

CAUGHT BETWEEN “MUNDANE WEST AND MEDIEVAL ORIENT”: ON THE ORIGINS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE BALKAN COLLECTION IN THE MUSEUM EUROPÄISCHER KULTUREN IN BERLIN

Matthias Thaden

(Museum Europäischer Kulturen - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Abstract: From 1935 to 1939, Gustav Adolf Küppers embarked on ethnographic collecting trips throughout the Balkans, aiming to preserve what he deemed threatened “native culture”. His acquisitions, now housed in the Museum of European Cultures (Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, MEK), reflect both the museum’s interest and ethnography’s interest in regions well within Europe. While Küppers’s trips were self-initiated, questions arise about the ideological and political influences behind his collecting practices. Despite lacking colonial contexts in a constitutional sense, scrutiny of the collection’s provenance and its representation of the region is crucial. Thus, the text aims to both enhance and contextualize our knowledge about Küppers’s motivations, the museum’s objectives, and the ideological currents at play.

Keywords: *Balkans, Southeastern Europe, Serbia, Bulgaria, Anthropology, Volkskunde, Völkerkunde, National Socialism, Balkanism*

1 Introduction

Starting in 1935 and up until 1939, Gustav Adolf Küppers (1894–1978) embarked on as many as five ethnographic collecting trips through the present-day Balkan states. Only a planned visit to Greece and Albania as part of the last trip did not materialize, due to the outbreak of WWII, which ended the journey

prematurely. Küppers initially travelled with the photographer Hannes Rosenberg, and from the second trip onwards with his daughter and son. They did so by car with each journey lasting several months. Küppers's client, the „Eurasia“ department at the Berlin Museum of Ethnology (Museum für Völkerkunde), was primarily interested in acquiring artefacts from European regions „that had remained largely untouched by modern developments“ (Krüger 2011).

In 1999, the Eurasia department, now named „Europe“, merged with the East and West Berlin folklore museums to form the new Museum of European Cultures (Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, MEK). To this day, the artefacts and photographs that Küppers acquired in the 1930s make up the largest part of today's museum collection on Southeastern Europe (Tietmeyer/Vanja 2013, 401–402).¹ With a total of around 3,600 artefacts and almost 2,000 photographs, they were a great enrichment for the museum's Eurasian department, which was being established at the time. Starting in 1934, the museum expanded its focus, which had been confined to extra-European areas, and began to also include regions within and on the borders of Europe. From the very beginning, it was precisely the areas that were deemed to be the “fringes” of the continent that caught the attention of the museum actors: Already in the late 19th century, collectors, traders, or mere “explorers” (e.g., Paul Traeger, Julius Konietzko, and Rickmer Rickmers) sold or donated large amounts of cultural and historical artefacts to the Ethnological Museum. Places such as Sardinia, Northern Scandinavia, and the Aran Islands were very much in demand and the museum was keen to obtain objects from there. This was even more the case for the Eastern and Southeastern parts of the continent.

However, the museum faced a severe shortage of foreign currency, which meant that its director, the Africanist Hermann Baumann, did not collect systematically but rather acquired the first collections by exchanging objects with other museums and through the initiative of individual collectors (Nixdorff 1973; 1982). Given this situation, Küppers was received with open arms when he approached the museum to go on a research trip to Southeastern Europe. He planned to „collect everything of native culture [*bodenständiger Kultur*] that remains in the Balkans and is threatened by destruction“, as he wrote in a request for support for a later trip to the Reich Chancellery in February 1939

¹ A research project is currently in progress that is taking the first steps towards the selective documentation and cataloguing of the object inventory and the historical context of the collection.

(Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, Bd. 5). Such a claim to preserve „native culture“ was an almost classic feature of contemporary „salvage ethnography“, on which a great deal of research is now available (Schneider 2017, 131).

However, such museum collections from Southeastern and other parts of Europe have hardly been the subject of provenance and collection research. At the intersection of German *Volkskunde* (folklore studies; mostly concerned with the German-speaking populations) and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology that dealt with the people outside of Europe, particularly overseas), this may be caused by the fact that the acquisition of objects from Southeastern Europe did not take place in a colonial setting. Of course – and as we shall see – this is not to say that no power relations were at play in the acquisition of museum objects. In this respect, the decolonization of museum collections from, as well as within, Eastern and Southeastern Europe must also address “internal colonialisms”. This is particularly true for the imperial environments of the 19th century, in which most of the collections were established (Lehrer/Wawrzyniak 2023). Politically and legally, however, Balkan states throughout the 20th century were not subject to colonial rule. Furthermore, the objects concerned here had already undergone a “stage of rejection/disposal before arriving in the museum” (Groschwitz 2018, 264). Most were everyday objects that seemingly held no symbolical significance or had been abandoned by their previous owners. In any case, no restitution requests, past or present, are known.

That being said, does this mean that the matter is settled and that the Küppers collection can be deemed entirely unobjectionable? If „provenance research as collection research [is guided by] the question of how museums direct the view of the world at a certain point of time“ (Thiemeyer 2018, 28, quoted by Heck 2021, 567), then a closer look is necessary: What image of a region is manifested in a museum collection, and what ideological currents and political concerns influenced this way of imagining space and culture? To answer these questions, it is crucial to examine the biographical and institutional contexts of the collection. Did Küppers actively pursue a fascist ideology during his travels, as cited as the main reason for his expropriation in the early GDR (Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Protocol No. 20)? And, finally, is this actually relevant to the evaluation of the collection?

2 Gustav-Adolf Küppers and his perspective on the Balkans

Born in Krefeld in 1894, Gustav-Adolf Küppers came into contact with the youth and life reform movement at an early age, rising to become a leading member of the local „Wandervogel“ (Küppers 2011, 19–22). His patron, the architect and ardent anti-Semite Karl Buschhüter, was a formative influence on him. After the First World War, which Küppers, severely wounded and with an amputated leg, only just survived, he „completely“ joined Buschhüter’s circle around the Krefeld „Dürerheim“, as he wrote to Werner Kindt in 1965, who excelled in uniting the Bündische Jugend and Hitler Youth in the 1930s (Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, N 14, No. 189). The „Dürerheim“ not only experimented with radical forms of alternative lifestyles. Küpper’s later affinity for nationalist and völkisch ideas can likely be attributed to this influence within the German “Lebensreform”-movement.²

