed to daily physical abuses by the Tobians, and experiencing starvation had clouded Holden's judgment on Tobi. Eilers maintained that Holden had arrived on the island in the wake of a natural disaster and was, like the majority of the population, suffering from the consequences. Elsewhere in her monograph she had to account for the zealous behavior of at least one individual who deeply troubled the ethnographic survey of the island—the shaman Mantrüior. Her treatment of this individual is discussed in the next section of this article.

Even the *Peiho's* crew partook in enjoying the final days of the visit. On September 2, in a patriotic gesture, Captain Vahsel celebrated Sedan Day (the major turning point in the Franco-Prussian War) by ordering a small fireworks display from on board the steamer (Hellwig, 1927, p. 207). But at least one person did not share the generally cheerful mood—Paul Hambruch, who had the least desirable task of the team. While the Krämers and Hellwig worked mostly indoors collecting and bartering for ethnographic information and artifacts, Hambruch, facing the elements, was performing a demographic and geographical survey of the entire island; he also had to carry out anthropometric measurements of the population. His tense relationship with the expedition leader exacerbated matters. From Krämer's point of view, Hambruch was more than just the expert on anthropometric measurements; he was the single member of the team officially associated with the Hamburg Ethnological Museum. For Krämer then, Hambruch represented those Hamburg authorities who prevented Krämer, by contract, from collecting for the Stuttgart museum. Hambruch embodied Thilenius's eyes and ears. So it is not surprising that Hambruch sometimes bore the brunt of the expedition leader's dissatisfaction. For example, in a meeting after the stay on Tobi, Krämer reproached Hambruch for what he regarded as the poor results of his anthropometric and demographic survey. Hambruch, deeply hurt, committed his resentment of Krämer's complaints to his diary (Sept. 7, 1909).

When he initially set out to collect anthropometric data on Tobi, Hambruch knew that trouble was brewing. Whenever he tried to arrange his equipment to perform the desired measurements, most of the Islanders fled (Hambruch diary, Aug. 28, 1909). Consequently, he had to wait until the end of the week to complete his task. On September 2, Hambruch enlisted the help of the *Peiho's* assistant engineer Wolff to round up about 20 "volunteers." They were forced to follow him to the steamer where he was able to perform his measurements (Hambruch diary, Sept. 2, 1909). One of Hambruch's volunteers was his interpreter, Sisis, who had spent several years in Yap after Senfft's first trip

to Tobi. His name, possibly a derivation of *Jesus*, indicates that he may have converted to Christianity during his stay in Yap. Sisis only grudgingly accepted the interpreter job, and his relationship with Hambruch deteriorated as the ethnographer's unorthodox methods became apparent to him. On occasion, Hambruch complained bitterly about the "footdragging" of his interpreter. He wrote in his diary that "due to the indolence of the natives, compounded by the slowness of the interpreter, one seems to be going in circles" (Aug. 29, 1909). But Hambruch, feeling the pressure from Krämer, had no choice but to resort to threats and coercion, which may have had their own consequences.

Oral tradition on Tobi relates an incident when Sisis may have been able to get even with Hambruch. Owing to his initial failure to gather anthropometric data, Hambruch tried his luck at a phonograph recording of some Tobian chants. In those days, a phonograph was a crude recording device designed to store an individual's voice on a wax cylinder. The *Peiho* had departed from Germany with two of these instruments, but the tropical heat and the expedition's pace had led to the malfunction of one phonograph (Fischer, 1981, p. 57). The remaining machine was therefore carefully guarded by Hambruch as he unveiled it to a mesmerized Tobian audience. German military marches proved to be particularly entertaining, and Hambruch was soon surrounded by a large crowd. But when he attempted to record some of their chants, the gathering quickly dispersed, leaving the ethnographer and Sisis alone (Hambruch diary, Aug. 29, 1909). At this point, Sisis volunteered to chant into the device. Hambruch's diary does not state what was actually recorded that afternoon, but a local oral tradition may provide some clues. This tradition speaks of Kuskus (Sisis?), a shaman, who was forced by the ethnographers to chant into the phonograph. It is said that Kuskus chanted a curse, thereby jamming the only recording device (Peter Black, personal communication, June 1995). The story of Kuskus's chant, like the Tobian ability to retain some of their most sacred artifacts, is remembered because of Kuskus's ability to sidestep the ethnographers' demands.

The encounter between the Tobi Islanders and the German research team was thus marked by both accommodation and resistance. On the whole, the division between sacred (shamans) authority and secular (chiefs) authority greatly influenced the conduct and outcome of the ethnographic survey of the island. It was the task of Anneliese Eilers, the editor of the Tobi monograph (1936), to provide an ethnographic account of the island in which the German colonial objectives, the museological considerations, and the Tobian political manifestations were to be reconciled.