Küpper’s later career, imbued with anti-urban and anti-modernist ideas and fully committed to the settlement movement, was shaped by this pre-influence (Wedemeyer 2000; Jantzen 1974). Together with his brother Oscar, Küppers cleared and settled a piece of land in the Lueneburg Heath, which they called, at first rather ironically, the “Sonnenberg”. Back then, Küppers started to use “Sonnenberg” as an unofficial addition to his name. While the area would gain minor recognition as a regional centre of the *Lebensreform* in northern Germany, Küppers also published and reflected on settlement practices. Being pushed to his physical limits rather early, he expressed his thoughts on this matter in various texts, letters, and publications, and also supported it ideologically. „Eigen Land“ (Own Land) and „Vom Akademiker zum Siedler“ (From Academic to Settler) were the first programmatic titles to appear after the war (Küppers 1918; 1924). Küppers’s texts and publications contained figures of argumentation from the classical repertoire of the *völkisch* right. For instance, in a request for support to the Celle district office in February 1925, Küppers wrote that a „spiritual renewal“ could only take place „by rooting the intelligentsia in the soil“. To support his argument, Küppers referred to the writings of the *völkisch* theorist Andreas Thomsen. In his writings, Thomsen emphasized

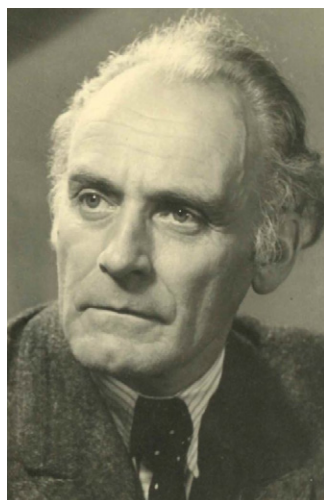
² This refers to a variety of social reformist movements in Germany from the mid-19th century onwards. They included alternative forms of housing, education, nutrition, sexuality, and other aspects of everyday life and coexistence. What they had in common was a rejection of industrialization and urbanization and a criticism of the associated alienation from the human “state of nature”. For a lucid introduction, cf. Wedemeyer-Kolwe 2017.



Gustav-Adolf Küppers and his wife Eva Küppers as settlers, 1918/1919, Archiv der Jugendbewegung Burg Ludwigstein, P 1, Nr. 1906.

the need for new “ethnic sprouts” [*Volk-skeime*] to combat the decline of European culture allegedly caused by “Slavdom” [*Slawentum*] (Kreisarchiv Celle). Unsurprisingly, Küpper wrote strongly German nationalist poetry during this period, even offering one of his first books to the race theorist Karl Ludwig Schemann, to whom he sent a „German greeting“ which was to become obligatory only years later in Nazi Germany (Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, P 1, Nr. 1906; Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg, Nachlass Schemann).

In the late 1920s, Küppers decided to opt for an academic career after his publications and other plans, such as founding a boarding school in the spirit of the



Gustav-Adolf Küppers, 1950, Archiv der Jugendbewegung Burg Ludwigstein, P 1, Nr. 1906.

Lebensreform, failed to bring the desired success (Küppers 2011, 39–40). He spent the following years studying in Berlin while commuting back and forth between the university, the “Sonnenberg”, and Werder, where he resided with his second wife. Here, Küppers remained committed to the idea of settlement. He founded the Settlers’ Association of the Unemployed and completed his studies in 1933 with a dissertation that also dealt with the subject of settlement (Küppers 1933). However, he did not achieve his goal of habilitation, as his reviewers harshly criticized his “activism” and his “pipe dreams” [*Fantastereien*], thus refusing to support the academic plans of the “highly sensitive eccentric” (Archiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Promotionsakte G. A. Küppers).

Apparently, membership of the NSDAP was never an option for Küppers, although according to his own memories, he “neither fully affirmed nor condemned the Nazi accession to power” (Küppers 1959, 183). After completing his dissertation, he worked as a freelance photojournalist and was also a member of the Reichsverband der deutschen Presse (Reich Association of the German Press), but still repeatedly ran into financial difficulties. Apparently, a radio programme on ethnological collecting in Africa heavily inspired him and became a major turning point for him and his future projects: During a research trip from the Balkans to the Baltic, he wanted to explore the supposedly “uncharted territories” of Europe. This plan, though limited to Southeastern Europe, he submitted to various Berlin institutions (Küppers 1970, 113). While he offered to make dactyloscopic recordings of the local population for the “Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics” (KWI-A), he proposed collecting regional songs and material culture for the Berlin Phonogrammarchiv and the Museum für Völkerkunde. All three institutions accepted his offer. In the following years, each of their collections benefited from Küpper’s travels (Ivkov 2013; Ziegler 2011). In April 1935, Küppers assured the museum that the Ministry of Propaganda supported his project and served as a financier and guarantor of his credibility (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, Bd. 1).

With his commitment to the KWI-A, in which he assisted eugenicist Wolfgang Abel by taking standardized pictures and fingerprints, Küppers became deeply involved in the ideology of National Socialism and its project of measuring and categorizing the European population according to racist categories (Küppers 1959, 210). Unfortunately, the relevant archive material did not survive the war. However, it can be assumed that Küppers’s comments in later texts

about „human races“ in the region and their supposed characteristics were primarily based on this activity. His travelling plans, however, were also attractive to the Museum of Ethnology and were certainly compatible with contemporary discourses and ethnographic trends. In Vienna, for instance, the Folklore Museum, under its director Arthur Haberlandt, had amassed a considerable collection from Southeastern Europe (Schmidt 1960, 66–69). This collection served as a kind of disciplinary and geographical bridge towards a „folklore as ethnology of the European cultural nations“ [*Volksunde als Völkerkunde der europäischen Kulturnationen*], as Haberlandt himself put it (Haberlandt 1934, 43). For Hermann Baumann, who as the head of the newly founded „Eurasia“ department in Berlin had demonstrably and thoroughly studied the objects from Vienna,³ Küppers’s initiative presented an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the successful Viennese model. Collecting non-German ethnographic artefacts from regions of the „lower and middle Danube countries“, as Küppers’s statement of commitment put it, was entirely in line with the study of the „margins of Europe“ in order to discover and compare the „retreats, remnants, and rests“ of cultures and people long vanished (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Bd. 3). Consequently, Baumann frequently campaigned for Küpper’s funding through funds from the Baessler Foundation. After Küpper’s second trip in 1936, Baumann wrote to the general director of the museums that he had „collected surprisingly well“, so that the museum now possessed an „excellent Hutsul, Gagauz, Ruthenian, and Romanian collection for relatively little money“ (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Vol. 3).