FROM COLLECTION TO TEXT: NEGOTIATING THE TOBI MONOGRAPH

Approximately 8,000 artifacts were taken to Hamburg at the expedition's conclusion, several hundred of which came from Tobi. Beyond accomplishing Thilenius's goal of enriching the Hamburg Ethnological Museum with Oceanic artifacts, the main accomplishment was the crafting of a different kind of artifact—the ethnographic monograph. Thilenius (1927b, pp. 38–39) envisioned that expedition members would compile the collected information into a comprehensive monographic form. This project was mostly successful: 30 volumes (25 on Micronesia) were completed. The emergence of these volumes was a complex process that deserves further consideration.

March 24, 1911, marked the official end of the expedition. A large festivity, held in Hamburg and sponsored by the Hamburg Scientific Foundation, honored the participants, but once the celebrations were over, the ethnographic team members were to turn to working on their respective monographs. At first, the rate of publication seemed promising—the first volume, devoted to the Sepik River area of New Guinea, appeared in 1913. A second volume, dealing with the island of Nauru and edited by Paul Hambruch, appeared in 1914, but then the outbreak of the First World War slowed things considerably. During the war, the Pohnpei, Yap, and Palau volumes were issued, but the end of the war proved to be fatal to the scientific foundation's endowment. The rampant inflation after the war greatly diminished the financial resources of the foundation, which was now unable to cover the publication costs for all of the volumes. The editors were forced to change their priorities (Reche, 1954). The high islands of the Caroline Island chain received publishing priority over the low-lying atolls, and so the planned volume on Tobi did not materialize. Thilenius (1927b, p. 39) had charged Paul Hambruch with the editorial task of the Tobi volume, but Hambruch's energies were concentrated on the execution of, first, the Nauru volume and then the Kosrae and Pohnpei monographs. When Hambruch died in 1933, the Tobi volume was still in the planning stages and his job passed to Anneliese Eilers who, like other second-generation ethnologists working on the Thilenius expedition reports (e.g., Hans Damm and Hans Nevermann), had never visited the area.

Eilers's monograph was published 1936; however, to reduce costs the ethnographic treatment of Tobi had to share a volume with a monograph on the island of Ngulu. By and large, the volume followed the standard topical organization developed in the other volumes. A large first part was devoted to material on European contact and exploration of Tobi, followed by a descriptive

section on the island's geographic and demographic setting. A second, largely ethnographic part was divided into discussions on spiritual matters and material culture, which covered Tobi's society and the collected artifacts.

The writing of the Tobi monograph pushed Eilers's editorial abilities to the limits, which is due partially to the events following the ethnographers' departure from Tobi. The tensions between the expedition's scientific aims (Tobi as an ethnographic "prize") and German administrative aims (Tobi as a demographic "prize") are best explored through the analytical framework provided in Nicholas Thomas's *Colonialism's Culture* (1994). In this work Thomas advocated an understanding of colonialism not as a monolithic affair, but as a series of different, sometimes conflicting projects.

Six months after the *Peiho's* departure from Tobi, a Dr. Buse arrived on the steamer *Delphin*. His call on the island was part of a general administrative inspection tour to investigate the health conditions in the southwest islands of Palau (Buse, 1910). The interest in the well-being of the inhabitants arose after the opening of the phosphate mines on Angaur in 1909, which was a large economic undertaking that demanded a thorough exploration of the Carolinian human resources by the colonial administration (Firth, 1978). As mentioned earlier, the large population size on Tobi seemed promising in terms of future employment, but Dr. Buse's inquiries into this matter were severely disappointed. The familiar large number of canoes that had greeted the occasional visiting ship in the past failed to materialize and, as Buse stepped ashore, he was met by only a few Tobians. Buse was informed that a respiratory disease (presumably influenza) had carried away no fewer than 200 inhabitants. His informants claimed that the disease had been introduced by the *Peiho's* passengers, which confronted Buse with a dilemma. His first impulse was to dismiss the account as "traditional South Sea lore" (Buse, p. 937). After all, he argued, Tobians could easily blame outsiders for their misfortune, thereby distracting attention from their own possible involvement. On the other hand, Buse was willing to concede that foreign contact may have played a pivotal role in introducing the disease.