This study of the „remnants of past cultural layers“ is a topic extensively researched in German folklore studies (Bendix 1997). Notably, this perspective was also central to Küppers and his work as a collector in the Balkans. Not least, the idea of the region as a kind of „refuge“ played an important role: in one of his articles, Küppers was fascinated by the „encapsulated, primitive basis of life in almost original form“ that he had encountered here and that, at the same time, was increasingly losing ground and had to be preserved by the museum (Küppers 1939, 36). While we are dealing here with a classic argumentation figure of so-called „salvage ethnography“, it was always the supposedly „genuine“ and „authentic“ that inspired him and his travel companions in Southeastern Europe. Küpper’s daughter and traveling partner Heimtraut

³ This is evident from Baumann’s fragmentary box of notes preserved at the MEK.

noted in her diary that the local market in Kriva Palanka in Macedonia was „really filled with genuine folklore and customs“, and yet here too „the plague of rubber planks“ was spreading, which were „sold by the hundreds“ at the market, making „one’s heart ache“ (Heimtraut Küppers’s diary, in the collection of the Museum of European Cultures). For Küppers, this culture-destroying potential of modernity was also evident in the cityscapes of the region. With a mixture of horror and admiration, he compared the building activities in Belgrade to a „fever attack“. The city, in his view, was caught between the „sophisticated West and an Orient stuck in the Middle Ages“. In today’s North Macedonia, on the other hand, he imagined himself to be completely in the „land of illiterates“, where life was good „even without Adam Riese, without syntax, algebra, and geometry“ (Küppers 1937, 24).

These remarks – made without any linguistic or in-depth local knowledge, of course – are exemplary of the classical topoi of the Balkans as a mixture of Orient and Occident and the notions of primitiveness and civilization inscribed in these categories (Todorova 2009; Warneken 2006, 26–30) The folklorist Gottfried Korff has pointed out that it was ultimately the anti-modern reform movements that identified „folk art as the antithesis of modernization per se“ and saw in it the „traits of the elementary and constants of the primary and natural, the simple and original“. He particularly emphasized the „Dürerbund“, which had such a lasting influence on Küppers (Korff 1994, 380). His enthusiasm for the Balkans, where this originality had supposedly been so successfully preserved, is therefore unsurprising. Accordingly, Küppers – like Baumann, his ethnographic mentor from the museum – was keen to depict „rural life“ with the greatest possible „authenticity“. Trade, migration, urbanization, mechanization, and the associated transformation processes – all were of no interest to them. Instead, the material culture of the Balkan Peninsula that he collected was meant to show an idealized pre-industrial culture. And so Küppers endeavoured to record traditional crafts and rural tools, collected what he considered to be exotic festivities and customs, made assumptions about their pre-Christian origins, and followed in the footsteps of pastoral cultures and their supposedly characteristic products.

3 Imperial and national socialist plans for the region and their ramifications with the Küppers collection

This quest for authenticity always implied a search for an ethnically unambiguous original state, which – with a bit of collector’s luck and by looking back far enough in history – could be identified through material culture. Küppers was by no means alone with this essentializing notion: the glorification of the region as a kind of „living folklore museum“ is a classic component of a discourse that Maria Todorova termed „Balkanist“, which portrays the region as an essentially backward, semi-civilized version of Europe. With the help of Küpper’s information on the transport lists, the museum staff also immediately began to assign objects and photos to individual ethnic groups, thereby quickly blurring geographical and ethnic attributions. According to ethnologist Klaus Roth, such a de-historicized concept of culture was also the norm in Southeast Europe for a long time (Roth 1992).

This construction of the Balkans as a periphery and as the European „Other“ has been discussed in detail and developed further in recent years with reference to postcolonial theories (Satjukow/Nießer 2022). In summary, this discussion does not focus on the actual coloniality of the region, which could likely only be claimed for the Habsburg regime in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, it relates to an essentializing dichotomy of centre and periphery that is characteristic of colonial discourse (Chakrabarty 2000). The Balkans often functioned as „Europe’s periphery, its close but still discursively and politically subordinated Other“ (Kołodziejczyk/Huigen 2023, 5).

The Küppers Collection clearly demonstrates that a certain exoticism played an important role in the selection of objects. As previously noted, this aligns with typical elements of „Balkanist“ discourse. However, a look at Küpper’s past and his involvement in nationalist and German *völkisch* networks in particular calls for greater consideration to be given to the time-specific ideologemes of his collecting that also influenced the „valuation“ of the supposedly backward Balkans. For Todorova, this „Balkan“ has always been inscribed with the role of the „middle-ground“ between barbarism and civilization, on which progress only ever arrives halfway (Todorova 2009, 129–130). However, Küppers’s ethnological perspective was more complex; he firmly believed that certain national characteristics had been better preserved in the multiethnic Balkans than elsewhere. In line with the ethnography of his time, Küppers saw the region as a „field of ruins and fragments of countless overlapping cultures“. It was also

Kaufnr. Rt.	Dr. ver. tar. Rt.	Se. st. Rt.	Gegenstand	Dr. ver. tar. Rt.	Kaufnr. Rt.	Dr. ver. tar. Rt.	Se. st. Rt.	Gegenstand	Dr. ver. tar. Rt.
4481	71 8/33	1888	Schnebelkanne, Ton mit Kissen gezeichnet, braun glasiert. Soyaga, Oberdase <u>Dr. Küppers</u>	282,33 Dr. Küppers Kauf	F 4502	71 8/33	1909	Plastik, Ton altmod. Schüssel Soyaga, Oberdase <u>Dr. Küppers</u>	162,50 Dr. Küppers Kauf
4482		1892	„Stygl.“ rot bemalt.		φ		1912	gelblich Schafforn, Ton braun (Töpfe stellen)	
4483		1890	Flasche, Ton mit violetter, grün glasiert.		φ		1913	Kugelflasche, Ton, von Kankel	
4484		1891	„Stygl.“ braun bemalt.		φ		1914	Flasche, Ton, sechs Henkel (getrockn.)	
4485		1901	Vase, Ton, glasiert braun bemalt.		φ		1915	Krug, Ton, gelb glasiert, 1870 mit angelegtem Besamensamen braun bemalt.	
4486		1902	„Stygl.“		φ		1923	Vase, Ton braun bemalt.	
4487		1903	„Stygl.“		φ		1925	Krug, Ton, dunkel glasiert „Tafel dunkelbraun“	
4488		1905	„Stygl.“		φ		1926	Krug, Ton, braun glasiert mit zwei Henkeln	
4489		1901	„Stygl.“ schwarz, braun bemalt, glasiert.		φ		1928	Schneppflasche, Ton braun glasiert, schmal	
4500		1906	Schirmchen, Ton dunkel glasiert.		φ		1907	Schneppbecher, Ton braun glasiert.	
4501		1908	flache Schale, braun bemalt.		φ		1927	„Stygl.“	

Inventory-list, Küppers collection, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

the museum’s interest to „salvage“ and document these fragments (Küppers 1939, 36). In a letter to Küppers following his first trip, the head of the department, Baumann, sharply distinguished the „valuable“ objects from the „modern wooden objects“, ceramic „bazaar wares“, and generally the „export kitsch“ that, according to him, was becoming increasingly common in the region (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, vol. 5).