Dr. Buse's dilemma had larger implications for the German colonial administration. Reports of this nature raised serious questions about the postulated humanitarian principles of colonial rule, that is, the protection of the indigenous people. Because metropolitan medical knowledge about contagion was far from perfect, indigenous accounts about the introduction and spread of infectious diseases were potentially dangerous issues for the administration. Placed in the right context, however, such accounts provided useful arguments for further consolidation and expansion of colonial rule. For example, 3 years

before Buse's arrival at Tobi, the government surgeon stationed in Yap, Dr. Born, forwarded an extensive medical report about the Palauan population to the colonial office in Berlin. One passage in this report is particularly telling:

The most prominent Japanese influence [on Palau] is probably the introduction of venereal diseases. According to widespread beliefs among the Palauan population, it was the arrival of the Japanese which first introduced syphilis to the islands. The people claim that prior to the Japanese arrival, noseless individuals⁷ were a rare occurrence. My own experiences seem to support the above statement because my periodic health inspections of Japanese ships often revealed several individuals with syphilis in a highly contagious stage. (1907, pp. 2-3)

Born's report also drew attention to an ominous Japanese presence in the islands of Palau. Only three German nationals were living there at that time, a government official, a missionary, and a doctor; in contrast, there were 30 Japanese residents, who controlled the majority of the shipping and trade. Born added that Japanese cultural influence was beginning to have a corrupting effect on Palauan songs and dances (1907, p. 2). The increasing number of Japanese nationals in Palau promoted a competitive economic atmosphere in the Caroline Islands, an atmosphere in which the German companies were at a complete disadvantage (Peattie, 1988, pp. 24-26; Purcell, 1972). Born's findings, in conjunction with indigenous accounts about the introduction of the disease, would have justified tighter control over Japanese business ventures in this German colonial outpost. On the other hand, Buse's experiences on Tobi could have deflected the allegations against those foreign elements who threatened to monopolize the entire trade in the Western Carolines.

Born's report represented a dilemma for Eilers, but the nature of her predicament was much different from the problem posed by that of the Japanese economic and cultural hegemony, which the German administration was facing during the first decade of this century. By the early 1930s, the dream of a German colonial empire had all but expired, but German anthropologists were still editing the large number of reports collected before September 1914. At stake for Eilers was the ironic interplay between the salvaging of a people's cultural heritage and their physical extermination by a disease introduced by the Hamburg expedition. While she did not deny that the disease was introduced by the *Peiho*, she maintained that the culprits were to be found among the Tobians, not the ethnographers. According to Eilers, the guilty parties were Sisis and his wife, both of whom had been obviously ill. Guilty also was Krämer's main interpreter, Pita, who was so ill at times that the expedition leader's work

was jeopardized. The last account available to Eilers, an obscure census published by the British government (based on Japanese reports to the League of Nations), listed Tobi's population as fewer than 200 individuals. Although she abstained from speculating about the cause of the drastic population decline between 1910 and 1930, Eilers did assert that the decline represented a "sad testimony" (1936, pp. 86–87) to the Japanese administration. Once again, the Japanese served as a readily available target for deflecting any German responsibility for the mass death or exodus of the Tobian population.

It may well be that the expedition leader introduced the disease himself. Shortly after his arrival, Krämer confided to his diary that he was overcome by a preexisting febrile infection. To fight its effects, he took one gram of quinine every morning and evening (A. Krämer diary entries for, Aug. 30, 1909; Aug. 31, 1909). How the respiratory disease came to Tobi will remain a matter for speculation, but because both Krämer and his interpreter went all over the island, if either, or both, were infected, they could easily have transmitted the disease to the remotest corners of Tobi.

Other issues also escaped Eilers's skilled editorial attention, in part because of the sources available to her. The monograph makes no mention of the employment of Tobians in the Angaur phosphate mines; however, the large-scale relocation of the population is well remembered in oral traditions on Tobi (Black, 1978, p. 313). This relocation was associated with further epidemics, as noted by the station official (*Stationsleiter*) Winkler, whose report about his trip to Tobi in December of 1913 indicated that the dying and the relocation of the Tobian population continued well after the *Peiho* left the island. The purpose of his journey to Tobi was to recruit able-bodied Tobians for the *Deutsche Südsee-Phosphat Gesellschaft* (German South Sea Phosphate Company) and to repatriate those individuals whose employment contracts had expired. Upon his arrival on December 10, Winkler was informed by the local chief (Makiroa?) that of a total of 700 individuals, 388 inhabitants (166 men, 120 women, 102 children) had succumbed to a recent outbreak of dysentery. All Winkler could do was to leave some supplies to ease the suffering of those already infected and try to avert further spread of the disease (Winkler, 1914, p. 68).

The expedition's infectious disease legacy provided an unintended, but no less macabre, momentary solution to a dispute between the German phosphate company manager and the district officer, Georg Fritz. Shortly after the phosphate mines opened in Angaur, Fritz attempted to control the mining company's excessive recruiting efforts, but pressures exerted by the Colonial Office in Berlin forced him to cooperate with the company (Firth, 1978, pp. 45–46). In the midst of this, the immediate legacy of the expedition to Tobi contributed to

freeing the demographic resources on this island. Specifically, Dr. Buse's report (1910) on the devastation caused by the disease the *Peiho* introduced allowed the ever-increasing need for Carolinian workers in the phosphate mines to be disguised as a legitimate humanitarian salvage action. Thus, the population declined further as returning Tobians or their German recruiters brought additional diseases to the island. By 1914, the last year of the German administration in Micronesia, Tobi's population had declined to a little over 300 individuals, close to the figures provided by the Japanese government. This does not mean that the Japanese authorities discontinued the exodus from the island; they followed the example established by the German phosphate consortium in the first decade of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

The dramatic transformation of Tobi's demographics had far-reaching social implications. The traditional religion could not withstand the demographic collapse that followed the Hamburg expedition's visit in 1909, and the Islanders jettisoned their familiar rituals and practitioners. Setting ablaze the spirit houses and Rugeiren's sacred canoe, the Tobians embarked on a trouble-ridden period of secularization in the late 1920s. Soon afterward, the arrival of a Spanish Jesuit led to the conversion to Roman Catholicism of the entire population (Black, 1994, pp. 12-17).

The demographic collapse and the cultural transformation of Tobi gave legitimacy to the expedition's initial and explicit salvage purpose, which was again expressed in Eilers's monograph. The Japanese reports available to Eilers must have persuaded her to believe that her monograph was indeed the last vestige of a dying society (compare, however, the more optimistic view of Black, 1994). In her opinion, only one individual, Mantrüior, benefitted from the demographic crisis. The shaman who had bedeviled the members of the expedition, she wrote, "must have been triumphant, as the epidemic introduced by the *Peiho* justified his gloomy predictions" (1936, p. 106). Implying that the doom of an entire island contributed to the enjoyment of a single individual, Eilers cynically dismissed Mantrüior's attempts to uphold the old order. Her efforts to maneuver through the potentially damaging issues concerning the survey of Tobi, such as museological competition, the use of force by the expedition's participants and, last but not least, the demographic collapse, induced Ernst Sarfert, one of the original expedition members, to praise Eilers for her monograph:

The visit to Tobi by the expedition marked the beginning of the study of numerous tiny coral clusters composing the sheer endless Caroline group. It was the task of this expedition to survey the entire island chain over the next months. . . .

It took all of her [Dr. Eilers's] love and devotion to craft the rather neglected material, collected from these unknown and simple islets, into likewise modest building blocks, which, I am sure, will eventually find their proper place in a general cultural history of mankind. Therefore, I have to thank her with all my heart for the gargantuan effort that went into this work. Surely, her effort will be recognized, as it contributes no end to Germany's colonial and scientific fame. (Sarfert, 1935, p. i)

Although Sarfert may have written these words out of kindness to Eilers, his allusion to the converging colonial and ethnographic aims capture the flavor of the events that followed the Hamburg expedition to Tobi. The Thilenius project, born out of a scientific interest in Pacific cultures and complicated by museological competition, finally culminated in several monographs. One of these (Eilers, 1936), written long after the expedition took place by one who had never visited Tobi, presented special challenges to the writer-editor. This article has addressed the historical context that Anneliese Eilers needed to digest in the writing process that informed her work.

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Notes

1. Fischer (1981, in chapter 2) has a good overview of Thilenius's scientific aims, and some of the main points of that chapter are summarized in this article.
2. Approximately US\$147,000 at the time (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, p. 827).
3. Approximately US\$245,000 at the time (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, p. 827).
4. The exchange between the Berlin museum officials and the Colonial Department is available in the file (#2372) reserved for the Hamburg expedition in the Potsdam *Bundesarchiv*.
5. Recently, the people referred to as Tobians in this article have renamed their island Hatohobei in an effort to organize themselves within the constitutional arrangements of the Republic of Palau. The common practice among Tobians is to

retain the earlier form of Tobi when speaking or writing in English and to use the new term when using the local language. Following Black's practice (1994, p. 23), I employ that usage here.

6. Eilers, adhering to the usage of the ethnographers, called them priests (*Priester*). A more appropriate designation of these religious specialists would probably be shaman or *uatoutou* (Peter Black, personal communication, July 1995). Black (1994, p. 24, n. 7) argued that the main authority, both in political and religious matters, was the high chief. The shamans, according to Black, had only limited functions.

7. Lesions of the nose are not necessarily diagnostic markers of syphilis. Although treponemal diseases, including syphilis and yaws, can affect the rhinomaxillary area, other common pathological conditions (such as neoplasms, Hansen's disease, leishmaniasis, sarcoidosis, and tuberculosis) can affect the nasal area (Donald Ortner, personal communication to Gary Heathcote, May 16, 1996).

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