This search for the original was in line with contemporary doctrine: As the Berlin museum director, Adolf Bastian had already made collections on European peripheries for this very reason. And this was also an unquestioned consensus for folklore in Southeastern Europe for a long time (Groschwitz 2015; Nixdorff 1973; Vojnović-Traživuk 2001). These perspectives were nothing special for the museum collections of their time either: for them, the focus was not on depicting contemporary people in their „real“ cultural and economic surroundings and life circumstances but on presenting the supposedly „original“



Bread stamp from the Burgas area in Eastern-Bulgaria, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Matthias Thaden

aspects that were meant to be preserved (Faber/Keckeis 2023, 294-295; Buchczyk 2023, 79–81; Jöhler 2005). In Küppers’s case, however, this was combined with a thoroughly *völkisch* view of his environment, the people, and their history. This was reflected not only in his series of pictures, in which he depicted people in a standardized way and as nameless representatives of their „ethnic group“, but also in his collecting.

For instance, Küpper’s striking interest in shaped bread and the corresponding material may seem harmless at first glance. In fact, the ornamentation he was interested in was a classic approach to „holistic“ cultural comparisons (Kauffmann 2020, 13–17). Küppers picked up on this and looked for deeper indications of cultural origins in the ornamental bread. In fact, he saw them as a direct link to the Migration Period. The ethnic implications of Küppers’s collecting of such bread, the associated bread stamps, and other ornamented artifacts can only be understood by reading his texts. In these, he

directly used his collecting activities and the results of his research in this area to further his *völkisch* political aims and positions. Based on his ornamental studies, he claimed to have been able to prove that the „cultural legacy and the blood heritage of the Germanic tribes are more significant than we had previously realized“ (Küppers 1942). According to Küppers, the carvings and ornamentation of the Šokci (sg. Šokac, an ethnic group in modern-day Northern Serbia) clearly revealed the considerable German influence in the region, which led him to speculate on the racial origins of this group (Küppers 1938).

He frequently drew parallels between Germany and Southeastern Europe in terms of techniques and forms. For example, the snake ornamentation in the timber framing of Lower Saxony and in various regions of the Balkans allegedly pointed to the formative example of the Lombards and thus to Germanic influences (Küppers 1940). He drew a line from corn granaries and burial mounds in Dobruja to similar objects and sites in the Lüneburg Heath (Küppers 1959, 205). His correspondence also indicates the search for „Nordic racial splinters“ and Germanic heritage in the region on the basis of ornamentation, as he formulated in the letter to Hitler already cited (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, Bd. 5). Just before the end of the war – in December 1944 – he asked Director General Kümmel to allow him to continue his studies in the future (Zentralarchiv der Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, I/MV 1361). And even after the war, when Küppers did not succeed in convincing the new head of the department, Werner Stief, to support further trips, he remained true to the topic and his scientific premises (Stief to Küppers, May 4, 1954, unrecorded files in the archive of the Ethnological Museum Berlin): He firmly believed that the movements of „peoples“ over the centuries could be traced by means of certain types of ornament, in which he accordingly saw „the hieroglyphics of folk art“ (Küppers 1959, 89). As already indicated, such ideas fitted closely with approaches claiming to understand “cultures as a whole” and to come to comparative conclusions by studying, among other things, forms and ornaments (Hahn 2014, 270). Küppers, however, continued to use this methodology by comparing material evidence and ornamentation in a somewhat arbitrary manner (Ulbert 1975/76).

The decisive issue here is not the scientific validity of Küpper’s assertions. Instead, what is important is that such convictions gave Küpper’s interest in the region a certain direction and thus also shaped the museum and its current collection. For all his fascination with the peculiarities of the inhabitants and their supposed „autochthony“, he was imbued with ideas of a „natural“ leadership

role for the Germans in Southeastern Europe. This attitude clearly brought him close to contemporary visions of „Central Europe“ [Mitteleuropa]. These were not only about the economic penetration of the area in the sense of an economic „supplementary area“ as envisioned by Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht in his „New Plan“. In addition to the region's – indeed extreme – economic dependence on Germany (Motta 2021; Vienna 2007; Ritschl 2001), a discourse that dismissed the newly founded states on the Balkan Peninsula as fragile and ultimately „unnatural“ entities was equally powerful. After the Ottomans and Habsburgs left, many actors regarded them as a legitimate „colonization area at our gates“, which historian Carola Sachse has accordingly described as an „informal empire“ (Sachse 2010, 17–18; Thörner 2008).

The conviction that Germany was historically predestined for its domination was widely shared in German intellectual circles. Ethnic actors and think tanks in particular linked the ideas to National Socialist imperial plans (Mazower 2011). In institutions dedicated to racial and ethnic policy, they fantasized about a „widespread cultural penetration“ of the Balkans and put forward theories about the racial composition of its inhabitants in corresponding journals and publications (Kirk 2010, 202). Gustav-Adolf Küppers participated directly in these debates with essays in which he gave these ideas a museum-oriented political spin. In his letter to Hitler, which has already been quoted several times, he pointed out that it was up to the Germans to preserve traditional folk culture, as „our prehistory is closely linked to the southeastern and Danube regions“ (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, Vol. 5). Even during the war, he continued to promote this position and, in June 1942, he spoke to Nevermann, an employee of the Eurasia department, about the comprehensive purchase of Bulgarian wooden ploughs. The modernization of agriculture, which was taking place under German influence, made it obvious to collect such „a landmark of Bulgarian folklore“ for Berlin (Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/MV 225).

In this respect, Küppers saw the Germans as the obvious and rightful custodians of the cultural heritage of Southeastern Europe. Such parallels to the imperialist discourse on Southeastern Europe were by no means a coincidence or purely due to the „zeitgeist“. Rather, a look at Küppers's contacts and networks reveals his deep involvement in a circle of people who, long before World War II, advocated a strengthening of Germanness in the region under National Socialist auspices proclaiming a racial and historical right to German leadership. Various individuals with whom he was apparently in close contact

had already been promoters of *völkisch* plans for Southeastern Europe in the 1920s. For example, one of his academic advisors, the economist Max Sering, had been an early advocate of the expansion and concentration of the German economy in Southeastern Europe. Karl-Christian Loesch, with whom Küppers later worked, was „head of the German Protection League for Border and Foreign Germans“ and advocated the congruence of German national and state borders as the basis for a new European order (Retterath/Korb 2017). Küppers contributed both texts and images to several of Loesch’s publications and invited him to attend his lectures at the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory (BGAEU) (Archive of the BGAEU, SIT 83; 248). The same applied to Friedrich Heiß, who, as a *völkisch* publicist, saw the „German European task [...] in the shaping of the Central European area determined by Greater Germany“ (Prehn 2010, 173). Like Küppers, Loesch and Heiß had been active in the youth movement of the interwar period. Their enthusiasm for the „German colonization“ of the Balkans and, above all, for the folklore of the Germans in Southeastern Europe was probably not lost on Küppers, who had already written enthusiastically about the ethnic movement of the „Artamans“ in a pamphlet in 1928 (Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, A 82, No. 30, Kalinke 2017).

In fact, the invitation lists received for Küpper’s lectures at the BGAEU featured several personalities of the *völkisch* intellectual spectrum with invitees from the cultural sector (such as the museum director and folklorist Konrad Hahm), from eugenics and racial sciences (Wolfgang Abel and Ingeborg Lott-Sydow), and from geopolitics (Karl Haushofer). In addition to the „theoreticians“ of the expansion into Southeastern Europe, some of their „practitioners“ were also present at Küpper’s lectures, such as Karl Passarge, director of the Advertising Council of German Business. Passarge was closely associated with the Institute for Economic Observation, which was responsible for „economic propaganda“ in Southeastern Europe and also stressed the „colonial idea“ (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 2301, 7059). On behalf of this institute, whose largest financier was the IG Farben, Küppers used his travels from 1939 onwards for „market observation in the Balkan countries“, drafting confidential dossiers which he sent to Germany via the German embassies, as the Federal Foreign Office reported in a confidential letter in June 1939 (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, RAV 43/1, 146).

Küpper’s collecting, his interest in “racial splinters”, in the “remnants” of Germanic existence, the legacies of the migration of peoples, and the evidence

of ideotypical, ethnically pure peoples were widespread in the anthropology of the time. Küppers picked up on them and utilized his travels and his findings to support explicitly National Socialist discourses and agendas. In view of the contacts and his ideological affinities, it was certainly no coincidence that Küppers was transferred to the Balkan Division of the German Army Command immediately after the German attack on Poland. His collecting activities had made him a „Balkan expert“, who saw the region as both a kind of pre-modern refuge and a natural German colonization area. Long after the end of the war, Küppers was still able to prominently publish some of his ethnographic observations. In doing so, he seamlessly tied in with the *völkisch* ideas that already had inspired his texts of the 1930s and 1940s (Küppers 1956). His attempts to present himself after the war as unjustly persecuted, or even as a victim of the Nazi regime, are therefore not very convincing (Küppers 1970, 113; Krüger 2011).

4 Practices of collecting “on the ground”

Küppers’s political allegiances, his respective networks, and the ideological dimensions of his collecting were one – albeit enormously important – aspect of the evaluation of his collection. However, what were the specific appropriation contexts and under what conditions and circumstances did the objects come into Küpper’s possession? Usually, such questions are difficult to answer, as the museum’s own records rarely provide answers. In postcolonial and decolonial provenance research, it has therefore been suggested that, in addition to archival research, perspectives from the source communities/societies of origin should also be included (Peers/Brown 2003). Even if this term has rightly been problematized as being somewhat essentialist (Hauser-Schäublin 2023), it makes a lot of sense to engage in a direct exchange about the objects and photographs with local museums and experts (Bründlmayer 2023, 69; Scholz 2019). Accordingly, this also takes place as part of the work on the Küppers Collection. On the other hand, its analysis can benefit from the aforementioned diary of Heimtraut Küppers, who accompanied her father on his travels from 1936 onwards. In her notes, she repeatedly referred to the actual acquisition of the objects. In addition, Küpper’s publications, in which he repeatedly discussed his collecting, are also being consulted.

Küppers came to the Balkans as a novice who was dependent on local and linguistic experts for all aspects of collecting. Most of these „brokers“ came about through random acquaintances, such as among the German and Tatar



Packaging museum objects, Diary Heimtraut Küppers, 1939, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Christian Krug



Aquisition of distaffs, Diary Heimtraut Küppers, 1939, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Christian Krug

population, whose villages in the Dobruja served as regular starting points for his trips to the surrounding areas (see for instance Küppers 1937, 13–16; Küppers 1965, 182). On his first journey in 1935 in particular, he had also collected many items in the vicinity of German communities. This may have been due to his enthusiasm for German colonization efforts on the ground, but the museum was unable to make any use of it. In a handwritten assessment of Küppers in February 1936, department head Baumann therefore suggested that on his next trips he should „spend less time in the German colonies and devote more time to the old Romanian and Bulgarian customs and traditions, beyond the highways.“ Another point of criticism was that he had mainly sent handicrafts and mostly new objects from local markets to Berlin (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Bd. 2).

Küppers evidently embraced this criticism, studied the academic literature, and „became sworn“ to the region over time, as he wrote to General Director Kümmel in April 1937 (Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/ MV 302). This passion was obviously not faked: even decades later, musical instruments that he had privately brought back from Southeastern Europe were still in regular use and part of the furnishings in his house (private mail correspondence with Rotraut K., a granddaughter of Küppers). Although he also bought everyday objects on subsequent trips to local markets and stores, he focused on systematic collecting and acquired entire workshop inventories, for example, in order to fully record (also photographically) local crafts such as cap making, silversmithing, or rope making.

By collecting a large number of objects of the same type, he also tried to meet the museum criteria aimed at „cultural comparison“. Küppers also sought to collect „highlight“ objects: It is true that his plan to bring an entire Romanian wooden church to Berlin could not be fulfilled (Küppers 1970, 115). However, he visited the local museums at almost all stops, had their depots shown to him, and also acquired objects here and in monasteries that went beyond everyday and domestic use, such as icons, jewellery, and richly decorated festive clothing.

However, the objects that Küppers acquired on his next trips were mostly household goods and tools that the people themselves no longer had any use for or that they were obviously willing to give away for other reasons. Küppers, who made new contacts in some villages and towns with each journey and was sometimes recognized by the inhabitants, often purchased the relevant objects directly from them. It appears that many local people expressed little interest



Icon, Madonna with five Saints, Troyan, Bulgaria, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



Belt lock (pafti), Kriva Palanka, Northern Macedonia, Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Matthias Thaden

in the old objects in particular. In Troyan, Bulgaria, according to his daughter's diary note, many people recognized them and some women even „dragged“ a bunch of „old things for the museum“ (Heimtraut Küppers's diary in the collection of the Museum of European Cultures). In the Strandža Mountains, on the other hand, they went directly to the people and acquired – at random and from house to house – „a number of interesting items“ (Heimtraut Küppers's diary in the collection of the Museum of European Cultures).

Naturally, the ethnographic departments of the local museums were interested in objects similar to Küppers's, which occasionally led to conflicts. In June 1938, Küppers reported from his fourth trip from Sofia that everything was packed and that „at the most, the local ethnographic museum could take out a few rarities“. However, the „boxes had already been nailed“, so this would probably not happen (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Vol. 4). A year later, Heimtraut Küppers again noted in her diary that the museum, also in Sofia, had „taken away“ some of the Karakachani spindle whorls mentioned above. The replica made from plaster, obviously as compensation, is still in the MEK's collection (Heimtraut Küppers's diary in the collection of the Museum of European Cultures).

Apparently, the respective diplomatic missions in Berlin sometimes became involved in such conflicts, although it remains unclear whether diplomatic pressure also played a role in the resolution. However, it is important to note that the objects were apparently not appropriated against the will of their former owners; there are also no known cases of obvious overreaching. Such an assessment can at least be made on the basis of the sources available so far. It should be noted, however, that these are based only on personal testimonies by Küppers himself and his relatives, many of them written retrospectively. Further research will have to show whether individuals felt they had been taken advantage of or gave away their objects due to different kinds of pressure. At the very least, Küppers was primarily interested in objects that were simply no longer needed or were for sale anyway. In view of the increasing urbanization and industrialization taking place in the region and the accompanying social changes, many of the objects acquired by Küppers had probably lost much of their practical and symbolic value (Paskalewa 1987). In this respect, an obviously unlawful appropriation, such as often occurred in colonial contexts, can likely be ruled out for the Küppers collection. Nevertheless, there seem to be grey areas here as well: again in Heimtraut Küppers's diary, we learn, for example, of „terribly rare“ calendar sticks acquired from an old woman near the Black Sea coast or of a village of

the Karakachani minority in central Bulgaria, where many of the spindle whorls collected for the museum „were difficult to obtain“, as they were commemorative gifts or even „wedding presents“.

Again, it remains vague what this actually meant for the negotiations. However, contacts with linguists and other trustworthy people as middlemen were essential. This is particularly evident in the case of the Hutsul artefacts, which Küppers collected in 1936 and which he considered „remains of Bronze Age culture“ (Küppers 1964, 202). Without the art historian and later politician Wladimir Zalozieckyj, who literally opened the doors to people’s homes for Küppers and accompanied him with his expertise for several days to the Carpathian Forest – and the following year to Maramureş in Romania – the collection that still exists today would hardly have come into being. In Struga at Lake Ohrid, too, they travelled with the local merchant Haki-Isa, who was well known to the local people as a dealer in antiques. He was therefore a suitable intermediary (Heimtraut Küppers’s diary in the collection of the Museum of European Cultures; a photo of the merchant is in the photo collection of the Musée du Quai Branly).

Although the selection of objects and Küpper’s general collecting interests were clearly motivated by ideological considerations, his actual acquisition practices appear to have been far less compromising. Apart from his first trip, during which he made dubious promises to a Zagreb baroness about a purchase and she subsequently complained to the museum (Schühle 2011), there is no documentation of the collector taking advantage of people or any other misbehaviour. On the contrary, his negotiating position on-site seems to have been quite difficult sometimes. Before his third trip in 1937, he wrote to the director general of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin that he no longer wanted to appear as an „old goods huckster“ who always had to push down prices and that he had simply lacked the money for many objects so far (Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/MV 302). He apparently had to spend more than planned on some festive and holiday objects such as a complete wedding costume in Romania (including a bridal crown) (Küppers 1964, 199). The fact that many local people were quite self-confident in their price negotiations with the collector and that supply and demand had evidently shifted also played a role here: Especially in Romania, Küppers wrote to Baumann in August 1936 on his second trip, he had endeavoured to „obtain what could still be found [...] because the country is already heavily plundered“ (Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, vol. 2).

5 Conclusion

The competition with other museums that Küppers and the Berlin museums found themselves in, as indicated in the previous quote, further increased the ethnological „salvage impetus“ described at the beginning. This, along with the claim, as the German hegemon in Europe, to have a quasi-natural „right of access“ to the „ancient folk culture“ – which was soon threatened with extinction – and to research and categorize it, was the main reason that Küppers and the museum started collecting in the Balkans. It is also the ominous mixture of classical rescue ideology and Nazi imperialism that casts the Küppers collection in a particularly dubious light and certainly also in the intellectual proximity of colonial collecting practices.⁴

At the same time, it has been shown that the actual collection practice on the ground took place under different circumstances. It remains up to future research whether there were instances of occasional profiteering or whether individuals gave up their possessions only under social or other pressure. It is important to consider the contexts in which the collector operated and the intention he had when selecting the objects and bringing them to Berlin as evidence and “typical” examples of Southeastern European folk culture. That being said, Küppers did not obtain the objects unlawfully, have them transported out of the country illegally, or take them from people under false pretences.

Ultimately, Küpper’s biography is an example of the radicalization of inter-war anti-bourgeois alternative culture, which vehemently rejected modernity and combined it with folk ideologies. In his engagement with Southeastern Europe and his collecting activities there, he projected these onto the region and fell prey to a romanticized and stereotypical Balkan discourse. Enriched by pseudo-scientific theories of the expansion of Germanic culture, which he believed he had been able to prove on the basis of the material legacies, he increasingly aligned himself with an imperial and racist policy towards Southeastern Europe, with whose protagonists he was also closely associated. It is precisely in this respect that the collection is ambiguous, as the objects cannot be separated from the intentions behind their acquisition. Their future presentation should therefore certainly take into account the historical background of the collection.

⁴ For general reflections on the role of the colonial in European collections, see Justnik 2021.

Matthias Thaden is currently working as a collection and provenance researcher at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. In his work he deals particularly with the origin of museum objects from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Before joining the museum, Thaden studied history and anthropology in Berlin, Belfast and Zagreb. He received his doctorate in 2022 with a thesis on Croatian nationalists after World War II and their political activism in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Contact: M.Thaden@smb.spk-berlin.de

Publications cited

Non-published sources and literature

Archiv der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (BGAEU), SIT 83; 248.

Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, A 82, Nr. 30.

Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, N 14, Nr. 189.

Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, P 1, Nr. 1906.

Archiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Promotionsakte G.A. Küppers.

Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, I/MV0610, Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers, Bd. 1–5.

Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, noch nicht verzeichnete Akten.

Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Potsdam, Rep. 203, AVE ESA 5165.

Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 2301, 7059: Deutsch-Bulgarische Handelskammer und Institut für wirtschaftliche Beobachtung.

Kreisarchiv Celle, L 601.

Krüger, Gerd. 2011. “Die Sammelfahrten Von Gustav Adolf Küppers Nach Südosteuropa Im Kontext Nationalsozialistischer Ideologie Und (Pseudo-) Wissenschaft: Vortrag Im Rahmen Der Tagung ‚Historische Tonaufnahmen aus Südosteuropa. Zeugnisse Einer Multiethnischen Bevölkerung‘”. Berlin, 2011.

Musée du Quai Branly Paris, collections online ([https://collections.quaibrantly.fr/?query=objectnumber=\[PF0015793\]&showtype=record#a01bc36b-0435-48c0-876c-2ff4620f04d5](https://collections.quaibrantly.fr/?query=objectnumber=[PF0015793]&showtype=record#a01bc36b-0435-48c0-876c-2ff4620f04d5), 23.3.2024)

Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Tagebuch Heimtraut Küppers.

Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, RAV 43/1, 146, Deutsche Gesandtschaft Bukarest.

Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg, Nachlass Schemann.

Schühle, Judith. 2011. Gustav Küppers Als Ethnographica-Sammler. Unpubliziertes Manuskript.

Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/MV 225; I/MV 1361.

Published sources and literature

- Bendix, Regina. 1997. "In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies." Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bründlmayer, Cécile. 2023. "'Out of Context' – Translocation of West African Artefacts to European Museums. The Case of the Leo Frobenius Collection from Mali." In *Material Culture in Transit: Theory and Practice*, edited by Zainabu Jallo, 60–77, London: Routledge.
- Buchczyk, Magdalena. 2023. *Weaving Europe, Crafting the Museum: Textiles, History, and Ethnography at the Museum of European Cultures*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Faber, Monika, and Martin Keckeis. 2023. "Ölrausch und Huzulenkult: Fotografische Streitobjekte aus Galizien und der Bukowina – Eine Zusammenfassende Betrachtung." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 126 (2): 274–296.
- Groschwitz, Helmut. 2015. „Und was ist mit Europa? Zur Überwindung der Grenzen zwischen >Europa< und >Außer-Europa< in den ethnologischen Sammlungen Berlins“, In *Quo vadis, Völkerkundemuseum? Aktuelle Debatten zu ethnologischen Sammlungen in Museen und Universitäten*, edited by Michael Kraus and Karoline Noack, 205–225, Bielefeld: Transcript.
- Groschwitz, Helmut. 2018. „Postkoloniale Volkskunde. Eine Annäherung über das Museum.“ In *Dimensionen des Politischen: Ansprüche und Herausforderungen der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft*, edited by Johanna Rolshoven and Ingo Schneider, 262–276, Berlin: Neofelis Verlag.
- Haberlandt, Arthur. 1934. „Volkskunde und Völkerkunde.“ In *Die Deutsche Volkskunde*, 42–58, Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut.
- Hahn, Hans Peter. 2014. „Ethnologie.“ In *Handbuch Materielle Kultur. Bedeutungen, Konzepte, Disziplinen*, edited by Stefanie Samida, Manfred Eggert, Hans Peter Hahn, Stuttgart: Metzler.
- Hauser-Schäublin, Brigitta. 2023. "Provenance Research Between Politicized Truth Claims and Systemic Diversionary Tactics." In *Historical Culture by Restitution? A Debate on Art, Museums, and Justice*, edited by Thomas Sandkühler, Angelika Epple and Jürgen Zimmerer, 67–90, Wien/Köln: Böhlau.
- Heck, Brigitte. 2021. "Wirkungsgeschichte/n: Neue Perspektiven auf die Entstehung volkskundlicher Sammlungen." *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie* 13: 558–568.
- Ivkov, Vesna. 2013. „Tragom najstarijih tonskih zapisa vokalne muzičke tradicije Nemaca u Bačkoj. Terenska istraživanja Gustava Kipers-Zonenberga u Bačkoj.“ *Etnoantropološki problemi* 8, 2: 585–596.
- Jantzen, Hinrich. 1974. „Küppers-Sonnenberg“. In *Namen und Werke, Bd. 2 – Quellen und Beiträge zur Geschichte der Jugendbewegung, Bd. 12*, 213–216, Frankfurt am Main: Dipa.
- Johler, Reinhard. 2005. "Auf der Suche nach dem ‚Anderen‘ Europa: Eugenie Goldstern und die Wiener ‚Völkerkunde Europas‘." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 108: 151–164.

- Justnik, Herbert. 2021. "Kolonialismus in der Bauernstube. Oder: Wie sich die Volkskunde ihr Objekt machte", In *Das Museum im kolonialen Kontext: Annäherungen aus Österreich*, edited by Pia Schölnberger, Wien: Czernin Verlag.
- Kalinke, Heinke M. 2017. „Volkskundler auf Wanderschaft im östlichen Europa. Wissenschaft im Zeichen von Sammeleifer, völkischer Ideologie und nationalsozialistischer Politik.“ In *Grauzone. Das Verhältnis zwischen Bündischer Jugend und Nationalsozialismus: Beiträge der Tagung im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, 8. und 9. November 2013*, edited by Claudia Selheim, Alexander Schmidt, and Christine Dippold, 53–60, Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums.
- Kaufmann, Doris. 2020. *Ornamentwelten: Ethnologische Expeditionen und die Kunst der „Anderen“ (1890–1930)*. Köln: Böhlau.
- Kirk, Tim. 2010. "Deutsche Kulturpolitik und öffentliche Meinung in Südosteuropa." In *„Mitteleuropa“ und „Südosteuropa“ als Planungsraum: Wirtschafts- und kulturpolitische Expertisen im Zeitalter der Weltkriege*, edited by Carola Sachse, 197–218, Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Kołodziejczyk, Dorota/Huigen, Siegfried. 2023. "East Central Europe Between the Colonial and the Postcolonial: A Critical Introduction." In: *East Central Europe Between the Colonial and the Postcolonial in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Huigen, Siegfried, and Dorota Kołodziejczyk, 1–33, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Korff, Gottfried. 1994. "Volkskunst und Primitivismus: Bemerkungen zu einer kulturellen Wahrnehmungsform um 1900." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 97: 373–394.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1918. *Eigen Land*. Dresden: Laube.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1924. *Vom Akademiker zum Siedler. Abenteuer und Erlebnisse*. Berlin: Deutsche Landbuchhandlung.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1937. *Einbeiner am Steuer*. Hannover: Werbung der Fa. Hanomag.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1938. "Die Schok Katzen der Batschka und der Baranya." *Volk und Rasse* 13, 3: 77–84.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1939. „Erwachender Balkan. Völkerkundliche Autostreifzüge durch Karpathen, Karst und Karawanken“. *Wir und die Welt*: 34–40.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1940. "Auf den Spuren der Langobarden durch Ungarn, Kroatien, Dalmatien." *Volk und Rasse* 15, 2: 110–113.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1942. "Nachlebende Ornamente der Völkerwanderungszeit in der Volkskunst des Südostens." *Volk und Rasse* 17, 11: 185–190.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1956. "Bei den Feuertänzern (Nestinari) im bulgarischen Strandschagebirge." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 81, 1: 118–123.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1959. "Völkerkundlicher Streifzug durch die Dobrudscha." *Jahrbuch der Dobrudscha-Deutschen*.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1959. "Ornamente und Symbole südslawischer Bauernlauten (Guslen)." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 84, 1: 88–109.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1964. "Vom Donaudelta zu den Waldkarpaten." *Jahrbuch der Dobrudscha-Deutschen*: 192–204.

- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1965. „Wiedersehen mit der Dobrudscha.“ *Jahrbuch der Dobrudschadeutschen*: 167–185.
- Küppers, Gustav-Adolf. 1970. „Leben im Sturm der Zeit.“ *Jahrbuch der Dobrudscha-Deutschen*: 107–121.
- Küppers, Harald. 2011. *Ich bekenne Farbe: Ein Unternehmer schildert sein stressiges, buntes Leben und schafft Ordnung im Chaos der Farbenlehre*. Köln: DuMont.
- Lehrer, Erica/ Wawrzyniak, Joana. 2023. “Decolonial Museology in East-Central Europe: A Preliminary To-Do List.” *Europe Now 50*: online: www.europenowjournal.org/2023/02/24/decolonial-museology-in-east-central-europe-a-preliminary-to-do-list/.
- Mazower, Mark. 2011. *Hitlers Imperium. Europa unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus*. München: C.H. Beck.
- Motta, Guiseppe. 2021. “Between Ideological Affinity and Economic Necessity: Romania and Nazi Germany Before and During World War II”. In *Complicated Complicity*, 99–119.
- Nixdorff, Heide. 1973. “Hundert Jahre Museum Für Völkerkunde Berlin: Abteilung Europa.” *Baessler-Archiv XXI*: 341–358.
- Paskaleva, Virginia. 1987. „Die Entwicklung des Handwerks und die kulturelle Vermittlungsfunktion von Handwerkern bei der „Europäisierung“ Bulgariens im 19. Jahrhundert.“ In *Handwerk in Mittel- und Südosteuropa: Mobilität, Vermittlung und Wandel im Handwerk des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Klaus Roth, 129–135, München: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft.
- Peers, Laura Lynn/Brown, Alison Kay. 2003. *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Prehn, Ulrich. 2010. „Die Entgrenzung des Deutschen Reiches. Europäische Raumordnungsentwürfe in der Zeitschrift „Volk und Reich“ (1925–1944).“ In *„Mitteleuropa“ und „Südosteuropa“ als Planungsraum: Wirtschafts- und kulturpolitische Expertisen im Zeitalter der Weltkriege*, edited by Carola Sachse, 169–196, Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Retterath, Hans-Werner/ Korb, Alexander. 2017. „Karl Christian von Loesch.“ In *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften*, edited by Ingo Haar, 446–452, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Ritschl, A.O. 2001. „Nazi Economic Imperialism and the Exploitation of the Small: Evidence from Germany’s Secret Foreign Exchange Balances, 1938–1940.“ *The Economic History Review* 54,2: 324–345.
- Roth, Klaus. 1992. „Einleitung.“ In *Die Volkskultur Südosteuropas in der Moderne*, edited by Klaus Roth, München: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft.
- Sachse, Carola. 2010. „Einleitung.“ In *„Mitteleuropa“ und „Südosteuropa“ als Planungsraum: Wirtschafts- und kulturpolitische Expertisen im Zeitalter der Weltkriege*, edited by Carola Sachse, 13–47, Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Satjukow, Elisa/Nießler, Jacqueline. 2022. “Reflections on Positionality in German Southeast European Studies.” *Südost-Forschungen* 81, 1: 34–56.
- Schmidt, Leopold. 1960. „Das Österreichische Museum Für Volkskunde: Werden und Wesen eines Wiener Museums.“ Wien: Bergland.

- Schneider, Franka. 2017. „Handgreifliche Geschichte. Dingpolitiken im Museum für deutsche Volkskunde Berlin.“ In *Politique De La Mémoire: Museen Als Orte Geschichtspolitischer Verhandlungen Im 19. Bis Zum 21. Jahrhundert*, edited by Andrea Brat and Anja Früh, 127–140, Basel: Schwabe.
- Scholz, Andrea. 2019. „Transkulturelle Zusammenarbeit in der Museumspraxis: Symbolpolitik oder epistemologische Pluralisierung?“ In *Museumsethnologie. Eine Einführung – Theorien, Debatten, Praktiken I*, edited by Iris Edenheiser and Larissa Förster, 162–179, Berlin: Reimer.
- Siedler Gustav Adolf Küppers (1894-1978).“ In *Aus Biographien Sportgeschichte lernen. Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Henze*, edited by Arnd Krüger, 149–162. Hoya: NISH.
- Tietmeyer, Elisabeth/Vanja, Konrad. 2013. „Das Museum Europäischer Kulturen und der Nationalsozialismus. Eine Geschichte der Anpassung in zwei Teilen.“ In *Zwischen Politik und Kunst. Die Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, edited by Jörn Grabowski, Petra Winter, 387–408. Köln: Böhlau.
- Todorova, Maria. 2009. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ulbert, Thilo. 1975/1976. „Rezension zu G.A. Küppers, Flecht- und Knotenornamentik, Mosaiken (Teurnia und Otranto). Beiträge zur Symboldeutung.“ *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 71/72: 128–130.
- Vojnović-Traživuk, Branka. 2001. „Gavazzi und die kroatische Volkskunst: Ein retrospektiver Ausblick.“ In *Kroatische Volkskunde/Ethnologie in den Neunzigern: Ein Reader*, edited by Jasna Čapo. Wien: Verl. des Inst. für Europ. Ethnologie.
- Warneken, Bernd Jürgen. 2006. *Ethnographie populärer Kulturen*. Wien: UTB.
- Wedemeyer, Bernd. 2000. „Ein Außenseiter niedersächsischer Körperkultur: Der jugendbewegte Siedler Gustav Adolf Küppers (1894–1978). In *Aus Biographien Sportgeschichte lernen. Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Henze*, edited by A.Krüger, B.Wedemeyer. Göttingen: NISH, 149–162.
- Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd. 2017. *Aufbruch. Die Lebensreform in Deutschland*. Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern-Verlag.
- Wien, Markus. 2007. *Markt und Modernisierung: Deutsch-bulgarische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen 1918–1944 in ihren konzeptionellen Grundlagen*. München: Oldenbourg.
- Ziegler, Susanne. 2011. „Einleitung.“ In *Walzenaufnahmen aus Südosteuropa: Booklet zur CD*, edited by Susanne Ziegler, Berlin: Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv.