

ANNA-MUNGUNDA-ALLEE
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Who,

What,

*Edited by
Lorraine Bluche
Suy Lan Hopmann*

Where

Is Colonial?

**Exploring Berlin's
History from Pokesu to
Anna-Mungunda-Allee**

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Foreword

*Sophie Plagemann,
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In recent years, the history of German and European colonialism has increasingly moved from the margins to the center of public debate in Germany. This shift, initiated and driven primarily by Black, African, and Afro-diasporic communities and their multifaceted expertise, has prompted cultural institutions—particularly museums—to critically examine their own colonial histories and, in some cases, to initiate processes of decolonization.

The study of Ernst A. Friedel, founder of the Märkisches Provinzial-Museum [Translator's note: *Museum of the Province of the March of Brandenburg*] (now the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin), illustrates how closely museum work, cultural policy, historiography, and colonial ideology were intertwined in the second half of the 19th century. Friedel (1837–1918) was not only a local politician and founder of the Märkisches Provinzial-Museum, but also an early proponent of German colonialism. As early as 1867, in his work *Die Gründung preußisch-deutscher Colonien im Indischen und Großen Ozean mit besonderer Rücksicht auf das östliche Asien* (The Founding of Prussian-German Colonies in the Indian and Great Oceans with Special Consideration of East Asia), he called for German involvement overseas—long before the empire itself engaged in colonial policy. He remained committed to this idea as a cultural politician: the street names in the 'African Quarter,' through which colonialism continues to mark Berlin's urban space to this day, are associated with him.

These insights are based on scientific dossiers compiled as part of the exhibition *Dekoloniale—What Remains?!*, which marked the conclusion of a five-year collaboration between civil society actors and the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin.


The pilot project *Dekoloniale Memory Culture in the City (2020–2024)* initiated by civil society and significantly shaped by three associations—Berlin Postkolonial e.V., Each One Teach One (EOTO) e.V., and the Initiative for Black People in Germany (ISD Bund) e.V.—provided their cooperation partner Stadtmuseum Berlin with an opportunity to examine Berlin's colonial entanglements as well as its own institutional history and its enduring effects. The Decolonization Competence Center, established at the Stadtmuseum in 2022, also played a key role in this process, with a special focus on the museum's collection and close support for the preparation of the academic dossiers.

This volume constitutes *one* building block in this long-overdue and fundamental reappraisal of the German and Berlin history of colonialism. It is therefore both a pleasure and a matter of great importance for us to make the results of the dossiers available here in condensed form, providing a foundation for further research.

We would like to express our special thanks to all our cooperation partners who have critically accompanied this work over the years, and to the researchers who have investigated the colonial entanglements surrounding the founding of the Stadtmuseum and the Nikolaikirche, as well as previously untold stories of resistance: Aischa Ahmed, Annika Bärwald, Laura Frey, Josepha Jendricke, Clara Westendorff, and Andrea Weindl. Their work constitutes an important pillar for the continued critical examination of Berlin's colonial history.

Introduction

*Lorraine Bluche,
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Suy Lan Hopmann

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Who, What, Where Is Colonial?

Exploring Berlin's History from Pokesu to Anna-Mungunda-Allee is the title of this publication. The book examines what a global and decentered history of Berlin that is aimed at a critical engagement with colonialism and coloniality might look like. It focuses on people, events, and places that link Berlin to regions colonized by Europe since the 15th century.

A central aim of the model project Dekoloniale Memory Culture in the City (Dekoloniale) was to make Berlin's colonial history visible, to analyze it critically, and to relate it to histories of resistance.¹ The collaboration with Dekoloniale provided the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin with a key impetus to begin addressing colonialism as a cross-cutting issue within its institutional work. The establishment of the Kompetenzstelle DeKolonisierung (DeColonization Competence Center) in 2022 marked a further step in this direction. This publication constitutes an important component of the Stadtmuseum's engagement with its own colonial entanglements and, by extension, those of the city of Berlin. The volume brings together research commissioned in 2024 on previously underexplored Berlin sites of memory and histories of colonial interconnections. The driver for this focused research was the final exhibition *Dekoloniale—What Remains?!*, which opened in November 2024. The exhibition examined how colonial history has been inscribed into urban space at several locations, including Wilhelmstraße 92, the Museum Nikolaiikirche (a site of the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin), and various sites in Berlin-Wedding. Its aim was to give visibility to colonial history while reframing it through perspectives of resistance.

Filling in Historical Blanks

During preparations for the exhibition, it became evident that basic research was lacking on several of the topics to be addressed. The exhibition team therefore commissioned external researchers to prepare scholarly dossiers on selected topics as directly usable groundbreaking work for the exhibition. One such example is the *Berlin Conference of 1884–85*, which marked a historical turning point when European colonial powers negotiated the political division of the African continent. The consequences of this event continue to shape the present and place a particular responsibility on Berlin in terms of memory policy and culture. The site at which this central colonial political event took place is today Wilhelmstraße 92. From 2020 to 2024, it served as the project space for Dekoloniale and was also be the venue for *Dekoloniale—What Remains?!* in 2024.

The exhibition section in the Nikolaikirche Museum took the Stadtmuseum's colonial history as its starting point and combined a historical overview with artistic interventions under the title *Colonial Ghosts—Resistant Spirits. Church, Colonialism, and Beyond*. A key point of reference for the historical part of the exhibition was the individuals commemorated in the Nikolaikirche, for example through tombs. Four research dossiers are therefore explicitly dedicated to the Nikolaikirche and the Stadtmuseum Berlin, critically reexamining their collections, commemorative practices, and historical narratives.

In the district of Wedding, *Dekoloniale—What Remains?!* engaged with urban space at multiple locations and through various formats. A central focus was highlighting the history of the 'African Quarter' and civil society's efforts to rename streets with colonial references. One research dossier is devoted to the emergence of the 'African Quarter,' with particular attention to the role of Ernst Friedel, founding director of the Märkisches Provinzial-Museum, now the Stadtmuseum Berlin.

The research, conducted in 2024 as internal scientific groundwork, combines careful source analysis with precise argumentation. From the outset, it was clear that the findings would be of interest far beyond the museum context, including urban historiography and a broader activist audience. Many of the topics addressed here first came to light thanks to critical interventions by decolonial activists—for example, highlighting the colonial involvement of Carl Constantin von Schnitter and Ernst Friedel. This makes it all the more important to make the resulting research publicly accessible.

We are grateful to the authors of the dossiers for agreeing to compile key information and findings from their research for this book, thereby making it accessible to a wider audience. The contributions collected in this volume cover a broad spectrum of periods and topics, opening up two interrelated perspectives on Berlin's colonial history. On the one hand, they focus on the early modern period, particularly the colonial ties of Brandenburg-Prussia, which can be traced exemplarily through the individuals commemorated in the Nikolaikirche. These individuals represent the social and economic milieus of the Berlin bourgeoisie closely connected to the colonial enterprises of the 17th and 18th centuries. The research by Anne Haeming, Andrea Weindl, and Annika Bärwald illuminates these connections from different angles: through the families and individuals honored in the Nikolaikirche, through the biography of the West African trader and power broker Kone Kpole, also known as Jan Conny, and through the role of Carl Constantin von Schnitter in the construction of _____ fort Groß Friedrichsburg.

On the other hand, the contributions by Aischa Ahmed, Laura Frey, Clara Westendorff, and Josepha Jendricke focus on the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the period of formal German colonialism and its ideological precursors. They examine pro-colonial networks in the context of the *Berlin Conference*, shed light on colonial political traditions of thought through the example of Ernst Friedel, and analyze the colonial topography of the 'African Quarter' in Berlin's Wedding district.

Taken together, these contributions highlight the colonial continuities of a European project that cannot be reduced to institutionalized colonial policy. Over the centuries, violent relationships produced specific worldviews that became culturally and intellectually entrenched and remain influential today—with consequences that extend far beyond historical analysis.

A Decolonial Approach— Method and Language

The question of how to address the contemporariness of colonial legacies arises not only in the selection of research topics but also in the use of language and forms of representation. Verbal and visual language determine whose perspective is highlighted and whose agency remains hidden in historical narratives. The gaps in the historical record—that is, what is omitted or left unnamed in the sources—are equally significant. They often reflect historical power relations that were (and in many cases still are) structured along lines of gender, social status, or racialized categories. Against this backdrop, it was important for us to consciously reflect on and make transparent the linguistic and editorial decisions underlying this volume.

We therefore strive to use formulations that include all people beyond a binary understanding of gender. This decision stems from a twofold awareness: First, attributing gender to persons in historical contexts in which non-binary existence could not be lived publicly is, from today's perspective, always only an approximation and not a reliable measure. Second, we assume that participation in historically relevant events encompasses far more than the actors documented in official sources. From our perspective, it is plausible to assume that a conference of the scale and internationality of the *Berlin Conference* was only made possible by the work of numerous additional persons beyond its male-identified, prominently positioned representatives: for instance, by the infrastructural and housekeeping personnel who ensured provision, accommodation, and smooth operations on site, as well

as by those who made travel preparations, compiled documents, and handled communication with the delegates and their accompanying staff. In the social and informal settings surrounding the conference—such as banquets, receptions, or events—other persons were presumably also present, including writers, musicians, spouses, and those identified as female domestic staff. These spaces, in which opinions were formed, and consultations and preliminary discussions took place, fundamentally shaped the dynamics and outcomes of the conference.

From a feminist perspective that takes into account informal contexts, care work, and the dimensions of gender, class, and race, it therefore is necessary to linguistically include those people who participated in historical processes without becoming visible in official sources. Our use of gender-inclusive language reflects this expanded understanding of participation and agency. [Translator's note: English grammar presents most words as gender-neutral, unlike German's grammatically gendered nouns. However, English discourse also struggles with patriarchal assumptions—for instance certain terms like "politician" or "scientist" often defaulting to male—though these challenges can be addressed differently than in German. Rather than employing typographical markers such as asterisks or colons to interrupt grammatically gendered nouns, gender-inclusive English relies primarily on context, explicitly inclusive wording, and other grammatical adjustments. An example of the latter is the use of gender-inclusive pronouns such as they/them, which this translation strives to use whenever possible.]

Another key methodological element of this publication is the typographical disruption of colonial and racist terms, images, and geographies. In this work, we draw on strategies developed in the context of the Dekoloniale project and in cooperation with the design agency Visual Intelligence, which also designed this book.² The strategies of typographical disruption are based on the principle of drawing critical attention to colonial racism in language and images, in order to prevent uncritical reproduction. There are several reasons for this. First, colonial and racist content can be hurtful and (re)traumatizing for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC). From our perspective as editors, a museum institution has an ethical and political responsibility to actively counteract such harm. Second, we assume that the unfiltered, repeated reproduction of racist terms and images reactivates, normalizes, and thereby reinforces historically entrenched, unconsciously ingrained patterns of racist perception within a *white* majority society.

Outlook and Further Work

This publication is among the final outputs associated with the Dekoloniale project. Yet, as with every ending, something new begins—so we hope that the research compiled here will inspire further projects, activities, and initiatives.

The Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin is continuing its work on perspectives on colonialism in various ways. This focus is a central element of the museum's collection strategy, which will be further developed in collaboration and dialogue with civil society in the coming years. The Museum Nikolaiirche will also continue to engage with colonial entanglements. Beginning in April 2026, three video interventions will be installed in the church interior, addressing the question of what remains of *What Remains?!*. These interventions are placed at two (former) tombs of *white*, male figures whose biographies were examined in the research published in this volume and who were involved in colonial power and violence. The video interviews feature researchers, artists, museum professionals, and church representatives from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. They reflect on the contemporary significance of the site and explore how it can be critically reinterpreted.

This volume is therefore not intended as a definitive, concluding interpretation, but rather as the reflection of a status quo in an ongoing debate. The contributions collected here invite readers to question their own perspectives on Berlin's history, to reinterpret familiar narratives, and to critically examine the conditions under which they emerged. Memory culture is not presented as a fixed product, but as an ongoing process sustained equally by research, public debate, and civic engagement. In this sense, we hope this publication will be read as an invitation: to ask further questions, to challenge assumptions, and to work together on a responsible, multifaceted, and many-voiced memory culture.

Endnotes

1 The pilot project *Dekoloniale Memory Culture in the City*, or *Dekoloniale* for short, was carried out in Berlin from 2020 to 2024. Its aim was to explore new approaches for the engagement with colonial history and its continuing effects in urban spaces. The project was conceived and implemented by Berlin Postkolonial e.V., Each One Teach One e.V., the Initiative of Black People in Germany (ISD Bund) e.V., and the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. Each project year focused on a different urban space. The project encompassed historical and artistic exhibitions, conferences, workshops, event series, festivals, city tours, artistic interventions in public space, and the ongoing digital mapping of (post-)colonial history. Further information is available at www.dekoloniale.de and in the accompanying book, published in 2025 by FALSCHRUM Verlag.

2 These were further tested in 2024–2025 in the digiS-funded project *Massenmedium Bilderbogen. Repräsentant des Kolonialen Archivs. Erprobung dekolonialer Digitalisierungsstrategien (Mass Media Picture Sheets: Representatives of the Colonial Archive. Testing Decolonial Digitization Strategies)* by Stadtmuseum Berlin—also in collaboration with Visual Intelligence and in cooperation with *Dekoloniale*. See <https://www.stadtmuseum.de/bilderbogen>.

Editorial Notes – Brief and Concise

In preparing this volume for publication, we have made editorial decisions concerning the use and non-use of terms as well as specific typographic conventions. Colonial-racist terminology that dehumanizes people is not employed in the texts gathered here; such terms are also not written out in historical titles and are additionally typographically disrupted. Colonial designations of localities are disrupted through strikethrough, foregrounding their Indigenous names. Where Indigenous designations are traceable, we have placed these first; where no names were traceable, the now missing name is indicated by a gap (e.g., _____
Groß Friedrichsburg).

By capitalizing Black and italicizing *white*, we follow an established practice to mark the different positions of people in a society shaped by racism. Black is a self-designation of African and Afrodiasporic people, and its capitalization signals collective strategies of self-empowerment and resistance. *White* marks a privileged position of societal dominance that is usually not questioned and therefore often not explicitly named.

The use of gender-inclusive language is of particular significance for historical topics, as the majority of primary and secondary literature reproduces both cis-male and heteronormative representational contexts. Since gaps in historical sources are known to be insufficient evidence of real-world absences and rather point to perspectival limitations, we use gender-inclusive writing to make presence, participation, and

gender diversity visible. [Translator's note: The use of the gender asterisk in the German text follows in principle the preceding Dekoloniale publications and exhibitions, but also deviates somewhat—for instance, by placing the gender asterisk after both masculine- and feminine-coded group designations. The English translation uses other linguistic and grammatical means to promote gender-inclusivity.]

Feminine and masculine forms without gender-inclusive markers are used only for specific individuals for whom the available sources confirm that they positioned themselves as female or male in a gender-binary-structured society and were perceived as such. [Translator's note: To reflect this distinction made in the German text, the English translation uses the descriptors male/female for entire groups and she/her or he/him pronouns for group members when these groups are explicitly documented as exclusively male or female in the sources, while aiming to employ they/them pronouns for all other historical actors and groups.]

Colonial visual languages and, relatedly, colonial visual politics are graphically disrupted in historical images.

Language use, orthographic conventions, and the handling of visual statements are both expression and outcome of societal negotiation and learning processes and therefore remain a collective and multi-perspectival work in progress.



A Church Nave as a Reflection of Urban Society

*Tracing the Colonial
Connections of Individuals
and Families Commemorated
at Nikolaikirche*

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The Nikolaikirche – a Reflection of the City

A brief glance at a map of Berlin suffices to reveal the historical embeddedness of Nikolaikirche within the city's early urban fabric. The Mühlendamm, which already in the Middle Ages connected Cölln with the northern bank of the Spree, functioned as an indispensable trade route. Immediately beyond the river lies the Molkenmarkt, the city's oldest marketplace and medieval commercial center. Directly west of this square stands the Nikolaikirche.

Alongside St. Marien, located only a few hundred meters away, and St. Petri on the opposite bank of the Spree in what was then Cölln, Nikolaikirche is regarded as one of the oldest churches in Berlin. Although the precise date of its foundation remains unknown, the church was most likely established in the first half of the thirteenth century.¹ Following the Reformation, Nikolaikirche became a reformed church in 1539 and subsequently assumed the function of the city's official parish church.²

Upon entering the Nikolaikirche, one encounters numerous burial chapels, tombstones, and other memorial objects, much as visitors would have in earlier periods.³ To understand who is commemorated and honored within the Nikolaikirche—and what this reveals about the city and its historical development—it is instructive to conceive the church as a reflection: an abstraction of the historical network of social, economic, and political structures. Which means, the Nikolaikirche is also a reflection of colonial structures.

Several factors support this perspective. First, the Nikolaikirche as such was frequently emblematic of the abovementioned networks. Berlin's Nikolaikirche was "very likely dedicated to Saint Nicholas [Nikolai], the patron saint of sailors, river boatmen, and merchants,"⁴ which, as Ernst Badstübner observes, was "customary for churches in market settlements that predated urban formation." In addition, the church venerated Saint Catherine, patron saint of "scholars and certain trades,"⁵ as well as Saint Martin, associated with the protection of the poor. The boatmen's guild⁶ and the bakers' guild likewise endowed altars within the church. Second, institutional entanglements were characteristic of the period: craft guilds, brotherhoods, and associations frequently functioned as ecclesiastical—or even exclusively ecclesiastical—cooperatives and institutions.⁷

In addition, burial plots and memorial plaques within the Nikolaikirche were made available not only to members of the immediate ecclesiastical community—such as provosts and deacons—but were also sold to the wider urban population and to parishioners. They were, as contemporaries noted, "an important source of income."⁸



St. Nikolai-Kirche, 1832.

erbaut 1223, Brand 1380, Neubau 1460.

VII 64/349 CW

Figure 1:
Nikolaikirche, steel engraving on paper, 1832.

As a result, the Nikolaikirche developed into a central site of (reformed) Berlin urban society. Richard Borrman characterizes it as a “pantheon of Berlin families and [...] the most distinguished memorial site of Berlin’s historical past.”⁹ Indeed, he identifies the memorial stones, portraits, and family tombs as the church’s “most valuable possessions.”¹⁰

The Agency of Individuals

The approximately 260 individuals who have been and continue to be commemorated in the Nikolaikirche represent a broad cross-section of Berlin’s *white* urban population. They span a wide range of historical periods and social contexts, from the 15th to the 19th centuries, including diverse social roles, professions, and life stages. These individuals are predominantly men; women appear almost exclusively in their capacity as wives. The spectrum ranges from deacons and master chefs to goldsmiths, authors, and senior civil servants. This diversity raises important questions: To what extent is the colonial entanglement, or coloniality, of these centuries reflected in the biographies of those commemorated? Which of these individuals were embedded in colonial networks, and in what ways?

As Ann Laura Stoler has repeatedly demonstrated, imperial structures permeated not only politics and the economy but also the intimate and everyday lives of both colonizers and colonized. Her conclusion is clear: an understanding of the empire requires attention to what are often deemed minor histories and seemingly marginal biographies situated within the shifting spaces of European colonial expansion. Focusing on individual life trajectories thus enables a more granular analysis of colonial entanglements.¹¹ At the same time, this approach is embedded in broader debates on collective memory and societal responsibility for cultural and ideological legacies, offering avenues for a critical engagement with the colonial past.

Michael Rothberg’s analytical framework is particularly instructive to adequately capture the diversity of agency involved: His concept of the *implicated subject* moves beyond reductive perpetrator-victim dichotomies

by foregrounding actors who, without necessarily exercising direct violence, sustain power relations, embody hierarchies through institutional roles, and form part of the infrastructures that enable—including structurally—colonial violence. The implicated subject thus occupies a position of ambiguity; it is situated in-between.¹² Against this backdrop, the ensemble of individuals memorialized in the Nikolaikirche can

→ pp. 41–56 see
the contribution
by **Annika Bärwald**

be read in differentiated ways. On one side stands Carl Constantin von Schnitter (1657–1721), civil engineer and commander of the colonial fort _____ Groß Friedrichsburg on the coast of present-day Ghana. On the other side stands his contemporary, the court goldsmith Daniel Mannlich (1625–1701), who purchased and processed gold imported by Brandenburg-Prussia in the course of colonial expansion, though no direct personal involvement in colonial enterprises can be conclusively demonstrated in his case.

The degree and form of colonial involvement thus vary considerably and often remains opaque, discernible primarily through contextual inference. Many of those commemorated can nevertheless be understood as implicated subjects to differing degrees—actors who stabilized, participated in, and benefited from a system shaped by colonialism.¹³

Memory Culture

The burial and commemorative practices reflected in the memorial objects of the Nikolaikirche document a significant transformation during the early modern period. On the one hand, this shift included the interment of secular members of the urban population within church interiors in the form of burial vaults. On the other hand, it encompassed the emergence of predominantly vertical inscribed monuments as part of an expanding commemorative tradition.¹⁴

Within the Nikolaikirche, these practices are manifested in a variety of forms, including epitaphs with liturgical functions, exclusive memorial monuments, and so-called epitaph paintings dedicated to individual persons. These objects are distributed throughout the interior and exterior spaces of the church, including along the columns. Their spatial placement within the sacred interior is of particular significance. It reveals social hierarchies, insofar as burial sites located in the entrance area or near the main altar indicate elevated social status—as exemplified by the prominent, centrally positioned burial chapel of Carl Constantin von Schnitter.¹⁵ Such placements functioned as a means of “expressing one’s social status one last time.”¹⁶ At the same time, historical evidence suggests that memorial objects were not fixed permanently in place but frequently “migrated”¹⁷ within the church interior over time.

The range of social and professional¹⁸ groups represented demonstrates that the Nikolaikirche functioned not only as a memorial space for clergy and members of the nobility, but also as a site commemorating “important members of Berlin’s upper class.”¹⁹ The following section illustrates the breadth of these dynamics and their entanglement with the

city's history by examining three individuals and their respective networks: the pharmacist and court mint master Michael Aschenbrenner (1549–1609), the legal philosopher Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–1694), and the entrepreneur and tax official Johann Andreas von Kraut (1661–1723).

The Pharmacist Michael Aschenbrenner (1549–1605)

“The history of pharmacy must be both economic and social history as well as scientific history,” as Manfred Stürzbecher observes.²⁰ This perspective applies also to Berlin in the early modern period. Figures such as Michael Aschenbrenner occupied dual roles as civil servants and independent entrepreneurs: he served as court pharmacist and court mint master, contributed to the construction of the electoral mint in the palace, and took over two pharmacies from the court physician Augustin Steel, most recently at Molkenmarkt. Notably, almost directly opposite, one of Berlin's most important pharmacies of the period was established: the so-called Tempelhoff Pharmacy.²¹

Like many others associated with the Nikolaikirche, Aschenbrenner exemplifies an industry and a professional network. The pharmacy trade in Berlin underwent substantial transformations between the 16th and 18th centuries, spanning the Electorate of Brandenburg to the Kingdom of Prussia. In this context, further research is required to examine the sector's colonial entanglements: What decisions did the Berlin Pharmacists' Conference make regarding the import and trade of colonial goods? What insights can the pharmacopoeias *Dispensatorium Brandenburgicum* and *Pharmacopoea Borussica*²² provide? What information can be drawn from the inventory and cash books of the court pharmacy regarding trade practices, supply chains, and potential colonial dependencies?

In order to substantiate Stürzbecher's classification, it is important to consider the responsibilities of pharmacies and their competition with “material traders.” Both groups held distinct privileges over specific product categories, including colonial goods such as sugar, spices, medicinal plants, and tobacco. Until around 1620, pharmacies held a monopoly on sugar and confectionery.²³ From approximately 1712,²⁴ this monopoly was limited to the court pharmacy, and from 1725,²⁵ other pharmacies were prohibited from trading in herbs, spices, jams, wax, and spirits; according to Stürzbecher, these restrictions were repealed around 1787.²⁶ The diversity and sustainability of Berlin's pharmaceutical industry are already evident in what Alfred Adlung identifies as the first known Berlin-Cölln pharmacy privilege. Issued in 1481 to the pharmacist Johann Tempelhoff,²⁷ it stipulated that no other merchant in the city could sell relevant goods,

medicines, or confectionery—a clear reference to colonial goods as a permanent component of the product range. This privilege also extended into the network of the Nikolaikirche, demonstrating the integration of individual actors into broader commercial and social structures.

Aschenbrenner served as court pharmacist from 1583, helped design the court pharmacy from 1585, and remained in office until 1587. At the same time, he collaborated with the same master builder, Peter Kummer the Elder, to design the mint, serving simultaneously as mint master and as the official responsible for supervising coin production (Münzwardein); more precisely, he held the titles “Brandenburg Mint Master and Supreme Coin Supervisor of the Holy Roman Empire,”²⁸ and was considered Brandenburg’s “secret servant.”²⁹ Aschenbrenner’s close ties to the electoral court positioned him as a key figure in the establishment of the court pharmacy, the palace pharmacy, and the court mint in Berlin. He was commissioned by Electors Johann Georg and Joachim Friedrich, as well as Electress Katharina, to design the rooms in collaboration with Dresden court architect Peter Kummer from 1585 onwards, while construction and furnishing were executed by Lynar. The so-called “pharmacy wing” began construction in 1585, and in 1598 Electress Katharina relocated the electoral pharmacy from Halle to Berlin.

In terms of coloniality, it is particularly noteworthy that the impetus for establishing the court pharmacy appears to have been the artificial production of two biological materials: gold and/or precious stones. Both raw materials were relevant as colonial commodities and continued to hold significance in the Electorate of Brandenburg.³⁰

The importance of pharmacists in general, and Aschenbrenner in particular, is immediately evident upon entering the Nikolaikirche: a memorial stone for Aschenbrenner is positioned to the left of the entrance, while one for Zehender³¹ is on the right. According to Gelder, Aschenbrenner had arranged during his lifetime to be buried “in the tower hall opposite Mr. Alradio”³² at Nikolaikirche, reflecting both his status and his enduring connection to the church. Aschenbrenner’s lasting significance is also linked to his successors. In 1635, the pharmacy on Molkenmarkt passed into the hands of Bartholomäus Zorn (1606–1667), who later bequeathed it to his son Friedrich Zorn (1643–1716). It was subsequently taken over by Johann Christian Schrader (1683–1744), “presumably the first chairman” of the Berlin Pharmacists’ Conference.³³ Not only are Schrader and both Zorns—including Friedrich’s wife, the author Ursula Zorn—commemorated in the Nikolaikirche, but the Molkenmarkt pharmacy itself, which bore many names over time, is best known as “Zorn’s Pharmacy.” Current excavations on Molkenmarkt have uncovered the former building and its old inventory; a so-called “archaeological window” around the Zorn’sche Apotheke will later serve to showcase this segment of the city’s history.

By century

By year of death

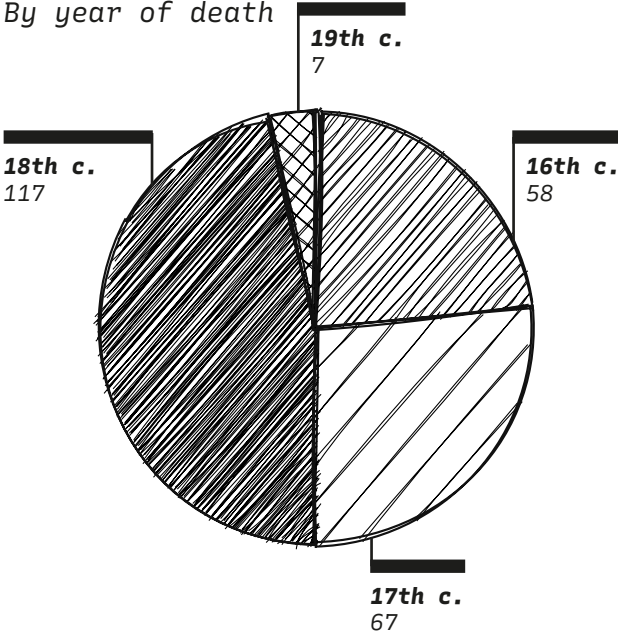


Figure 2.1: Most individuals commemorated at Nikolaikirche lived during the period of Electoral Brandenburg's colonial expansion.

By industry

Multiple categories possible; incl. family

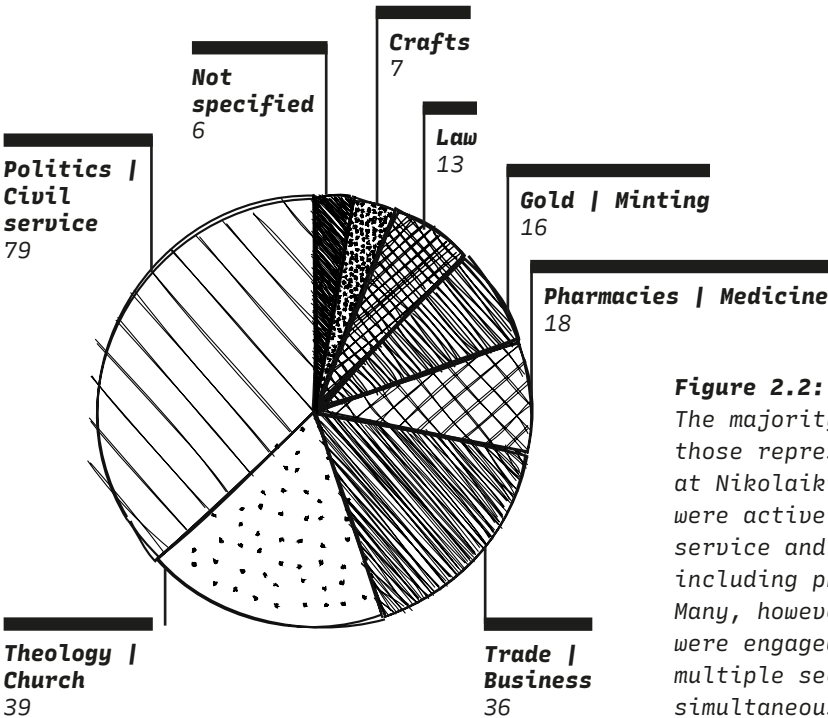


Figure 2.2: The majority of those represented at Nikolaikirche were active in state service and trade, including pharmacies. Many, however, were engaged in multiple sectors simultaneously.

By first name

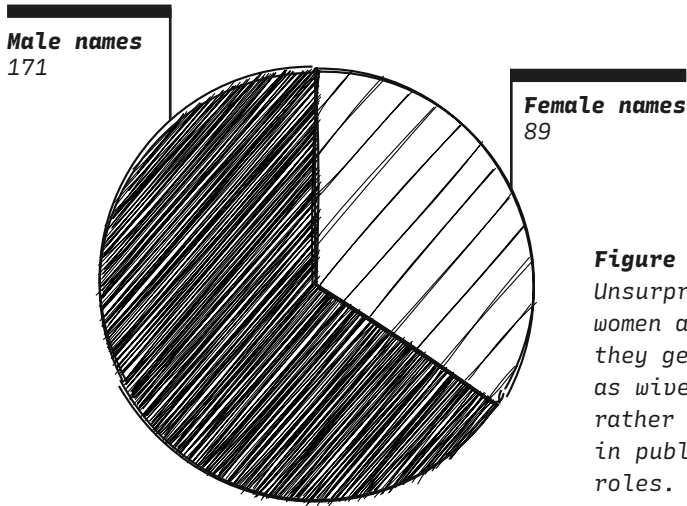


Figure 2.3: Unsurprisingly, when women are commemorated, they generally appear as wives or daughters rather than as actors in publicly visible roles.

The Legal Scholar Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–1694)

Samuel von Pufendorf's teachings on natural law and international law form the argumentative background to the question of how extraterritorial possessions and occupations—such as the Brandenburg colony of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg and the associated trade in gold and enslaved people on the coast of present-day Ghana, _____ Fort Dorothea near Accada (Accoda) from 1684, Taccarari from 1685, the island of _____ Arguin from 1687, leased by the Dutch from 1685, and the island of _____ St. Thomas—should be assessed as part of the state's claim.

It was a complex phase in the Electorate: At the center of this phase was Elector Friedrich William's plan after the Thirty Years' War to build up a standing army and thus reorganize the state finances in order to finance the army, the war fleet, the navy, and the colonial bases on the coast of present-day Ghana. Kurt Breysig's *Geschichte der brandenburgischen Finanzen* (History of Brandenburg Finances) centers this priority of the Elector, which he considered as a means to political power at European level.³⁴ Richard Schück explains how earlier colonial plans reemerged after the end of the wars in 1647 and 1660, linked to the establishment of a war fleet, since "world trade, colonies, and the war fleet were closely connected."³⁵

When Elector Friedrich William I sought to hire Samuel von Pufendorf as a historiographer in 1684,³⁶ Pufendorf was then serving at the Swedish court. It is noteworthy that the Elector recruited a new historiographer around the same time as the founding of the Brandenburg-African Company (BAC) and the establishment of _____] Groß Friedrichsburg—specifically selecting Pufendorf, a scholar renowned for his work at the Swedish court and for his major treatises *De jure naturae et gentium* (1672) and *De officio hominis et civis* (1673). Whether this timing was coincidental or strategic cannot be definitively determined. Four years later, Pufendorf joined the Brandenburg court, where he composed the commissioned biography during the Electorate's expansion along the West African coast, in present-day Ghana. The work was published posthumously in Latin in 1695 and later translated into German in 1710.

Although Pufendorf is often considered among the first historiographers to address Brandenburg's colonial expansion, this dimension of Elector Friedrich William's domestic and foreign policy receives minimal attention in his work: of the 1,312 pages in the German version, only two sections totaling five pages concern the Brandenburg colonial base. Pufendorf references the BAC, _____] Groß Friedrichsburg, general strategic considerations, and treaties, assessing the expansion as occurring "in accordance with international law." He emphasizes that such "actions" were carried out only under three conditions: voluntary submission, acquisition of permission from the "inhabitants," or the establishment of treaties. Furthermore, the local populations were reported to have declared their willingness to become subjects of the Elector.³⁷

Pufendorf's detailed knowledge of the colonial conquests of European states is also evident in his *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten, so itziger Zeit in Europa sich befinden* (*Introduction to the History of the Most Distinguished Empires and States Currently Existing in Europe*), published in 1682—coinciding with Brandenburg's land acquisition on the West African coast.³⁸ In this work, he explicitly addresses the colonial expansion of European powers such as Spain, Portugal, England, and Holland, as well as the system of enslaved labor and the transatlantic slave trade. Under the section "Fertility of Portugal," he describes how the country profited from its various colonies—from Brazil to the coasts of Africa and East India—through commodities such as sugar, cotton, and indigo, as well as enslaved people from Congo and Angola, whom the Portuguese "purchase" as "servants," so that they "have to do the hard work for them in Brazil."³⁹

Pufendorf's legacy also includes the philosophical concept of human dignity, which he grounded in an idealized state of nature. In practice, however, he regarded the enslavement as legitimate under certain conditions: voluntary surrender of freedom, captivity in war, or birth into the system of enslavement.⁴⁰

Notably, Pufendorf's familial connections further linked him to Brandenburg's colonial enterprise: his daughter Emerentia married Carl Constantin von Schnitter, the builder of _____| Kreis Friedrichsburg—the Electorate's first colonial base—in 1698, four years after Pufendorf's death.

The Entrepreneur and Tax Official Johann Andreas von Kraut (1661–1723)

Johann Andreas von Kraut's⁴¹ career developed along two parallel, sometimes hard to separate, trajectories. At the very least, he is to be considered an implicated subject in colonial networks through his multiple roles. On one hand, he pursued an entrepreneurial career as a merchant;⁴² on the other, he held positions as a civil servant.

As a merchant and entrepreneur, Kraut founded the Gold and Silver Manufactory in Berlin in 1686 and the Wool and Cloth Factory in 1713.⁴³ In his capacity as a civil servant, he occupied management positions within financial administration. Kraut also leveraged his companies as quasi-banking institutions—for instance, to enable the state to finance the army, pre-finance or co-finance jewelry deliveries⁴⁴ for the Great Elector, or support castle construction and urban development projects.⁴⁵ It is therefore unsurprising that secondary literature frequently characterizes Kraut as a “civil servant entrepreneur”⁴⁶ or even a “double agent,”⁴⁷ with some scholars arguing that he exploited his position within the state.⁴⁸ The multiplicity of Kraut's roles, their overlapping nature, and the advantages he derived from this multi-faceted career underscore both his extensive networks and the potential value of further research into the responsibilities and influence of figures like him.

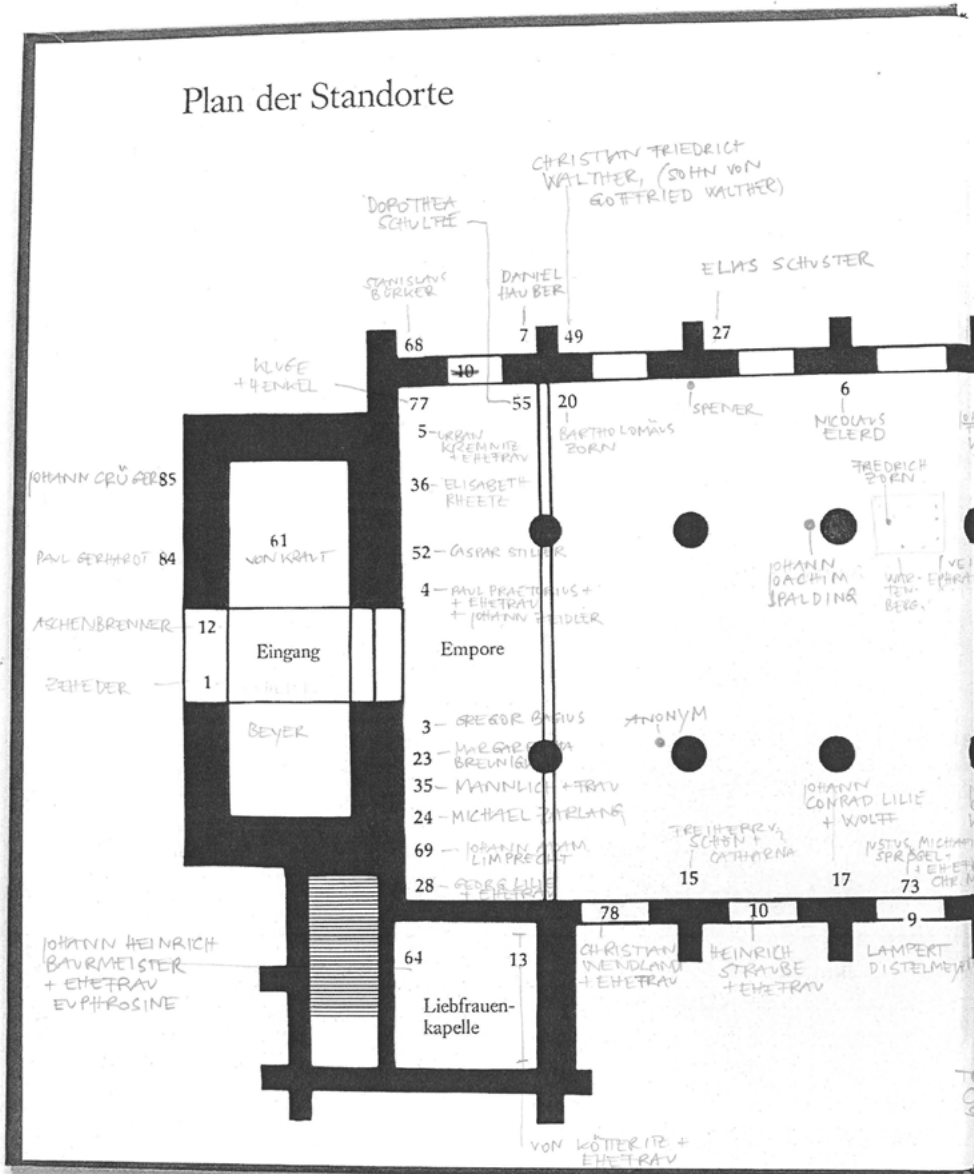
The Colonial Context: As an Entrepreneur

In the colonial context, Kraut's entrepreneurial activities were closely linked to raw materials, notably precious metals for his gold and silver braid manufacturing and indigo for wool production. In December 1686, Johann Andreas von Kraut was granted the privilege of gold and silver drawing.⁴⁹ The company he founded produced silver- and gold-woven fabrics, clothing, and accessories, primarily for the court and royal household, including liveries, braids, and trimmings.⁵⁰ While it is not

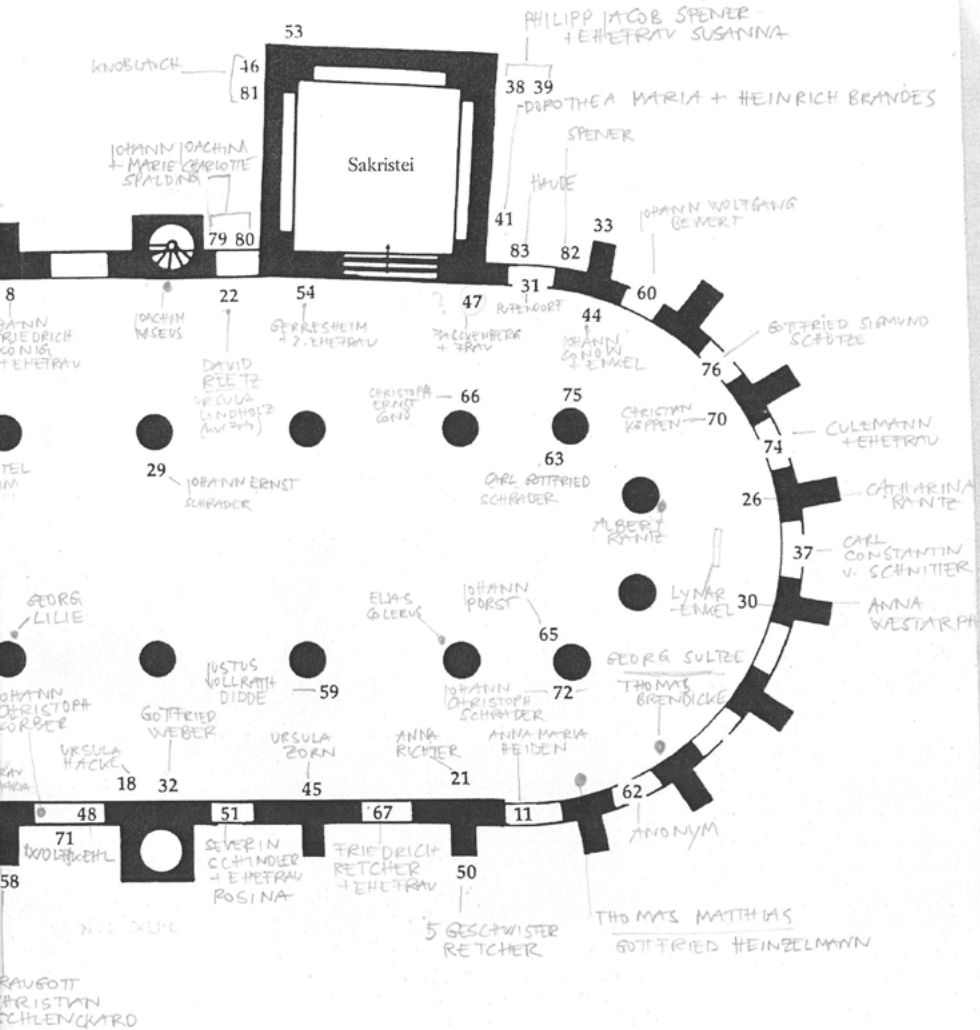
Figure 3:

Ground plan of Nikolaikirche with handwritten annotations indicating the current locations of memorial plaques and tomb monuments.

Design by A. Haeming, K. Brehm.



- EMPORE :
- MARGARETHA LIEBMANN
 - GEORG ANDREAS KRÜMPEL
 - HEINRICH KROLL
 - HENNING LÜDERS + EHEFRAU
 - MARTHA SOPHIE SEIDEL, geb. WOLL
 - JOHANN V. WÖSTERITZ + EHEFRAU
 - JOHANN GRÖGER



possible to verify precisely where the silver and gold used by the company were sourced, it is certain that Brandenburg-Prussia imported gold as part of its colonial expansion.⁵¹

Kraut's role as a "double agent" is particularly noteworthy. From 1713, he headed the state manufacturing industry.⁵² His wool factory, founded in the same year, is widely regarded as the cornerstone of Prussia's subsequent industrial policy.⁵³ It was part of Friedrich William I's plan: the so-called "warehouse" was intended to provide employment for soldiers' families. Initially functioning only as a repository for uniform fabrics,⁵⁴ the wool factory later employed up to 800 people.

The origin of indigo in Kraut's production is also relevant. Prussian-Brandenburg soldiers' uniforms were blue, and according to Hugo Rachel, the "warehouse" was supplying "the entire army"⁵⁵ just three years after its founding. During Kraut's lifetime, these fabrics were likely dyed primarily with woad.⁵⁶ By the time of his death in 1723, the factory demonstrably used indigo—a plant cultivated by enslaved people on Caribbean plantations under inhumane conditions. Notably, colonial indigo did not play a major role in European fabric production until the second half of the eighteenth century.⁵⁷

The Colonial Context: As a Civil Servant

Kraut's tenure in government service partially overlapped with that of Pufendorf, situating him within the broader context of army establishment, the development phase of the Brandenburg-African Company (BAC), and the founding of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg. From the late seventeenth century, Kraut held various senior positions in the administration and was thereby involved in colonial expansion to varying degrees. From 1686, he oversaw payments to Brandenburg troops for the General War Commissariat and later served as war commissioner and chief receiver of the General War Treasury, which Rachel describes as the "largest treasury of the financial administration."⁵⁸ He was also responsible for the domain treasury and the Elector's private treasury.⁵⁹ Kraut's responsibilities expanded further after 1713 with the accession of King Friedrich William I, who established the General Finance Directorate—a precursor to a modern Ministry of Finance. According to Adolph Friedrich Riedel, the costs of the navy for _____ Groß Friedrichsburg were "covered partly from war funds and partly from treasury funds"⁶⁰—the same navy that, under Director General Benjamin Raulé, enabled the construction and maintenance of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg from 1681 onwards.⁶¹ Special expenditures, such as those for enslaved people, were subsequently funded not from the war chest, as before, but from the treasury and other sources.⁶² Kraut, in his senior position within the financial administration, was jointly responsible for all of these financial operations.

At the end of 1713, the king involved Kraut in a plan concerning the so-called “African affairs,”⁶³ referring to the colonial territories established by his father, Elector Friedrich William, along the Gold Coast of present-day Ghana, including the fort of _____ | Cross Friedrichsburg. Friedrich William I’s objective since taking office had been to discontinue his father’s colonial policy and to sell these territories.

Location in the City

Kraut’s activities can also be traced to the Mühlendamm area. His career began at a trading house specializing in silk goods on Breite Straße, on the south bank in Cölln,⁶⁴ where he initially joined as a commercial servant⁶⁵ and became a partner in 1686.⁶⁶ Later, he is reported to have owned a house at what was then St. Georgenstraße 60, later Königstraße, and today Rathausstraße, not far from the Nikolaikirche.⁶⁷

The gold and silver manufactory was later located on Molkenmarkt, at Stralauer Straße 33.⁶⁸ Contrary to some accounts in the literature, this location only came into use when Kraut’s partner Severin Schindler joined the enterprise in 1702⁶⁹ and presumably became sole owner in 1704. According to Nicolai, Schindler had a “spacious building” constructed at the beginning of the street at Molkenmarkt “at the beginning of the century,” likely in 1707⁷⁰—the so-called “Schindler House”—where he then established “the gold and silver manufactory.”⁷¹ Schindler and his wife, Maria Rosina, are also commemorated in the Nikolaikirche.⁷²

This cross-sectional example demonstrates that the spatial and geographical context of the Nikolaikirche offers significant potential for further research and educational approaches. By examining the biographical trajectories of individuals associated with the church, it is possible to reveal the networks in which they moved and thereby make the colonial history of the city visible through their lives and actions.

Endnotes

- 1** Cf. Borrmann, Richard: *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler von Berlin*. Berlin, 1893, p. 51; Badstübner, Ernst: *Berlin, Nikolaikirche*. Leipzig, 1991, p. 1–3; Henkys, Albrecht: *Die Berliner Nikolaikirche: Gotteshaus – Denkmal – Museum*. Berlin, 2010, p. 9. The first reference to the existence of the church is the mention of Provost Simeon | Simeyon in 1245, and it was first mentioned in a document in 1264. Cf. Henkys, p. 13; Borrmann, p. 221.
- 2** Borrmann, pp. 53–54.
- 3** Brehm, Knut: *Grabmalkunst aus vier Jahrhunderten. Epitaphien und Grabdenkmäler in der Nikolaikirche zu Berlin*. Katalog der Sepulkralplastik. Berlin, 1994.
- 4** Badstübner, pp. 2–3; Cf. also Henkys, p. 13.
- 5** Henkys, pp. 13–14.
- 6** Borrmann, p. 222.
- 7** Cf. *ibid.*, p. 53.
- 8** *Ibid.*, p. 224.
- 9** *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 10** *Ibid.*, p. 228.
- 11** Stoler, Ann Laura: *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton/Oxford, 2009, pp. 7–8.
- 12** Knittel, Susanne C. | Forchieri, Sofía: "Navigating implication: An interview with Michael Rothberg," in: *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 3, Issue 1, 2020, p. 10.
- 13** Also: Male. The crypt for him and his wife Anna Catharina in Nikolaikirche was designed by court architect Andreas Schlüter.
- 14** Cf. Kohn, Renate: "Zwischen standesgemäßem Repräsentationsbedürfnis und Sorge um das Seelenheil. Die Entwicklung des frühneuzeitlichen Grabdenkmals." In: Hengerer, Mark (ed.): *Macht und Memoria. Begräbniskultur europäischer Oberschichten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Böhlau/Köln, 2005, pp. 19–46.
- 15** Gokenbach, Gabi und Wolfgang et al. (ed.): *Die Epitaphie der Freiherren von Woellwarth*. Essingen, 2020, p. 40.
- 16** Anderson, Gudrun: "Der Tod als Statusbegründung: Epitaphien und Gräber einer schwedischen Stadt-elite 1650-1770." In: Hengerer, Macht und Memoria, pp. 47–70; here: p. 48.
- 17** Cf. Kohn, pp. 35–36.
- 18** Cf. the diagrams in figures 2.1., 2.2., 2.3.
- 19** Frie, Ewald: "Adelskreise und des Königs Rock. Vom Bestattungsverhalten der brandenburgischen Nobilität im 18. Jahrhundert," in: Hengerer, Macht und Memoria. pp. 291–315; hier: p. 294.
- 20** Stürzbecher, Manfred: "Zur Biographie Alt-Berliner Apotheker. Pharmaziegeschichtliches aus der Leichenpredigtsammlung

des Gymnasiums zum Grauen Kloster in Berlin." In: Bessler, Otto et al. (ed.): *Beiträge zur Pharmazie und ihrer Nebengebiete*. Vol. 2. Berlin (Ost), 1956, pp. 49–75; here: p. 49.

21 That is where the Ephraim Palace stands today, built on this site in 1766 by the entrepreneur, banker, coin lessee, and court jeweler Veitel Heine Ephraim (after he had acquired the previous building and land in 1762). Facade elements of the Ephraim Palace are on display in the Nikolaikirche.

22 Even essays on pharmacopoeias as expressions of political action fail to mention the colonial (trade) contexts," imports of raw materials, and knowledge.

Cf. e.g. Bergmann, Günter: "Von den 'Brandenburg-Preußischen Dispensatorien' zur 'Pharmacopoea Borussica'." In: Müller-Jahncke, Wolf-Dieter | Friedrich, Christoph (ed.): *Preußen und die Pharmazie. Die Vorträge der Pharmaziehistorischen Biennale in Potsdam vom 23. bis 25. April 2004*. Stuttgart, 2006, pp. 53–68.

23 Stürzbecher refers to a corresponding document for the Földerich Pharmacy. Cf. Stürzbecher, p. 25.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 51

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

27 Adlung, Alfred: *Die Entwicklung Des Brandenburgisch-Preussischen Apothekenwesens Bis Zum Erlass Der Revidierten Apothekerordnung Vom 11. Oktober 1801*. Berlin, 1931,

p. 6. Tempelhoff is not remembered in the Nikolaikirche, but all of his successors are: Johann Zehender, Peter Heuenzweig, and both of their sons.

28 Cf. *ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*

30 Zu Hofapotheke und Apotheken als Laboratorien cf. e.g., Klein, Ursula: "Apothecary-Chemists in Eighteenth-Century Germany." In: Lawrence M. Principe (ed.): *New Narratives in Eighteenth Century Chemistry*. Berlin, 2007, pp. 97–137.

31 Or „Zeheder," both spellings are common.

32 Alradio is referring to Zehender here. Gelder, Hermann: "Zum 150-jährigen Bestehen des Berliner Apotheker-Vereins, Part 1," in: *Pharmazeutische Zeitung* 70, Issue 8, 1925, p. 110.

33 Motschmann, Uta (ed.): *Handbuch der Berliner Vereine und Gesellschaften 1786–1815*. Berlin, München, Boston, 2015, p. 37 ff.

34 Breysig, Kurt: *Geschichte der brandenburgischen Finanzen in der Zeit von 1640 bis 1697: Darstellung und Akten. Erster Band. Die Centralstellen der Kammerverwaltung. Die Amtskammer, das Kassenwesen und die Domänen der Kurmark*. Berlin, 1915, p. 4.

35 Schück, Richard: *Brandenburg-Preussens Kolonial-Politik unter dem grossen Kurfürsten und seinen Nachfolgern (1647–1721)*. Vol 1. Leipzig, 1889, p. 87.

- 36** Döring, Detlef: *Samuel Pufendorf in der Welt des 17. Jahrhunderts: Untersuchungen zur Biographie Pufendorfs und zu seinem Wirken als Politiker und Theologe.* Frankfurt am Main, 2012, p. 131 ff.
- 37** Pufendorf, Samuel von: "Die Schiffsfarth der Brandenburgischen Africanischen Compagnie in Guinea, 1681," in: *ibid: Friederich Wilhelms des Grossen, Chur-Fürstens Zu Brandenburg Leben und Thaten.* Übers. Jakob Paul von Gundling, Berlin, 1710, p. 946-949.
- 38** Pufendorf: *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten, so itziger Zeit in Europa sich befinden.* Franckfurt am Meyn, 1682. Cf. Saastamoinen, Kari: "Pufendorf on Natural Equality, Human Dignity, and Self-Esteem," in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 39-62.
- 39** Pufendorf: *Einleitung*, p. 176.
- 40** It is semantically complex and problematic to translate Pufendorf's concepts of natural law based on the Latin "servus" and "servitus" 1:1 with today's epistemic approaches to slavery.
- 41** Cf. also: Krautt. Den Adelstitel erhielt er erst 1703. In many publications, he has been and continues to be confused with his brother Christian Friedrich Kraut (1651-1714).
- 42** Cf. Rachel, Hugo: *Die Zeit des Merkantilismus 1648-1806.* Berliner Großkaufleute und Kapitalisten, Vol 2. ed. Johannes Schultze, Berlin, Boston, [1938] 2019, p. 137; Hinrichs, Carl: *Die Wollindustrie in Preußen unter Friedrich Wilhelm I.: Darstellung mit Aktenbeilagen.* Berlin, 1933, p. 17 ff.
- 43** Documents and literature use "Lagerhaus" synonymously with the company name.
- 44** Cf. Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 137, p. 155 ff.; Hinrichs: p. 17 ff.
- 45** Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 161; Breysig: p. 532.
- 46** Cf. e.g., Reissig, Harald: "Das Berliner Lagerhaus 1713-1816. Zum Einfluß von Regierung und Wirtschaft auf die Entwicklung einer altpreußischen Staatsmanufaktur," in: *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 29, 1980, pp. 68-95; here p. 71.
- 47** Hinrichs, p. 4.
- 48** Hinrichs, p. 19.
- 49** Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 135.
- 50** Cf. *Invoices to Westorff and Schindler for liveries: Breysig*, p. 534.
- 51** Cf. e.g., Weindl, Andrea: *Die Kurbrandenburger im ,atlantischen System', 1650-1720.* Köln, 2001.
- 52** Cf. e.g., Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 165.
- 53** Cf. Hinrichs, p. 1-14; Reissig: p. 73; Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 172.
- 54** Cf. e.g., Nicolai, p. 1, p. 16.
- 55** Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 168.

56 The origin of the woad is unclear. According to Lauterbach, Elector Friedrich William specifically promoted the cultivation of woad; according to Wimpler, local dyes for uniforms were not grown in commercially relevant quantities in Prussia, and from the early 18th century onwards, woad and indigo were mixed as dyes in fabric and textile production. Cf. Lauterbach, Fritz: *Der Kampf des Waides mit dem Indigo*. Leipzig, 1905, p. 75; Wimpler, Jutta: "Dyeing Woollens in Eighteenth-Century Berlin: The Königliches Lagerhaus and the Globalisation of Prussia through Colouring Materials." In: Siebenhüner, Kim et al. (ed.): *Cotton in Context : Manufacturing, Marketing, and Consuming Textiles in the German-Speaking World (1500–1900)*. Köln, 2019, pp. 201–204; Schreiber, Daniel Gottfried: *Historische, physische und economische Beschreibung des Waides, dessen Baues, Bereitung und Gebrauchs zum Färben*. Halle, 1752, p. 124 ff.

57 On the one hand, this was due to a lack of knowledge about its use; on top of that, indigo was considered the "devil's color," and from the mid-16th century onwards, it was banned in various duchies and at the higher state level (including in England and France). Wimpler, p. 200 ff.; Lauterbach, p. 62, p. 65 ff.; Timmermann, Anja: "Kaufmännisches Wissen über Kolonialwaren am Beginn der industriellen Entwicklung Europas. Das Beispiel des überseeischen Farbstoffs Indigo," in: Denzel, Markus et al. (ed.): *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte* 6, 2006, pp. 159–162. In Hinrichs' work on the wool industry [Die Wollindustrie],

indigo appears only in connection with the import of pre-dyed or printed "Indiennes" fabrics, only twice in the entire volume, and not at all in the context of wool manufacturing. Cf. Hinrichs: p. 102, p. 321.

58 Established in 1674 to optimally build and expand a standing army. Cf. e.g., Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 137.

59 Cf. Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 164; Hinrichs, p. 150 ff.

60 Riedel, Adolph Friedrich: *Der Brandenburgisch-Preussische Staatshaushalt in den beiden letzten Jahrhunderten*. Berlin, 1866, p. 25. Due to the administrative reform under Dodo von Knyphausen, personnel, structural, and financial responsibilities, titles, and budget sources changed in many cases.

61 "Raule's Bestallung zum General-Directeur de Marine mit Obristen-Rang," printed in Schück, Richard: *Brandenburg-Preussens Kolonial-Politik unter dem grossen Kurfürsten und seinen Nachfolgern (1647–1721)*. Vol. 2, *Urkunden und Aktenstücke*. Leipzig, 1889, p. 99; Schück: Vol. 1, p. 127.

62 "Neuer Marine-Etat," in Schück, Vol. 2, p. 244.

63 Cf. "Royal order to von Jlgem, von Kraut, Cramer, and Ramler concerning African affairs," 20 October, 1713, Secret State Archives (GStA), R 65.34; Schück, Vol. 2, p. 146.

64 Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 17.

65 An entry-level position, comparable to apprentices or referred to as "assistants." [Hilfs-personen].

66 Cf. Rachel, Vol. 2, p. 17. Rachel also refers to Küster, who lists Kraut as a "co-owner" as early as 1682. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 134.

67 Rachel, Vol. 1, p. 354–355.

68 Herz, Rudolf: "Berliner Barock: Bauten Und Baumeister Aus Der Ersten Hälfte Des 18. Jahrhunderts." Berlin, 1928, p. 35; Sommer, Roland: *Grottenarchitekturen im Gebiet Berlin/Brandenburg: Bauherren, Bauintentionen, Bausubstanz*. Dissertation, 2018, p. 325. The first location could not be determined in the course of this research.

69 There is conflicting information as to whether and from when Schindler was the sole owner, partner, or official managing director. Cf. Hertzberg, Gustav Friedrich: *Geschichte der Stadt Halle an der Saale von den Anfängen bis zur Neuzeit*. Vol. 2. Halle, 1889, p. 54; Rachel, Vol. 1, p. 186.

70 Sommer, p. 325.

71 There is conflicting information about this building: according to Sommer, the building already existed before that, and Schindler owned it from 1707 until his death; it is possible that there were major renovations and extensions, which would resolve this contradiction. Cf. Nicolai, Vol. 1, p. 24; Sommer, p. 325.

72 Severin Schindler's career and private life are closely linked to Johann Andreas von Kraut, who was

ten years his senior. Positions held by Kraut were repeatedly transferred to Schindler. The dynamics between the two remain unclear based on the sources available today, as does when and how they met. Presumably, it was before Kraut's dual career as an entrepreneur and civil servant began: Kraut married Schindler's sister Anna Ursula in 1685.

Image Credits

Figure 1: Inventory no. VII 64/341 c w; collection of Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. Reproduction photograph by Dorin Alexandru Ionita, Berlin.

Figure 2.1–2.3: Visual by Haeming. Design by visual intelligence.

Figure 3: Visualization by Anne Haeming and Knut Brehm, based on Knut Brehm, *Grabmalskunst aus vier Jahrhunderten. Epitaphien und Grabdenkmäler in der Nikolaikirche zu Berlin*. Katalog der Sepulkralplastik. Berlin, 1994, n.p.





Architecture and Power

*Plans, Interactions, and
Everyday Life of Brandenburg
Civil Engineer Carl Constantin
von Schnitter at the Colonial
Fort _____ | Groß Friedrichsburg,
1683–1685*

Annika Bärwald

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enslavement.*

If it were not for his magnificent funerary monument in Berlin's Nikolaikirche, Carl Constantin von Schnitter (1657–1721) might well be forgotten today. Located in the center of the choir, the sandstone relief depicts him surrounded by a “decorative ensemble of trophies and weapons.”¹ A plaque was added only in 2023, classifying the civil engineer and interim commander of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg as a key figure in early Brandenburg-Prussian colonial history.² The monument in the middle of the

→ pp. 19–38 see
the contribution
by **Anne Haeming**

capital serves as a reminder of how closely Brandenburg-Prussian history is linked to colonialism and the enslavement trade. In 1683, Schnitter's career in the Brandenburg military took him to a region in what is now southwestern Ghana, where he was tried in 1685 for embezzlement and abuse of power and later rehabilitated. His life and career exemplify how imagined and real power in West Africa were negotiated through architecture and they give insight into the daily life of the fort, which was marked by enslavement.

The Significance of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg for the Examination of German Colonial History

_____ Groß Friedrichsburg which Schnitter helped to complete, remains a symbol of Brandenburg-Prussia's enslavement trade to this day. The Brandenburg-African Company (BAC), founded in 1682 and operating as the Brandenburg-African-American Company (BAAC) from 1692 onwards, was largely owned by the Brandenburg elector Friedrich Wilhelm and his successors. It was dedicated to the trade in enslaved people and African raw materials. The company's development was largely shaped by the Dutch entrepreneur Benjamin Raulé. Following the establishment of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg, additional, smaller Brandenburg outposts were founded at Akwidaa, Takoradi, and Taccarama. Over the course of the company's operations, an estimated 22,750 individuals were deported to the Americas on its ships, of whom approximately

→ pp. 59–76 see
the contribution
by **Andrea Weindl**

18,400 survived the transatlantic passage.³ A leased plot of land on the island of _____ St. Thomas functioned as a key transshipment point in the Caribbean. After the company encountered financial difficulties, it was dissolved in 1711.⁴ The fort then fell to a local ruler named Jan Conny.

The significance of the BAC/BAAC remains the subject of controversial academic debate. In foundational works and primary source editions produced during the height of imperial expansion, _____] Groß Friedrichsburg was frequently invoked as a favorable point of reference—an alleged German colony that could serve as a model for contemporary imperial policies.⁵ More recent studies since the 1980s, however, have focused increasingly on the enslavement trade of the BAC/BAAC.⁶ The extent to which _____] Groß Friedrichsburg can be characterized as a colony remains debated, given the mutually influential relationships and dependencies between European and African actors. Roberto Zaugg, for instance, emphasizes that local Akan-speaking caboceers or capuciers (leaders, rulers, intermediaries) strategically leveraged alliances with European powers.⁷ According to John Kwadwo Osei-Tutu, forts functioned as a “middle ground” where European⁸ and African actors engaged in ongoing negotiation processes.⁹ Enslaved people transported on BAC/BAAC ships or employed at the fort primarily originated from the hinterland and occupied a hierarchically subordinate position, with markedly fewer possibilities compared to Europeans¹⁰ or free Africans. The enslavement trade operated by the BAC/BAAC contributed significantly to the expansion of colonial plantation economies in the Americas at the turn of the 18th century.

Imagined Supremacy: European Architecture in West Africa

In a 1684 drawing by Schnitter, _____] Groß Friedrichsburg [Translator’s note: The original text is rendered in an older form of German that reflected contemporary usage in the late 17th century. The English translation has been adapted into contemporary English for readability, with explanatory commentary provided only where the original wording carries specific historical, cultural, or technical significance] is depicted almost as the center of the world: The fort is drawn with exaggerated perspective, and its diamond shape prominently projects into the sea from a headland. Smaller islands lie before it, while the surrounding area’s “three villages” are represented by diminutive, shadowy houses. The strongly curved horizon conveys the impression of encompassing half the globe. In the accompanying key, Schnitter highlights the site’s advantages: “[O]n the sides, there is the water source where we now fetch water,” and he notes the abundance of “good fish,” “oysters,” and “shellfish.” He further observes that a “bulwark could be built where our ships could dock and the goods could be conveniently unloaded.” According to Schnitter, inhabitants of the nearby villages came daily “to work on the fort.”¹¹

Initially, the site likely consisted solely of a fort enclosed by wooden palisades. In 1683, representatives of the elector undertook their first voyage to _____] Cape Three Points, concluded a treaty with local caboceers, and commenced construction of a fort near the village of Pokesu.¹² However, following the death of the two engineers who had accompanied them and attacks by neighboring groups, the fortification remained in a temporary state.¹³ To advance this prestigious project, the company's management sought a successor and specifically recruited the twenty-six-year-old Schnitter,¹⁴ who agreed to travel to West Africa "to build the Großfriedrichsburg fort and to make a map of all of it."¹⁵ In return, he secured promotion to the "rank of captain"¹⁶ and a monthly salary of 50 Reichsthaler.¹⁷ In his 1684 layout, Schnitter highlighted the progress achieved: unlike the earlier structure, the new fort adhered fully to geometric-Baroque architectural principles,¹⁸ with identical bastions added to each corner of the square plan so that "both sides of the mountain are defended" and all approaches could be "covered and guarded well [with musket fire]."¹⁹

As Christian Voigt observes, this depiction represented an idealized model; later illustrations reveal marked asymmetries.²⁰ _____] Groß Friedrichsburg underwent multiple expansions and reconstructions, yet the company's management quickly lost interest, as building materials and skilled labor were costly and the fort failed to meet expectations as a trading hub. In subsequent years, smaller outposts were established at Takoradi and Akwidaa, with Schnitter contributing to their planning. His construction sketch for the _____] fort Dorothea (also called Dorotheenschanze) in Akwidaa adhered to contemporary Baroque fort principles,²¹ featuring a triangular plan, whereas no stone fortifications were constructed at Takoradi.

_____ | Groß Friedrichsburg— A ‘Slave Castle’?

It remains uncertain whether _____ | Groß Friedrichsburg was ever used on a large scale for the transatlantic enslavement trade. Many West African ‘slave castles’, with their ‘slave dungeons’ and ‘doors of no return’, that were built by European companies have become global sites of memory, holding particular significance for the African diaspora.²² Sources indicate, however, that captains of BAC/BAAC ships acquired the majority of the more than 20,000 enslaved people they deported in the eastern kingdom of Hueda, in present-day Benin—a route documented by the ship’s surgeon Johann Peter Oettinger during the 1690s.²³ Some scholars question whether _____ | Groß Friedrichsburg was architecturally suited to accommodate large numbers of enslaved people, given the absence of large dungeons.²⁴ The architectural historian Louis P. Nelson notes, however, that the large underground prisons of many coastal forts were mostly constructed only from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Enslaved people were also held in warehouses, wooden barracks, and other temporary facilities prior to embarkation or were forced to remain on board while the ships were waiting for further captives. Only rarely have these architectures of enslavement survived the passage of time.²⁵

It is well documented that a substantial number of so-called ‘fort slaves’ lived in and around _____ | Groß Friedrichsburg. These were enslaved people who lived and worked on European forts for extended periods. For women and girls in particular, this proximity entailed an increased risk of sexual abuse.²⁶ At the same time, European garrisons often allowed them a relatively high degree of mobility, and some thus acted as “intermediaries between the European forts and surrounding African towns.”²⁷ In 1699, 216 ‘fort slaves’ were recorded at _____ | Groß Friedrichsburg; by 1709, the number was 168, including 72 women, 47 men, and 49 children.²⁸ Their precise roles are not fully documented, but included positions such as bombas (overseers), washerwomen, water carriers, waiters, and cooks.²⁹ In the 1690s, BAC management decided to train twelve enslaved people as soldiers; however, likely due to fears of uprising, they were not issued rifles and were locked in their quarters under guard at night.³⁰ ‘Fort slaves’ were not protected from sale to the Americas, as evidenced by the deportation of 156 individuals to the Caribbean in 1699.³¹ Some BAC employees also appear to have held enslaved individuals privately. Schnitter, for example, sold goods to the caboceer Sahoun in April 1685, receiving gold and an enslaved person in return; it is unclear whether this individual became privately ‘owned’ or remained company ‘property.’³²

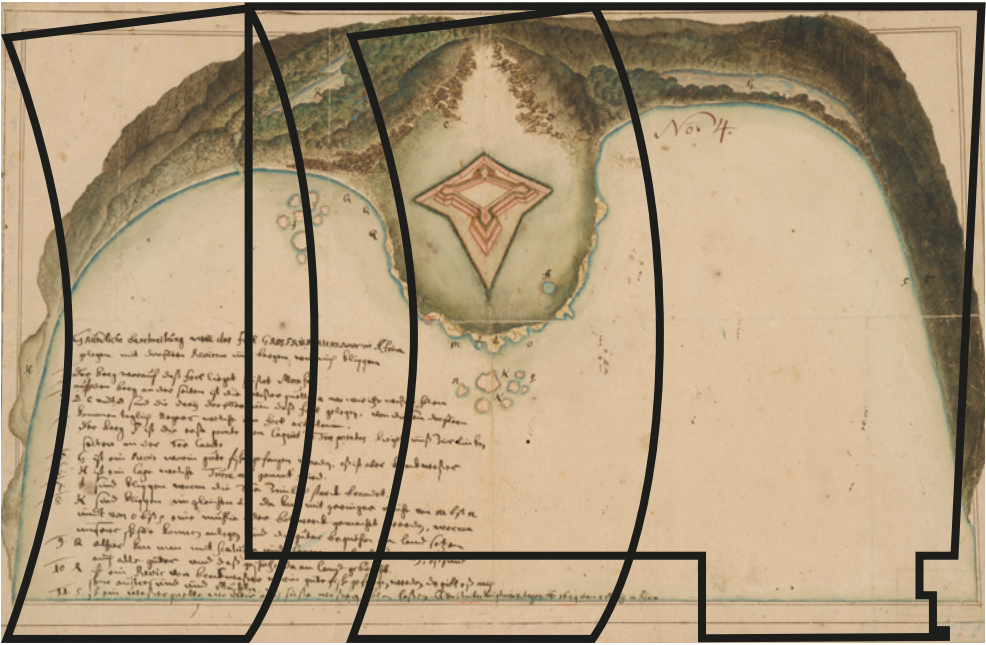


Figure 1:

Map from Schnitter's manuscripts:
 "Thorough Description of the Location of Fort
 Cros Friederichsbour in Africa" (1684).

The European and African Struggle for Spheres of Influence

Shortly after his arrival, Schnitter assumed additional responsibilities. He became a co-signatory to two treaties concluded by the BAC with the caboceers of Akwidaa (February 1684) and Takoradi (February 1685) and served as interim commander of _____ Groß Friederichsburg from January to April 1685. The Akwidaa treaty, signed by the town's "24 capuciers," (caboceers) recorded that they had "sold" or even transferred the land for "one peso of gold."³³ It stipulated that local workers would assist in constructing the fort, supply food, and wood in exchange for wages, and refrain from trading with other nations, particularly the Dutch West India Company (WIC).³⁴

In a treaty concluded a year later with the caboceers of Takoradi, Schnitter is designated as "Major and Commandant." The treaty states that the local population, feeling abandoned by the Dutch, requested the BAC to establish a settlement. The council of _____

Groß Friedrichsburg then resolved to “plant a flag there and let it fly” and to construct a “small redoubt [fortification] surrounded by palisades.”³⁵ Scholars of African history, however, emphasize that from a local perspective such treaties did not constitute land acquisition but rather a form of rental contract or lease maintained through regular gifts, therefore not implying claims to sovereignty.³⁶ Similar conflicts between European and African authorities were frequent, as the region comprised numerous smaller political entities, some of which were mutually hostile.³⁷ Certain caboceers leveraged alliances with European powers for military support beyond mere economic considerations.³⁸

In the ensuing years, both treaties provoked conflicts with the WIC, which asserted claims to the territories. Correspondence during these conflicts reflect the Europeans’ claims to the land, even as both parties repeatedly invoked the notion of free and responsible Africans. In letters written in January 1687, WIC representatives declared that they had already “obtained”³⁹ the area around Takoradi through treaty agreements, suggesting that the caboceers had entered into these treaties voluntarily. The Dutch company threatened that if the BAC did not vacate the post, it would resort to “bloodshed”⁴⁰ and a punitive expedition against “our rebels around Taccoray.”⁴¹ This threat was carried out in February 1687 when both parties deployed African soldiers to attack and garrison the forts.⁴²

Trade, Everyday Life, and Abuse of Power

During the 1680s, BAC leaders and shareholders grew increasingly dissatisfied with developments at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg. The fort had failed to become the anticipated trading hub, prompting the company management to investigate the causes through interrogations and to sanction employees accused of engaging in prohibited trade on their own account or with foreign ships.⁴³ Although invoices from 1683 to 1685 demonstrate regular and close interactions between Europeans⁴⁴ and African buyers, the volumes of goods exchanged remained limited. For instance, the widow of the caboceer “Casp[r]” purchased two blue perpetuans (woolen fabrics), and Jacobje, Herman, and Pieter Claas from the Dutch _____ fort Elmina acquired blankets, 74 muskets, fabrics, and tallow, among other items.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the quantity of unsold or spoiled goods was sufficient to justify returning a shipment to Emden in 1684.⁴⁶ Akan merchants did not feel bound to a single European trading partner; an interrogation in 1687 reveals that local traders, after being cheated at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg

relocated their goods to the Dutch _____] fort St. Anthony.⁴⁷ Company employees and local caboceers also lodged complaints regarding diplomatic ineptitude, arbitrary violence against locals, embezzlement of company funds, and sexual misconduct.⁴⁸ Because they sought to maintain their trading relationships, BAC leaders treated such accusations with considerable seriousness.⁴⁹

After serving as interim commander for four months, Schnitter was dismissed from _____] Groß Friedrichsburg in August 1685.⁵⁰ The company management under Benjamin Raulé accused him of both embezzlement and sexual misconduct. Raulé, for instance, wrote in 1686 that Schnitter and his predecessors had “irresponsibly lost the company 240 marks of gold, amounting to 36,000 Reichsthaler.”⁵¹ Elsewhere, it was stated that “Commandants Philip Pietersen Blonck, Nathaniel Dilliger, and Carel Constantin Schnitter—respectively through theft, negligence, and debauchery—conducted themselves in such a manner that it was a miracle the company still existed.”⁵²

Accusations of sexual misconduct also appear in instructions from Emden in December 1684, which decried the “licentious, infamous, and godless lives of most servants.” Discontent and public scandal arose from the fact that “each of them kept a certain number of *whores* on his own” and expended company funds in doing so. Among the countermeasures ordered were joint evening prayers and attendance at Sunday sermons.⁵³ It is not entirely clear who was referred to by the term “*whores*” in this context. Marriages between Europeans and African women were not uncommon along the coast, but they typically occurred with the consent of local families and provoked little offense; it is therefore more likely that the women in question were sex workers and/or female ‘*fort slaves*.’ As Rebecca Shumway has shown in the British context, such sexual relationships always occurred within highly asymmetrical power structures. Nevertheless, she notes that a spectrum existed, with some relationships extending “beyond casual sex or rape,”⁵⁴ for instance when sexual partners were appointed heirs or granted freedom.

Few details are known regarding the allegations of embezzlement. Raulé claimed that Schnitter and others had “squandered and spent”⁵⁵ company funds. A 1685 inventory records that Schnitter had “wasted” approximately 25 gold marks and was responsible for the loss of goods valued at just under eight gold marks. Of the 240 gold marks claimed by Raulé, a further 100 were attributed to the two forts, 20 to damaged goods, and 15 to liquor.⁵⁶ Instructions from Emden underscore that BAC management feared losing control over personnel and operations at _____] Groß Friedrichsburg where—as they alleged—a dissolute lifestyle had become entrenched, with employees working for their own benefit at best, and at worst alienating all trading partners through excessive violence and offensive conduct.

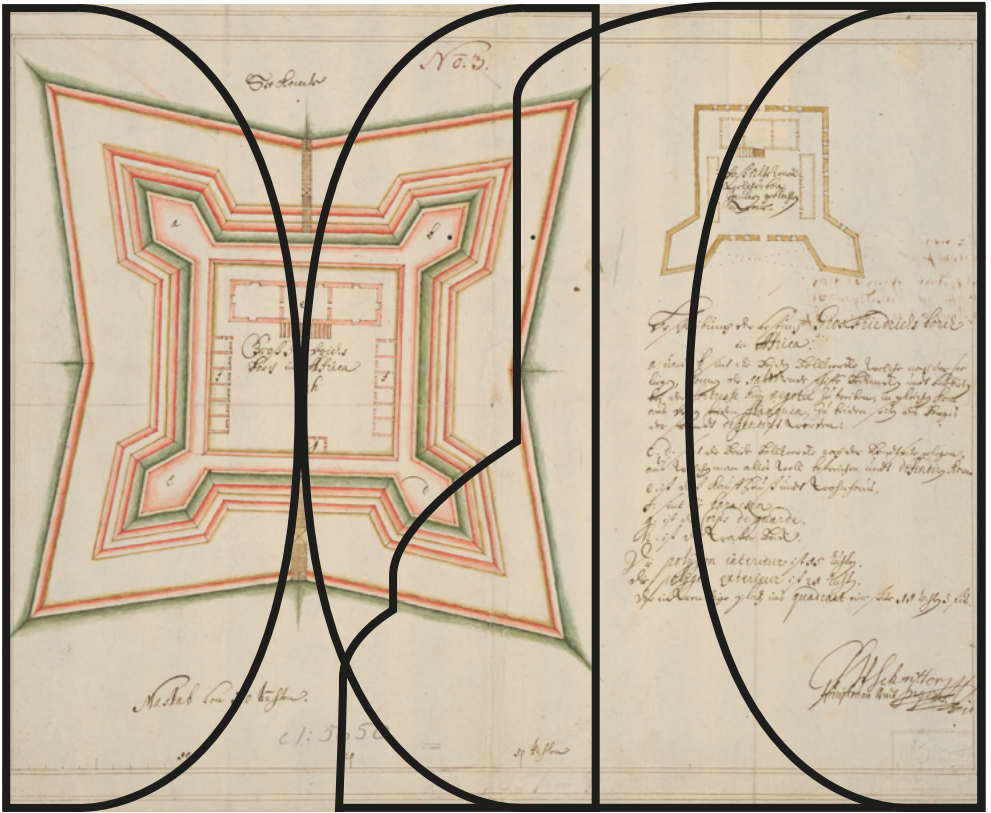


Figure 2:

Map from Schnitter's manuscripts: "Sketches of the fort 'Gros Friedrichsbourg' in Africa how it was built" (1684).

After his return, Schnitter was imprisoned in Emden in the autumn of 1685. The elector expressed "particular displeasure" that Schnitter and others had caused "great damage" through their "negligence, malice, and dissolute, wicked lives." He ordered an investigation and commanded that "in particular, the engineer Schnitter be kept in good and careful custody so that he does not escape prematurely and take flight."⁵⁷ Only after the regent's death in late 1688 did the company leadership write to his son, noting that "there is still a certain delinquent named Schnitter sitting here in Schultzen Keller [Translator's note: probably a prison cell in the townhall] who has now been there for three years."⁵⁸ After a brief exchange of letters, it was recorded that "the aforementioned [investigation] records* (*despite diligent searching) could not be found anywhere here."⁵⁹ Apparently, no trial took place. There is also no documentation indicating whether Schnitter received any compensation.

Conclusion

In light of his imprisonment and the associated loss of reputation, Carl Constantin von Schnitter's subsequent career is remarkable. In the Prussian military, he advanced from quartermaster to lieutenant colonel and ultimately became commander of the Brandenburg fort at Peitz.⁶⁰ In 1698, he married Emerentia Elisabeth, daughter of the scholar Samuel von Pufendorf, in Berlin. Pufendorf had not only addressed issues of enslavement and serfdom within natural law but had also written on _____

→ pp. 19–38 see
the contribution
by **Anne Haeming**

Groß Friedrichsburg.⁶¹ Schnitter and his wife quickly entered court circles, with several members of the electoral family—which became the royal family in 1701—and influential courtiers serving as godparents to their children.⁶² Among these was Paul von Fuchs, who maintained close ties to the BAC as both a shareholder and a temporary company negotiator.⁶³

Schnitter himself rarely reflected on his time at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg, noting only in 1698 that he had “served the House of Brandenburg both at home and abroad for 22 years.”⁶⁴ In many respects, the fort and the maps he produced constitute his most enduring legacy. Both drew considerable attention in the late nineteenth century: for example, an imperial military expedition led by Captain Wilhelm Stubenrauch set out for West Africa in 1884, mapped the area surrounding the fort, and transported cannons and individual stones back to Berlin.⁶⁵ Schnitter's nearly symmetrical depiction of _____ Groß Friedrichsburg as an impeccable fort functioned as a projection of power and could readily be imagined as the center of an extensive colony. What his sketches obscured, however, were local negotiation processes, mismanagement, abuses of authority, and the enslavement trade, which formed the economic foundation of the Brandenburg-African Company.



Figure 3:

Aerial view of fort _____ Groß Friedrichsburg,
Ghana, 2024. Photograph by Christian Hartl-Reiter.

Endnotes

1 Brehm, Knut: *Grabmalsskulpturen aus vier Jahrhunderten. Epitaphien und Grabdenkmäler in der Nikolai-Kirche zu Berlin. Katalog der Sepulkralkunstplastik*. Berlin, 1994, 70f.

2 *Dekoloniale Memory Culture in the City and the Berlin Stadtmuseum initiated the plaque, which was written by Lorraine Bluche with the support of Christian Kopp.*

3 Cf. Weindl, Andrea: "The Slave Trade of Northern Germany from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries," in: Eltis, David | Richardson, David (ed.): *Extending the Frontiers. Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*. New Haven, Conn., 2008, pp. 250–271, here p. 261.

4 See in detail van der Heyden, Ulrich: *Rote Adler an Afrikas Küste. Die brandenburgisch-preussische Kolonie Großfriedrichsburg an der westafrikanischen Küste*. Berlin, 2001, 2nd ed.; Brübach, Nils: "'Seefahrt und Handel sind die fürnehmsten Säulen eines Estats': ... Jahrhundert," in: Zoller, Rüdiger (Hg.): *Amerikaner wider Willen: Beiträge zur Sklaverei in Lateinamerika und ihren Folgen*. Frankfurt am Main, 1994, pp. 11–42; Weindl, Andrea: *Die Kurbrandenburger im 'atlantischen System,' 1650–1720*, in: *Arbeitspapiere zur Lateinamerikaforschung* 2, Issue 3 (2001), p. 1–90.

5 See in particular Schück, Richard | Kayser, Paul: *Brandenburg-Preußens Kolonialpolitik unter dem Großen Kurfürsten*

und seinen Nachfolgern (1647–1721). Leipzig, 1889, 2 vols.

6 See above an Jones, Adam (ed.): *Brandenburg Sources for West African History, 1680–1700*. Stuttgart, 1985; Leschke, Gabriele: *Otto Friedrich von der Gröben und der koloniale Diskurs*. PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, 2019; Zaugg, Roberto | Koslowski, Craig (Hg.): *Oettinger, Johann Peter: A German Barber-Surgeon in the Atlantic Slave Trade. The Seventeenth-Century Journal of Johann Peter Oettinger*. Charlottesville/London, 2020.

7 Cf. Zaugg, Roberto: "Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa? Brandenburg-Prussia, Atlantic Entanglements and National Memory," in: Osei-Tutu, John Kwadwo | Smith, Victoria Ellen (ed.): *Shadows of Empire in West Africa. New Perspectives on European Fortifications*. Cham, 2018, pp. 33–73, here pp. 36–43.

8 Translator's Note: The German original includes a footnote at this point stating that, according to current research, not a single European person identified as a woman lived in the fort during the period of the BAC/BAAC. The German text therefore explicitly explains the decision not to use gender-inclusive language in this instance. Because this linguistic distinction does not map directly onto English grammatical conventions, a brief additional clarification is required here.

9 Osei-Tutu, John Kwadwo: "Introduction," in: idem. (ed.): *Forts, Castles and Society in West*

Africa. *Gold Coast and Dahomey, 1450–1960*. Leiden/Boston, 2019, pp. 1–32, here p. 22.

10 See Translator's Note, endnote 8.

11 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB) IIIC, Kart X 481 Manuscripts, Schnitter: "Detailed description of the location of Fort Gros Friederichsbour in Africa: with villages, hunting grounds, mountains, and cliffs" (1684).

12 The region was inhabited by Nzima and Ahanta. Cf. Nyarko, Edward Adum: *Archaeology of Prince's Town*. University of Ghana, Legon, 2013. pp. 118–121.

13 Cf. Schück et al., *Brandenburg-Preußens Kolonial-Politik*, Vol. 1, p. 139.

14 On Schnitter's origin and life see also Wentscher, Erich: "Die Entfaltung der Schnitter in Görlitz und Zittau," in: *Der Herold: Vierteljahrsschrift für Heraldik, Genealogie und verwandte Wissenschaften N.F.*, Vol. 10 (1983), pp. 229–258; Schnitter-Tittmann, Maria: "Zur Herkunft des Karl Konstantin v. Schnitter und seiner Brüder," in: *Der Herold: Vierteljahrsschrift für Heraldik, Genealogie und verwandte Wissenschaften* 33, Vol. 13:1 (1990), pp. 9–17. I would like to thank Ekkehart Tittmann for sending me the essay.

15 Cited according to: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK) VIII. HA Siegel, Wappen, Genealogie, Sammlung Friedrich Jorberg, No. 46, 61.

16 *idem*.

17 Cf. GStA PK, I HA, Rep. 65, No. 37 Privy Councillor, Naval and African Company Affairs: Letter from Clefmann to the Elector., 15/25 August 1683, fol. 142.

18 Cf. Krufft, Hanno-Walter: *Geschichte der Architekturtheorie. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. München, 1991, 3rd ed., pp. 122–132; Eichberg, Henning: "Geometrie als barocke Verhaltensnorm: Fortifikation und Exerzitien," in: *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 4, Issue 1 (1977), pp. 17–50.

19 SBB IIIC, Kart X 481–1 Manuscripts, Schnitter: "Sketches of the fort 'Gros-Friedrichsbour' in Africa how it was built" (1684).

20 Cf. Voigt, Christian: "Groß-Friedrichsburg," in: *Der Burgwart: Zeitung für Wehrbau, Wohnbau und Städtebau* 20, Issue 2 and 3 (1919), pp. 11–16, pp. 21–25, here part I, p. 15.

21 Cf. SBB IIIC, Kart. X 120, Manuscripts, Schnitter: "Sketches of the Acada Fort in Africa" (1684).

22 Cf. Abaka, Edmund Kobina: *House of Slaves and 'Door of no Return'*. Gold Coast/Ghana Slave Forts, Castles and Dungeons and the Atlantic Slave Trade. Trenton, N. J., 2012, p. 26; Osei-Tutu, Introduction, p. 4f., 15.

23 Cf. Zaugg et al., Oettinger, *A German Barber-Surgeon in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp. 11–13, 39.

- 24** Cf. Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*, p. 6.; Weindl, *Die Kurbrandenburger im 'atlantischen System'*, p. 36.
- 25** Cf. Nelson, Louis P.: "Architectures of West African Enslavement," in: *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 21, Heft 1 (2014), pp. 88–25, here pp. 103–06 and *passim*.
- 26** See Rebecca Shumway: "Castle Slaves of the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast (Ghana)," in: *Slavery & Abolition* 35, Issue 1 (2014), pp. 84–98.
- 27** Shumway, *Castle Slaves of the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast (Ghana)*, p. 85.
- 28** Cf. Zaugg, *Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa*, p. 37; Weindl, *Die Kurbrandenburger im 'atlantischen System'*, p. 36.
- 29** GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 40, *Invoices from May 1685 onwards*, fols. 34–68.
- 30** Cf. GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 39, *Instructions to Johan Brouw*, fols. 325.
- 31** Cf. Weindl, *Die Kurbrandenburger im 'atlantischen System'*, p. 36.
- 32** Cf. GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 40, *Invoice May 1685*, fols. 41. See also Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*, p. 113.
- 33** Contract from 24 February 1684, cited according to Schück et al., *Brandenburg-Preußens Kolonialpolitik*, Vol. 2, 205f.
- 34** Cf. Contract from 26 February 1684, in: *idem.*, pp. 207–209.
- 35** GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 178, *Resolution from 5 February 1685*, fols. 47–50.
- 36** Cf. Osei-Tutu, *Introduction*, p. 18; Zaugg, *Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa?*, p. 41. See also Brauner, Christina: *Kompanien, Könige und caboceers. Interkulturelle Diplomatie an Gold- und Sklavenküste im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Köln/Wien, 2015, pp. 274–394.
- 37** Cf. Zaugg et al., *Oettinger, A German Barber-Surgeon in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 37.
- 38** Cf. Osei-Tutu, *Introduction*, p. 17. See also Robin Law: "'Here is no resisting the country': The Realities of Power in Afro-European Relations on the West African 'Slave Coast'," in: *Itinerario* 18, Issue 2 (1994), pp.50–64.
- 39** GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 44, *Letter by Nicolas Sweerts (WIC)*, 27 January 1687, fols. 8.
- 40** *Idem.*
- 41** GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 44 *Letter by Nicolas Sweerts (WIC)*, 30 January 1687, fols. 10.
- 42** Cf. Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*, p. 157
- 43** Cf. *Stadtarchiv Emden (StAE) 279 a+b African and American Company as well as Prussian Marines in Emden, Complaint from 1683*, not paginated. Numerous interrogation records

are partially printed in Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*.

44 Cf. note 9.

45 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 42, *Invoices from 1683 onwards*, fols. 25–38, here 31, 33 and 37.

46 Cf. GStA PK, I HA, Rep. 65, No. 39, *Instructions to Johan Brouw*, fol. 318.

47 Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*, p.152.

48 Cf. Jones, *Brandenburg Sources for West African History*, p.261; StAE, 279 b, *African and American Company as well as Prussian Marines in Emden*, fol. 121.

49 Cf. Zaugg, *Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa?*, pp. 42–44. Zaugg additionally addresses to extremely severe cases of violence and killing.

50 Cf. GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 40, fol. 38; *idem.*, No. 44, fol. 113.

51 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 44, *Letter Raulé 1686*, fol. 11.

52 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 44, *Undated Letter by Raulé to the Elector (likely: summer 1686)*, fol. 11.

53 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 39, *Instructions to Johan Brouw*, fol. 331.

54 Shumway, *Castle Slaves of the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast (Ghana)*, p 93.

55 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 44, *Letter Raulé 1686*, fol. 13.

56 Cf. GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 65, No. 4a, *list of 4 May 1685*, fol. 131.

57 *Letter by the elector to Raulé, 24 July 1686*, cited according to Schüeck et al., *Brandenburg-Preußens Kolonial-Politik Vol. 2*, 285p.

58 GStA PK, I HA, Rep. 65, No. 45, *undated document by the Director (Bewindhaber) to Elector Friedrich III.*, fol. 344.

59 *Idem. Document from 25 November*, fol. 342.

60 GStA PK VIII. HA *Sammlung Jorberg*, No. 46, fol. 55; Wentscher, *The Development of the Schnitters*, p. 245.

61 Leschke, *Otto Friedrich von der Gröben und der koloniale Diskurs*, 11f.

62 Cf. *Baptismal register Nikolai-kirche Berlin 1690–1699*, o. 894; *idem. Baptismal register 1700–1706*, p. 913; 1091; 1186; *idem. Baptismal register 1707–1709*, p. 234 (available via Archion.de).

63 Cf. Schüeck et al., *Brandenburg-Preußens Kolonial-Politik*, Vol. 1, 161; 182; 208p.

64 GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 22 No. 2 *Faz. 29 Confirmation of Nobility for Schnitter*, fols. 1.

65 Cf. Zaugg, *Grossfriedrichsburg, the First German Colony in Africa?*, p. 46.

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Figure 1: SBB IIIC, Kart X
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Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Figure 3: Christian Hartl-Reiter,
German Archaeological Institute
(DAI-KAAK), 2024. In: Kleinitz,
Cornelia et al.: Princes Town &
Akwidaa. Early 'Shared Heritage'
of German-African Interactions:
The Brandenburg-Prussian Forts on
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tion/613](https://www.dainst.org/newsroom/project-brandenburg-prussian-forts-in-ghana-first-open-access-publication/613).





Shared Memory?

*Biographical Fragments and
Diverging Interpretations of
Kone Kpole Alias Jan Conny[†]*

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Introduction

Kɔne Kɔpɔle, also known as Jan Conny¹ (c. 1670–1730?), exerted decisive influence over political and economic structures in the western region of what Europeans then termed the *Gold Coast*, in present-day Ghana, for approximately fifteen years. Owing to the significance of his policies within the Atlantic System,² he emerges as a historically consequential figure whose impact has been variously remembered across its inter-connected regions—Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

The following historical overview can only highlight a complex and continually shifting situation, which is nevertheless essential for understanding the actors involved, their configurations, and the fragility of these constellations.

From the 15th century onward, Portugal and subsequently other European powers became engaged in trade along the West African coast, initially in gold and later in enslaved people. These developments contributed to the economic expansion of gold-producing empires in the hinterland of the coast, in what is today southwestern Ghana and eastern Côte d'Ivoire. By the late 17th century, the unification and rise of the Asante Empire began, which, in the early 18th century, successfully prevailed against the Denkyira in the southwest and Akwamu in the east of the Volta region. Numerous local political formations—villages, small kingdoms, and coastal city-states—were drawn into these dynamics, competing for control over access to the gold trade. As the number of political and economic centers in the hinterland diminished, struggles among coastal elites over geographical access and economic control intensified accordingly.

The various European trading companies, themselves in competition with one another, collaborated closely with local elites in establishing forts and trading posts to secure commercial interests, exclude rival powers, and protect allied local populations. These trading arrangements promised capital accumulation and political leverage for all parties involved. Against this backdrop, African and European actors sought to influence one another and to steer the policies of their respective counterparts to their own advantage. The extent to which such strategies succeeded depended on individual diplomatic skills, broader political circumstances, and, to a certain extent, luck.

Jan Conny's rise to dominance at _____ Cape Three Points, as well as his eventual downfall, unfolded against the backdrop of these broader upheavals. In 1680, the chief of Kumasi, Osei Tutu (c. 1660–1717), unified the previously independent Asante principalities under his rule, marking the beginning of their ascent as a regional power. Two years later,

→ pp. 41–56 See
the contribution
by **Annika Bärwald**

the newly founded Brandenburg African Company (BAAC) established a presence on the West African coast through the construction of several trading bases. The dynamics of African politics were arguably more decisive for Jan Conny's trajectory than his direct dealings with representatives of European trading companies. At the same time, African, European, and American political processes became increasingly interconnected within the Atlantic System. Conny's emergence as a politically influential and economically successful authority can therefore only be understood in relation to his interactions with European actors. This emphasis originates partly from the nature of the written sources, which predominantly document engagements with European representatives and thereby shape the contextualization and interpretation of his actions and political agency. Beyond this source bias, however, and in line with the argument advanced here, it was not merely the appearance of a new European power in Africa—namely Brandenburg—that created new political opportunities. Rather, Jan Conny's ability to operate confidently across African and European contexts afforded him decisive advantages in struggles over political and economic influence.

This article first focuses on Conny's life and work, as reconstructed from written sources and oral tradition, and summarizes the findings.³ The study then examines the significance of the historical figure Jan Conny and the fragmentary and legendary accounts of his life for (de)colonial discourses in Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

Life and Work of Jan Conny

Jan Conny was probably born around 1670 in Kpɔkɛzo, now known as Princes Town] Pokesu, or in a neighboring village on _____] Cape of Three Points on the west coast of present-day Ghana. He likely came into contact with Europeans at an early age, learned to communicate in Portuguese—the lingua franca used in the region between Europeans and Africans—and by 1721 spoke at least some English and possibly also Low German or Dutch. He was familiar with trading practices along the West African coast and belonged to a transatlantic trading elite characterized by “linguistic proficiency, cultural adaptability, and social agility,”⁴ whose intermediary services were essential to the functioning of Atlantic trade.

Jan Conny's rise began with his ownership of a fleet of canoes on which European traders along the West African coast depended. These traders required not only the vessels themselves but, crucially, locals with

detailed knowledge of currents and shoals to guide the boats. With their assistance, Europeans were able to disembark from their ships or receive African traders on board; without these canoes, merchant vessels could neither be loaded nor unloaded.

Conny likely also derived income from the cultivation and/or trade of corn. In the final decades of the seventeenth century, grain produced in Africa not only replaced bread shipped from Europe for European crews but also formed the basis of the provisions supplied to captured enslaved people during maritime transport.

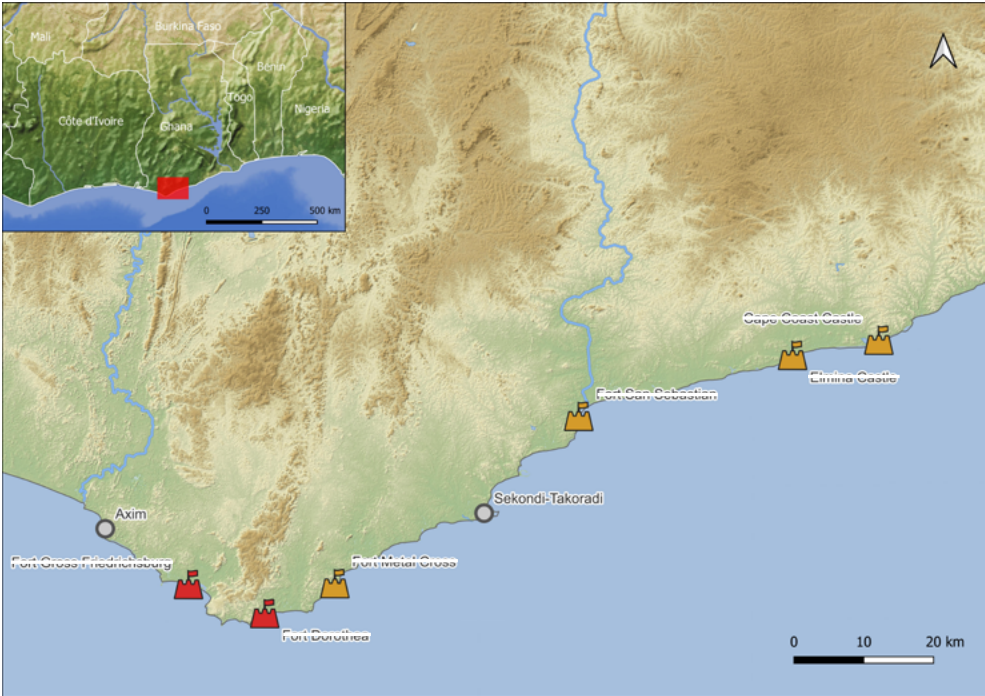


Figure 1:

Brandenburg-Prussian forts (in red) and neighboring European outposts on the southwestern coast of Ghana (2024). Map design by Christian Hartl-Reiter.

In Alliance with the Brandenburgers

While little is known about Jan Conny's birth and early life, he appears with increasing frequency in African oral traditions and European written sources from the 1710s onward. From around the turn of the century, the company-based connection between Brandenburg and Europe effectively collapsed. Only a small number of ships outfitted by the Brandenburg African Company (BAAC) continued to sail for Africa, most of which failed to reach their destination. The African outposts increasingly traded with interlopers—independent ship captains operating outside company monopolies and often subject to prosecution for doing so.

Despite this, commercial turnover at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg⁵ frequently remained low. For African actors allied with Brandenburg, there were thus diminishing incentives to uphold alliance obligations—especially as the European side failed to do so as well. At the same time, resistance against the personnel of the Brandenburg Company intensified, directed in particular at mismanagement and the exercise of excessive violence. Senior officials were deposed and/or killed by the inhabitants of Kpɔkezo.

By 1710–11 at the latest, European actors held Jan Conny responsible for developments at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg. Soon thereafter, representatives of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) and the English Royal African Company (RAC) exploited an intra-African conflict as a pretext to remove the broker they regarded as having become too powerful. Of particular relevance here is the fact that these otherwise competing European companies formed an alliance to neutralize Jan Conny and render him, as they put it, “incapable of ever undertaking such unjust proceedings against any Europeans here for the future.”⁶

This effort failed decisively. Although representatives of the Dutch and English companies were able, several months later, to force the newly arrived Brandenburg Director General, Nicolas Dubois, into a kind of dictated peace—which he promised to enforce among the inhabitants of _____ Cape of Three Points—Jan Conny emerged from the conflict as the clear victor. Commanding a large and well-functioning military force, he compelled his English and Dutch opponents to incur substantial military expenditures and inflicted devastating defeats on them at their forts. More consequential still was Dubois's inability to enforce the imposed conditions. On the contrary, Jan Conny now controlled both trade and politics at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg. No merchants arrived without his consent and attempts to starve the fort through blockades failed. Dubois became increasingly dependent on Conny: without his cooperation, he lacked the revenues needed to pay his garrison; without

a garrison, he had no military protection. Jan Conny, in turn, employed Dubois as a secretary for his correspondence, thereby reinforcing a finely calibrated configuration of power. This arrangement went so far that, when the Brandenburg Director General—exhausted by illness and repeated failure—attempted to return to Europe, Jan Conny imprisoned him at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg in 1715–16. Subsequently, Jan Conny formally integrated the fort into his political order, and European actors were compelled to come to terms with the African powerbroker at _____ Cape of Three Points. For the pursuit of their objectives, they could no longer bypass Conny and therefore sought his favor in order to secure advantageous trading conditions. Jan Conny, for his part, negotiated with all sides and established _____ Groß Friedrichsburg as a free (trading) port, where trade was permitted with his authorization and no company could claim a monopoly.



Figure 2.1:

*Jan Conny's house in Princes Town, Ghana (2024).
Photograph by Cornelia Kleinitz.*



Figure 2.2:

View from above, at the foot of Manfro Hill with _____ Groß Friedrichsburg in the background.
Photograph by Christian Hartl-Reiter.

Enemy and Partner of the West India Company (WIC)

In Berlin, a search for a buyer for the African outposts had already begun in 1713. The situation on the West African coast was well known in Europe: a mere sales contract could not secure a change of ownership. In 1717, the Dutch West India Company (WIC) finally agreed to ‘purchase’ _____] Groß Friedrichsburg—for 6,000 ducats and twelve young African men⁷—and to pay one third of the sum in advance. The agreement stipulated that if the WIC

“was unable to obtain the said fort and it remained in the power of Jan Conny [...], the two thousand ducats handed over and the renunciation of the said coast by His Royal Majesty of Prussia would be further discussed.”⁸

In April 1718, WIC officials demanded the immediate handover of _____] Groß Friedrichsburg. After Conny refused, they launched an attack; however, without military support from their African allies—who were unwilling to go to war against Conny—the assault failed. Conny’s forces routed the attackers, killing 36 individuals described as “white” and two African canoe guides, while the remainder narrowly escaped. Following this victory, Jan Conny reinforced his position. He had demonstrated that the fort could not be taken from the sea and now constructed a protective barrier against attacks from inland. Palisade walls were erected along the river in the west and the lagoon in the east, with a defensive wall connecting the two bodies of water, enclosing the village and fort on all sides. The wall featured 13 embrasures and 565 loopholes; in front of it lay a 100-rod (360–500 m) field of fire, and dense forest protected the village side. Conny also built a stone residence using materials from the fort, which served as his personal dwelling.

At first, Jan Conny did not need to demonstrate the effectiveness of his defenses. The Dutch found no military support among their African allies and refrained from further attacks. Representatives of other European companies continued to negotiate with Conny for trade advantages and, potentially, for their own bases within his territory. This, in turn, prompted the WIC to pursue a negotiated solution: its representatives “visited Conny in friendship [...] and wanted to know under what conditions he would hand over the fort to them.”⁹

By the fall of 1721, the state of war had ended. Conny permitted the WIC to trade at _____] Cape of Three Points, even though he refused to relinquish the fort, allowing only the Dutch flag to be raised there. The location itself remained a free port. A year later, a new Director General of the WIC concluded a more comprehensive agreement. Under its terms, Conny ceded control of the bases in certain respects but retained

the right to appoint their commanders. Prices for trade with WIC ships were set for all common commodities at 20 percent above those at other forts. Conny also received a monthly lease and an annual gift, as well as the right to trade on his own account up to a specified limit. In return, he surrendered the lucrative trade with interlopers.

Through this contract, Jan Conny imposed his terms on the WIC and offered his African trading partners more favorable prices than his competitors, while simultaneously stabilizing his income independently of interloper trade. Although the WIC formally assumed control of the fort, the conduct of trade remained firmly under Conny's authority.

By around 1724, Conny's carefully calibrated network of alliances began to collapse. Hostile African groups besieged the fort and village. In the spring of 1724, the WIC continued to supply food to Conny, as the ongoing conflict had disrupted local food production, leaving the inhabitants of Kpɔkɛzo—reportedly numbering 30,000—on the brink of starvation. Conny's reputation declined, and the war brought trade to a standstill. WIC attempts at mediation proved unsuccessful.

Finally, an attack by Conny's forces on a village near Axim provided the WIC with a pretext to join the opposing coalition. The allies then assaulted _____ Groß Friedrichsburg from the landward side, while three Dutch ships bombarded the fort from the sea. After several weeks of siege, the attackers captured the forts at _____ Cape of Three Points. Jan Conny fled to an island in the Ankobra River within the territory of an ally and began to rebuild his network. He effectively took the trade with him, as no one continued to conduct business at the cape.

Ultimately, Opoku Ware I (1700–1750), now head of the Asante, brokered a settlement: in exchange for a share of the trade previously controlled by Conny and additional compensation, the WIC abandoned its pursuit of him. Asante merchants returned to _____ Cape of Three Points. The conflict subsided temporarily, as Conny's adversaries remained dependent on Dutch arms supplies. However, the agreement did not endure; Conny's network had been broken. Former allies joined the opposing coalition. In February 1726, forces from Axim attacked Conny's retreat along the Ankobra River, prompting him to seek refuge with the Fante before relocating to the court in Kumasi. Opoku Ware I was either unable or unwilling to assist him in regaining his former position. Beyond rumors that Conny lived in Kumasi until his death, no further information is known.

Narratives around Jan Conny

Legends began to circulate throughout the Atlantic world soon after Conny's victories and/or disappearance. Despite significant variation, European, African, and American narratives share a memory of Jan Conny as an exceptional, strategically adept, and resolute figure—even though his story has been repeatedly reworked, distorted, and embellished across different contexts.¹⁰

Europe (German-speaking regions)

In the German-speaking world, the Prussian politician Ewald Friedrich Graf von Hertzberg (1725–1795) was likely the first to mention Jan Conny in his 1754 article on the “History of Prussian Naval Power and the African Trading Company under Friedrich William the Great and King Friedrich I.” His account came relatively close to Conny's autonomy and political power as reconstructed in contemporary scholarship.¹¹ Half a century later, however, Peter Feddersen Stuhr recasted Jan Conny as a powerful prince “who sided with the Brandenburgers [and ...] promised the commander of the fort [Dubois] all kinds of assistance.”¹² In this narrative, the local population was degraded to minions of European politics. With few exceptions,¹³ this interpretive framework remained dominant throughout the era of German colonialism.

Jan Conny and his descendants were portrayed as guardians of German interests, clinging “with incredible tenacity to Prussian supremacy”¹⁴ while awaiting the return of Prussian rule. After the loss of the German colonies following World War I, Conny was even mobilized as a key witness to an allegedly “humane” form of German colonialism.¹⁵

West Africa

Jan Conny's fame endures within West African societies to this day. Several families trace their lineage back to him. In the tradition of the *mbusua* (family) of the *Mafolɛ* in Ghana, who count Jan Conny among their ancestors, he is known as *Kɔne Kpɔle*, with *Kpɔle* derived from the *Nzema* word for “great.” Other variants exist across Ghana's linguistic landscape: among the *Fante* he is called *Gyan Kone*, from which the *Nzema*/*Twi*-speaking inhabitants of present-day Princes Town (formerly *Kpɔkɛzo*) derive the names *Jan Kwaw* or *Kwa*.¹⁶

Following Ghana's independence in 1957, Jan Conny became an object of scholarly interest in Ghanaian historiography. In his work on early modern West African history, Kwame Yeboah Daaku examined Conny's activities from an African perspective and critically re-read European

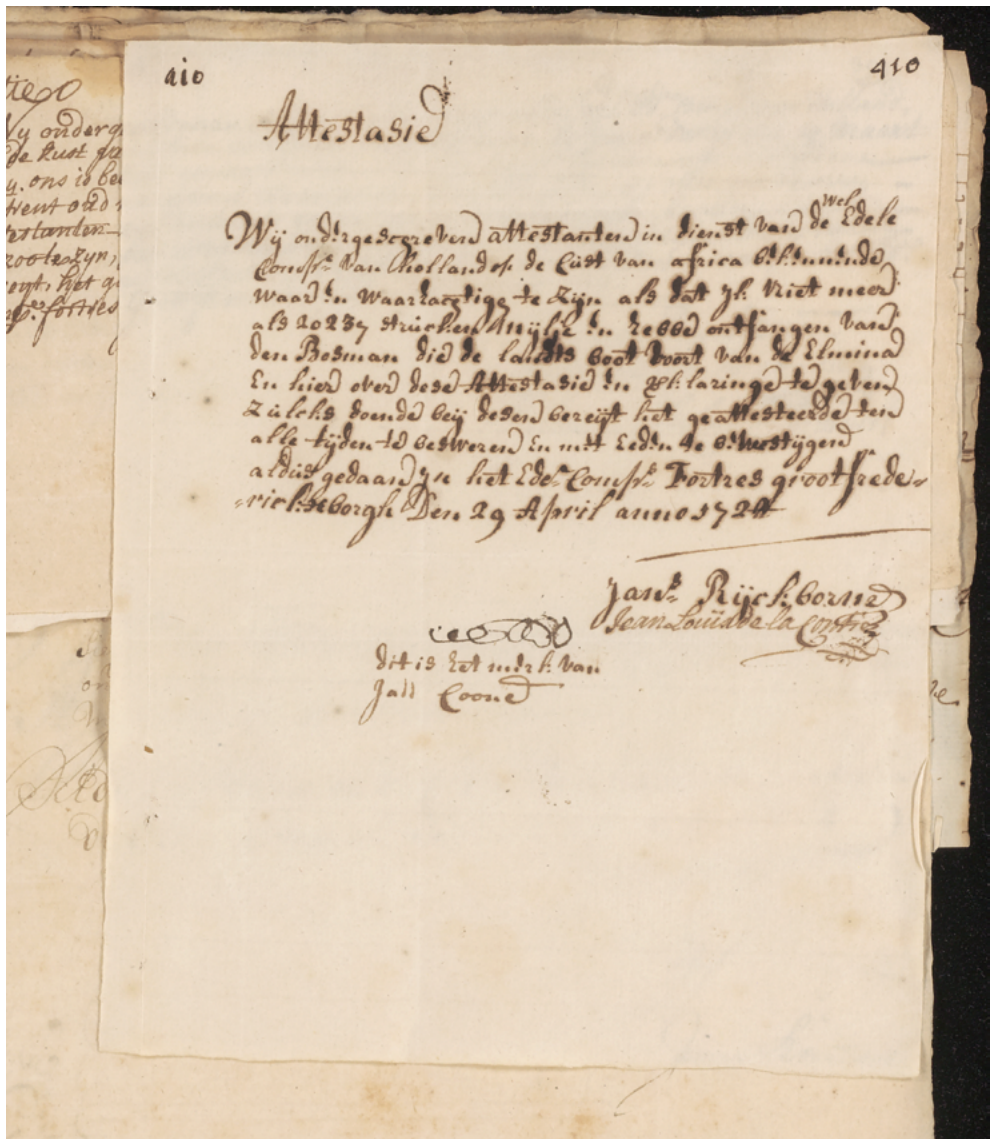


Figure 3:

Proof of a business transaction: Jan Coone [Conny] (left), Jan Rijckborne [Rijxborne], interim commander appointed by Jan Conny at _____ Groß Friedrichsburg (and his secretary), and Jean Louis de la Contie, assistant, acknowledge receipt of 2023 "Stucken in Mijlije" [corn/millet]. _____ Groß Friedrichsburg, April 29, 1724. Almost until the moment at which the Dutch WIC joined the enemy coalition, it supported Jan Conny in supplying food to the population that had fled to him.

sources. Nonetheless, the myth of Conny as Prussia's loyal ally had become so deeply entrenched that even Daaku concluded: "His main desire was to serve faithfully the company he had helped to establish in his state. He tried unsuccessfully to inject life into the crumbling fortunes of the company."¹⁷ A narrative shaped by German colonial theorists was thus reaffirmed by a Ghanaian historian, subsequently reabsorbed into German scholarship, and remained influential in German-speaking historiography well into the late 20th century.¹⁸ Only more recent studies, which supplement or counter European-influenced historiography with oral tradition, have enabled a synthesis across the sources from varying linguistic and cultural contexts. As a result, several monographs now situate Jan Conny within broader West African history, stripping away the long-standing image of him as a 'Prussian vassal.'¹⁹

The Americas

In the Caribbean and parts of Central America, a festival emerged among enslaved populations in the 18th century that is still celebrated during the Christmas season. Depending on region and language, it is known as Jonkonnu, Junkanoo, Jonkanoo, Jankonnu, John Conny, John Kuners, or John Canoe Festival, among other names.²⁰ One prominent theory traces the festival's origins to the historical figure of Jan Conny. The earliest written reference appears in Edward Long's *History of Jamaica* (1774), in which the British historian identifies the festival with Jan Conny, the "caboceiro at [Cape] Three Points [...] who flourished about the year 1720."²¹

Although the festival spread widely across the Caribbean and Central America, substantial evidence suggests that it originated in the Bahamas and/or Jamaica. In the Bahamas, the celebrations became particularly widespread; in Jamaica, the festival is primarily associated with Maroon communities founded by people who had escaped enslavement.

A more recent theory links the festival to members of the Ahanta people from present-day Ghana, who may have introduced it to the Bahamas in memory of Jan Conny. In 1721, the *Bahama Galley* transported 295 enslaved Africans directly to the Bahamas—the first such transport.²² Prior to the Middle Passage, these individuals may have been embarked at or near _____] Cape Three Points. Until then, the Bahamas had served largely as a refuge for pirates and outlaws, with no more than approximately 250 Black inhabitants. Under Governor George Phenny (r. 1721–1727), plantation agriculture expanded rapidly. The newly arrived population effectively doubled the Afro-diasporic presence, suggesting a strong cultural impact. Phenny relocated to Edenton, North Carolina, in the late 1720s, followed by several plantation owners and their enslaved laborers. He became one of the wealthiest landowners in the region, and Edenton emerged as a center of the John Kuners festival, first celebrated

there after his arrival.²³ This trajectory plausibly explains the festival's diffusion under similar names.

In Jamaica, the cultural features of the festival closely resemble the Kundum Festival, still celebrated today in Princes Town, Ghana. There is also evidence of direct deportations from _____ | Cape of Three Points to Jamaica: in early June 1721, a ship carrying 250 captives departed and arrived in Jamaica later that same month.²⁴ In 1724, approximately fifty of Jan Conny's soldiers were captured, enslaved, and likely deported to Jamaica²⁵—among them a military commander who was also Conny's cousin. While their numerical impact may have been less pronounced than in the Bahamas, their influence on Maroon societies—whose successes in the 1720s culminated in the First Maroon War (1728–1739/40)—is at least conceivable. Enslaved people from the *Gold Coast* were widely regarded in Jamaica as particularly resistant, repeatedly organizing uprisings, facilitating escapes, and forming Indigenous communities alongside Taíno descendants and other marginalized groups.

Conclusion

Jan Conny's rise and influence unfolded amid profound political transformations along the southern coast of present-day Ghana. These upheavals also enabled European actors with comparatively limited financial and commercial power—such as Brandenburg-Prussia—to participate in competition over resources, markets, and political influence.

Just as the Brandenburg company relied on local societies at _____ | Cape Three Points to establish their trading post, Jan Conny appropriated what soon became the hollowed-out shell of the Brandenburg enterprise and its infrastructure to construct and expand his own commercial and political network. It was only 19th and early 20th century German colonial historiography that reframed this dynamic as one of subjugation and embedded that interpretation in historical discourse.

In practice, Jan Conny operated on an equal footing with European actors, understood the mechanisms of political leverage, and demonstrably enforced his own rules. For European decision-makers, however, the assertiveness of an African powerholder within an institution they had founded was deeply unsettling, as it disrupted the hierarchies they sought to impose. Consequently, they repeatedly emphasized the alleged dangers of Conny's 'insubordination' for order along the entire coast. Discursively—and imaginatively—there was thus, from a European perspective, no true equality between *white* and Black sovereigns, even

as European powers invoked the sovereignty of African partners when negotiating among themselves. From an African perspective, Jan Conny exemplifies precisely such equality within a specific temporal and geographical context. This may also help explain why enslaved people deported to the Americas commemorated him through a festival that repeatedly carried explosive social and political potential. Within the world of Atlantic trade, Jan Conny succeeded in confronting European actors on what they considered their 'own' terrain—the fort—through an effective practice of rule.

It remains a shared scholarly task to disentangle these overlapping yet divergent memory regimes, which continue to shape historical understanding, from the still-dominant colonial narrative, in order to do justice to Jan Conny as a historical figure in all his ambivalence.

① The article is based on an extensive research dossier, the findings of which have been abridged and edited without addressing its details and sources in full, as this would go beyond the scope of this publication. The article was edited by Nicola Lauré al-Samarai.

Endnotes

1 In Europe, Jan Conny was referred to by a variety of names, reflecting different renderings of Jan/Johann/John/Jean and Conny/Kony/Comain, among others. In his extant correspondence, Jan Conny himself used at least the forms "Jan Coone" and "Cone." Jan may either represent a Christian name or derive from Nyane, Nyanyi, or Nyame. See Valsecchi, Pierluigi, *Power and State Formation in West Africa: Appolonia from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 2011), p. xi, 141, 253 (n. 5); see also *ibid.* for orthography in accordance with the conventions of the Bureau of Ghana Languages. On Ghana and the Caribbean, see also the second part of the present article.

2 In the following, the term Atlantic System refers to the complex network of trade that, from the 15th to the 19th century, connected Europe, Africa, and the Americas across the Atlantic on the basis of the trade in enslaved people, mercantilism, and colonialism.

3 For this, I refer to the forthcoming volume: Weindl, Andrea, *Wessen Festung? Großfriedrichsburg oder Connys Castle [Whose Fort?*

Großfriedrichsburg or Conny's Castle], (Kiel, 2026).

4 Berlin, Ira, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 39.

5 Regarding the typographical disruption of Groß-Friedrichsburg, the author's position diverges from the editorial convention. As a (proto-) colonial outpost in the possession of the Dutch West India Company (WIC), the site was known as Fort Hollandia. Even if the Brandenburgers pursued more far-reaching ambitions, they did not establish colonial settlements but rather constructed a trading post over which they exercised only very limited territorial and temporal control.

6 Cf. TNA T 70/170, fol. 72r, 12 September 1711; see also Daaku, Kwame Yeboah, "John Konny: The Last Prussian Negro Prince," *TARIKH* (Ibadan, 1967), pp. 55–64, here pp. 57–58.

7 It may be assumed that the particular interest in Black male adolescents is connected to a courtly tradition in which this group increasingly appeared as military musicians. Trained as fifers, drummers, kettle drummers, and trumpeters, Black boys/young men primarily fulfilled a representative function and were intended to symbolize the power, influence, and cosmopolitan reach of the respective court. See Kuhlmann-Smirnov, Anne, *Schwarze Europäer im Alten Reich. Handel, Migration, Hof* (Göttingen, 2013), pp. 107–132.

- 8** Schück, Richard, *Brandenburg-Preußen's Colonial Policy under the Great Elector and His Successors (1647–1721)* (Leipzig, 1889), 2 vols.; cited here from vol. 2, p. 572; see also vol. 1, pp. 308–309. The remainder of the payment was in any case not to be transferred until after the handover of the fort, scheduled for 1 January 1720.
- 9** The National Archives, London (TNA), T 70/7, fol. 13r, 28 June 1721 [author's translation]; T 70/53, 12 September 1721, fol. 53r; 13 March 1722, fol. 85. See also Daaku, Kwame Yeboah, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600–1720* (Oxford, 1970), p. 139.
- 10** Cf. Sutton, Angela C., *Pirates of the Slave Trade: The Battle of Cape Lopez and the Birth of an American Institution* (Lanham, 2023), p. 204.
- 11** Hertzberg, Ewald Friedrich von, "Geschichte der Preußischen Seemacht und der africanischen Handelsgesellschaft unter Friedrich Wilhelm dem Großen und König Friedrich I," in Karl Friedrich Pauli (ed.), *Allgemeine preußische Staats-Geschichte*, vol. 7 (Halle, 1767), pp. 484–528.
- 12** Stuhr, Peter Feddersen, *Die Geschichte der See- und Colonialmacht des Großen Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg in der Ostsee, auf der Küste von Guinea und auf den Inseln Arguin und St. Thomas aus archivalischen Quellen dargestellt.* (Berlin, 1839), p. 124.
- 13** Both the Great General Staff and Richard Schück dealt more candidly with the historical figure of Jan Conny. In the 1910s, Christian Voigt even demonstrated a genuine interest in Conny as a historical actor. None of those mentioned, however, succeeded in shedding colonial ideology. The ethnologist Julius Lips transformed Jan Conny ahistorically into a metaphorical figure of anticolonial resistance. See Kárani, Palan, *Heiden vor Afrika, ein N-spiel* (Leipzig, 1930).
- 14** Worthmann, Ludwig, *Die deutschen Kolonien in Westafrika* (Schweidnitz, 1887), p. 7.
- 15** Cf. Hennig, "Das Ende der ersten preußischen Kolonie," *Bonner Zeitung*, 23 September 1922; available online at the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek; available online: www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/newspaper/item/ON2MYHM6R4FNUUZYH-6DAC4DYVE2TEJTI?query=%22Jan+Conny%22.
- 16** Cf. Valsecchi, *Power and State Formation*, p. 141 and p. 253 (n. 5); Davis, Christopher (Nana John Canoe II), "The Resurrection of John Canoe: Eurocentric Narratives and Identifying the Commemoration throughout the Americas," *International Journal of Carnival Arts* 8B (June 2024): pp. 50–61, here p. 57; Davis, Christopher; Kwofie, Alex; McKay, Angélique; Pateman, Michael P., "Clothed in Mystery" and "Investigating the Clues: The Origins of Junkanoo," Parts 1 and 2 (Summer and Fall 2022), online at *Times of the Turks & Caicos*: www.timespub.tc/2022/06/clothed-in-mystery/ & www.timespub.tc/2022/10/investigating-the-clues.

- 17** Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, p. 141; see also *idem*, John Konny; Atta-Duncan, Joseph, *The History of Princes' Town and the Brandenburg Castle, 1680–1725*, handwritten manuscript (Princes Town, 1975–1998).
- 18** See, for example, Steltzer, Hans Georg, "Mit herrlichen Häfen versehen": Brandenburg-Prussian Seafaring Three Hundred Years Ago (Berlin, 1981).
- 19** Cf. Leschke, Gabriele, *Otto Friedrich von der Gröben und der koloniale Diskurs* (Berlin, 2019), esp. pp. 20; Matz, Klaus-Jürgen, "Das Kolonialexperiment des Großen Kurfürsten in der Geschichtsschreibung des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts," in Gerd Heinrich (ed.), *Ein sonderbares Licht in Teutschland: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Großen Kurfürsten von Brandenburg* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 191–202.
- 20** Cf. Davis, Christopher (Nana John Canoe II), "The Resurrection of John Canoe: Eurocentric Narratives and Identifying the Commemoration Throughout the Americas," in: *International Journal of Carnival Arts*, Vol. 8 B, June 2024, pp. 50–61, here p. 57; Davis et al., "Clothed in Mystery. The origins of Junkanoo – Part 1," (Summer 2022), available online www.timespub.tc/2022/06/clothed-in-mystery; "Investigating the Clues. The origins of Junkanoo – Part 2," (Fall 2022), available online: www.timespub.tc/2022/10/investigating-the-clues.
- 21** Davis, "Resurrection," p. 53. Long was an active proponent of the system of enslavement and a member of a plantation-owning family.
- 22** Cf. Craton, Michael, and Saunders, Gail, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, vol. 1 (Athens, GA, 1992), p. 119. Davis assumes 235 individuals; slavevoyages.org calculates 236 disembarked enslaved persons under voyage ID 25736, without specifying the destination port. See Davis, *Resurrection*, p. 54.
- 23** Cf. Davis, *Resurrection*, p. 57.
- 24** Cf. slavevoyages.org, voyage ID 76391.
- 25** Cf. Nationaal Archief Den Haag, 1.05.01.02 Inventaris van het archief van de Tweede West-Indische Compagnie (WIC), (1624) 1674–1791 (1800), 106, Fol. 177. The dates given in the Dutch narrative would correspond to voyage ID 75303 (slavevoyages.org). I owe this reference to Christopher Davis.

Image Credits

Figure 1: Map design by Christian Hartl-Reiter, German Archaeological Institute. Commission for Archeology of Non-European Cultures (DAI-KAAK), 2024. In: Kleinitz, Cornelia et al.: *Princes Town & Akwidaa. Early 'Shared Heritage' of German-African Interactions: The Brandenburg-Prussian Forts on the West Coast of Ghana and their Local Communities.* 2024. <https://www.dainst.org/newsroom/project-brandenburg-prussian-forts-in-ghana-first-open-access-publication/613>.

Figure 2.1.: Cornelia Kleinitz. German Archaeological Institute. Commission for Archeology of Non-European Cultures (DAA-KAAK), 2024. In: Kleinitz, Cornelia et al.: *Princes Town & Akwidaa* (cf. figure 1).

Figure 2.2.: Christian Hartl-Reiter, German Archaeological Institute. Commission for Archeology of Non-European Cultures, 2024. In: Kleinitz, Cornelia et al.: *Princes Town & Akwidaa* (cf. figure 1).

Figure 3: Nationaal Archief The Hague, 01.05.01.02 Inventory of the archive of the Second West India Company (WIC), (1624) 1674–1791 (1800) (abbr.: WIC 106).





Ernst Friedel (1827–1918)

*Early Proponent of
Colonialism in the
Late 19th and Early
20th Centuries¹*

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is a historian specialized in global and colonial history, cultures of memory, and historical pedagogy, and author of Arabische Präsenzen in Deutschland um 1900. Biografische Interventionen in die deutsche Geschichte (2020) (Arabic Presences in Germany around 1900: Biographical Interventions into German History). She works as a teacher and in political and historical education—and writes when time permits.

Starting Points

Ernst August Friedel—a Berlin lawyer, city councilor, member of several associations, ‘ethnologist,’ [*Volkskundler*] archaeologist, and regional historian—is best known as the founder of the Märkisches Museum (formerly the Märkisches Provinzial-Museum (MPM) [Translator’s note: The term *Volkskunde* and its derivatives such as *Volkskundler* can best be approximated as *German and/or European ethnology*. It must be noted, however, that the German term *Volk*, prevalent in Friedel’s time, was rooted in a deeply racialized idea and conceptualized as the essentialist presupposition of an homogenous (*white* Christian German) people, which in turn renders *Volkskunde* a term with connotations that do not pertain to the term ethnology mainly focusing on non-European contexts. That is why, where possible, this text will work with the German original.], which is now part of the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. In 1895, during his lifetime, Friedelstraße in Berlin-Neukölln was named after him.¹ Friedel’s role as a prominent advocate of German colonial interests and as an influential author of related writings and publications is rarely recalled. His biography nevertheless illustrates how colonial modes of thought and perspective spread in the mid-nineteenth century and became increasingly differentiated and institutionalized between 1860 and 1900. At the same time, it points to several interrelated processes closely tied to the historical formation of what is called the long 19th century: nation-building and the emergence of a German nation-state; the differentiation and institutionalization of the sciences and academic disciplines; and globalization together with colonialism and Eurocentrism.²

Ernst August Friedel authored more than 470 publications during his lifetime, addressing a wide range of topics and reaching a broad audience.³ He worked as a lawyer and city councilor, was active in numerous scientific and regional historical associations, founded a museum, and embodied a bourgeois commitment to progress with liberal leanings. His contemporaries cited him as a thought leader of colonialism, and he was well connected to the leading figures of the colonial movement as it became institutionalized in the 1880s. Nevertheless, detailed analyses of Friedel’s colonial thought and early colonial propaganda, his political positions and actions, his significance for the history of knowledge, and the interconnections between his colonial, anthropological, classical, and regional-historical research have yet to be undertaken.

This contribution seeks to address this gap, at least in part, by presenting Friedel as an early protagonist of the colonial project in the German-speaking world. From his involvement in various associations—well before the founding of the MPM—and later through the museum itself, Friedel’s biography reveals a striking simultaneity: a strong engagement with notions of ‘*Heimat*’ (homeland) [Translator’s note: The concept of *Heimat*

carries similar ideological weight in the German-speaking context as the term *Volk*. In Friedel's time, *Heimat* was grounded in the same essentializing equation of Germanness with *whiteness* and in racist constructions of belonging and exclusion as *Volkskunde*. Both terms, *Heimatkunde* and *Volkskunde*, thus constitute fields of so-called knowledge production that rest upon and perpetuate these assumptions.], *Volkskunde* alongside an early preoccupation with colonial, and thus global, perspectives. This article argues that Friedel's engagement with both local *and* global issues was grounded in a shared underlying connection, namely the articulation of the German Empire's claim to great-power status.

The social milieu that shaped Friedel's life provides a context-matrix for the following considerations.⁴ Focusing on the scholarly networks of *Volkskunde*, Sabine Imeri highlights what she terms the “dual structure of the regional,”⁵ according to which the region functioned both as an “object of knowledge and as an organizing principle.”⁶ Friedel's intellectual biography—and his growing engagement with local and regional, that is, topics pertaining to the ‘homeland’ and *Volkskunde* over the course of his life—partially supports this thesis. At the same time, this article seeks to extend Imeri's approach by arguing that Friedel first had to identify, study, and render visible the distant and the supposedly ‘other’ against which the ‘own’ or ‘self’ could become recognizable as such.

Locating by Biography: Ernst Friedel and Colonialism

Ernst Friedel was born on June 23, 1837, to Luise and Carl Gottlob Friedel. He grew up with his brother Carl, three years his senior, at Große Friedrichstraße 141b.⁷ After initially receiving private instruction from his father, he attended the secondary school Friedrichs-Werdersche Gymnasium.⁸ His life can be described as a successful bourgeois biography shaped within the urban middle classes that consolidated their social position in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Friedel belonged to a milieu formed by the educated middle class. This milieu was predominantly *white* and affluent and, despite maintaining social boundaries, continued to seek proximity to the nobility until the end of the 19th century. It was also deeply influenced by broader societal developments of the period.⁹ The Berlin into which Friedel was born, then part of the Prussian province of Brandenburg, was undergoing profound transformation, driven by processes of nation-building, industrialization on the one hand, and—within the globalizing structures of expanding imperial capitalism—a shrinking of world on the other.

These developments were reflected in and reinforced by the sciences and academia. Dominant discourses, exemplified by intellectual currents such as social Darwinism and Eurocentrism, shaped conceptions of the world and supported both the institutionalization and the interconnection of colonial and imperial spheres of influence and practice. These dynamics, in turn, affected everyday life in the 19th and 20th centuries. What is now described as “colonial imaginaries” is closely linked to biography in general and, more specifically, to the entanglement of individual life contexts.¹⁰ Colonialism is thus not only inscribed in these contexts but is also reproduced, shaped, enacted, and thereby rendered tangible through individual lives.



Figure 1:

View into the Department of Natural Sciences, Märkisches Provinzial-Museum, formerly housed in the Köllnisches Rathaus, Breite Straße 20a, Berlin, 1899. Photograph by Georg Bartels.

What private and professional connections did Ernst Friedel maintain to the various forms of colonial thought and their empirical manifestations, even though he did not conduct what might be called ‘classical’ ethnological studies and traveled exclusively within Europe?

After successfully completing his high school diploma, Friedel studied law and, as an early 1884 retrospection of his life notes, “[...] in addition to the subject matter, mainly national economy, political science, antiquities, and natural history, especially zoology.”¹¹ These subjects, which would shape Friedel’s publications and activities in associations throughout his life, evolved in different ways during the 19th century. What was then called ‘antiquity,’ for example, became increasingly associated not only with Roman-Greek antiquity but also with the so-called Ancient Orient and North Africa, ultimately establishing itself as a recognized academic discipline at universities. Natural history [*Naturkunde*], by contrast, was initially regarded as a lay science.¹² Over the course of the 19th century, both disciplines gained recognition as scientific fields, primarily through their connection to the natural sciences. They were part of a broader development that Osterhammel describes as an “unprecedented cultural authority,”¹³ producing a dominant Eurocentric understanding of the world that could be quantified, so to speak, due to its proximity to natural scientific methods. Friedel’s interdisciplinary combination of subjects—particularly his engagement with institutionalizing ethnology, then known as *Volkskunde*¹⁴—reflects the epistemic authority and Eurocentric worldview embedded in these fields.

Furthermore, Ernst Friedel’s relationship with his older brother Carl (1833–1889)¹⁵ played a significant role in shaping his worldview. By 1858, Carl was already working as a ship’s doctor in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. From 1860 to 1863, he participated in the Prussian East Asia expedition led by Friedrich Albrecht Graf zu Eulenburg (1831–1912), who was appointed Prussian Minister of the Interior in 1862.¹⁶ During this expedition, Carl Friedel authored papers on naval diseases,¹⁷ including his well-known *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Klimas und der Krankheiten Ost-Asiens gesammelt auf der Preußischen Expedition in den Jahren 1860, 1861 und 1862* (Contributions to the Knowledge of the Climate and Diseases of East Asia Collected on the Prussian Expedition in 1860, 1861, and 1862).¹⁸ He had also completed part of his medical training under Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), the influential physician, anthropologist, colonial enthusiast, and politician, who remained a constant point of reference for both Carl and Ernst throughout their lives.¹⁹ In this context, it is worth noting a paper by Carl Friedel, now lost, that brought together the intellectual interests of both brothers: *Die Pflanzenwelt Formosas*²⁰. The island, named after the Portuguese colonial designation for what is today Taiwan, also became the subject of Ernst Friedel’s first monograph, published in 1867—just four years after Carl’s participation in the expedition—*Die Gründung preußisch-deutscher Colonien im Indischen und Großen Ozean mit*

besonderer Rücksicht auf das östliche Asien: Eine Studie im Gebiete der Handels- und Wirtschafts-Politik (The Founding of Prussian-German Colonies in the Indian and Great Oceans with Special Consideration of East Asia: A Study in the Field of Trade and Economic Policy).²¹ This monography will be discussed further below.

While Ernst Friedel's legal career progressed successfully—he was appointed as a single judge of the Royal District Court Commission in Cöpenick in 1869²²—he also gained recognition as a writer across multiple fields. He produced both pro-colonial texts and zoological studies, while increasingly turning his attention to topics related to *Volkskunde*. At the end of 1872, the city council elected Friedel as a salaried city councilor²³ for three twelve-year terms. He held this position until his retirement in 1909, overseeing a range of responsibilities,²⁴ including serving as “head of department [*Dezernent*] for archives, libraries, and museums.”²⁵ In August 1874, he received the commission to establish a museum and to prepare an organizational plan for the future MPM.²⁶

As early as October 1874, the MPM—today's Stadtmuseum Berlin—opened “as the first purely civic museum independent of the royal house.”²⁷ The initial collection consisted largely of objects drawn from municipal holdings and private donations, including one of the largest contributions from Ernst Friedel himself. His brother Carl also donated objects he had brought back from his participation in the Prussian colonial expedition to Southeast Asia.²⁸ The MPM's management—a citizens' committee without an official director—assumed formal responsibilities in 1875, and Rudolf Virchow was among the museum's co-founders.²⁹ The museum's location changed several times over the following decades, and it was more than thirty years before the MPM's representative building, which still stands today, was constructed and opened in 1908 and houses the Stadtmuseum to this day.

In 1876, Friedel married Marie Schenk, the daughter of a pharmacist from Greifswald.³⁰ Alongside his work as a city councilor, which was praised in numerous retrospectives and obituaries, Friedel received a variety of honors during his lifetime, making him one of the most highly decorated civil servants in the imperial state. He retired from his very active professional life in 1909. His various activities continued up to the outbreak of the First World War, during which he sought to secure war aid for himself and his family.³¹ Ernst Friedel died on March 10, 1918, at the age of 90.³²

Locating by System: Ernst Friedel's Networks

In 1882, Ernst Friedel published a popular book that praised *Die deutsche Kaiserstadt Berlin* (The German Imperial City of Berlin) in the highest terms. Although the work has a distinctly regional focus, Friedel wrote it as an active member of several associations closely connected to the colonial movement of the German Empire, which became increasingly institutionalized in the 1880s. This affiliation may explain why the city guide included a group of so-called 'African explorers' whose names would become synonymous with both the colonial movement and the realization of colonial claims in the 1880s and 1890s, including Heinrich Barth, Georg Schweinfurth, Gustav Nachtigal, Gerhard Rohlfs, and Karl Richard Lepsius.³³

Friedel himself was an early member of two key organizations closely linked to this history: the Berlin Geographical Society (GfE, founded in 1828) and the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory (BGAEU, founded in 1869).³⁴ The BGAEU emerged directly from the GfE,³⁵ and several other institutions were established at the GfE's instigation,

→ pp. 97–112 see
the contribution
by **Laura Frey**

including the German Society for the Exploration of Equatorial Africa in Berlin (the African Society, founded in 1873) and the Central Association for Commercial Geography and the Promotion of German Interests Abroad (active from 1878 to 1881). These organizations were influential and well connected: they organized research expeditions, deployed participants to various regions of Africa, established transnational networks, and developed

colonial claims. Many of their activities predated the *Berlin Conference* by one to five decades. Within this context, a question arises: what role did Ernst Friedel play in these associations, which were directly linked to later, explicitly colonial-oriented societies, networks, and interest groups?

Adolf Bastian (1826–1905), co-founder of the BGAEU and founder of so-called "modern ethnology,"³⁶ praised Friedel's work as groundbreaking, particularly highlighting his "efforts on behalf of overseas interests."³⁷ Friedel's extensive publications on colonial enterprises can be read as early calls for German participation in the global imperial competition. His membership in multiple associations, together with his personal network—most notably including Rudolf Virchow—are central to understanding the breadth and diversity of his activities. In this context, Sabine Imeri refers to the



Figure 2:

Ernst Friedel and members of Brandenburgia on an excavation trip in the Berlin area. Trebbin, 1903. Photograph by F. Lüdicke.

“[...] very active intervention by some actors on behalf of associations in politically charged arenas around 1900: the ‘national associations,’ which typically operated across the empire with large memberships and promoted a more or less radical nationalism, often enjoying substantial support from authorities and government ministries [...]”³⁸

Ernst Friedel’s involvement in nationally and nationalistically oriented associations is confirmed by his membership in the Berlin branch of the German Eastern Marches Society, which was openly anti-Polish, as well as in other organizations directly linked to colonial agendas. Imeri describes Friedel as a highly networked city politician and notes his multiple memberships. Although she does not provide detailed analysis of the content and orientation of these colonial movement associations, she does mention, for instance, Friedel’s board membership in the German Society for the Exploration of Equatorial Africa.³⁹ In this role, he contributed not only his legal expertise but also the influence he wielded as a city councilor—a position he attained almost concurrently with the society’s founding.

Friedel's status differed from that of other prominent members, such as Bastian or Virchow, who also held university professorships. Nevertheless, the colonial networks operating at the association level were both highly influential and enduring, due in large part to extensive personnel overlaps and sustained contacts. This is exemplified by the connections between the Pan-German League, founded in 1891 on a racist-nationalist [*völkisch*] basis; the German Colonial Society (a merger of the German East African Society and the German Colonial Association), founded in 1887; and the German Naval Association, which engaged in military lobbying—all of which maintained links with the associations of which Friedel was also a member.⁴⁰

Friedel continued to publish on colonial topics throughout the 1870s, increasingly concentrating on methods of collecting and exhibiting, as exemplified in his article on "*Ostindien auf der internationalen Ausstellung von 1871*" (*East India at the International Exhibition of 1871*).⁴¹ His visit to the International Exhibition in London reads like a systematic collection report, in which Friedel categorized countless objects into departments and evaluated them according to 'cultural geography' that is, according to the taxonomies of colonial discourse. These considerations played a decisive role in shaping his concept for the MPM, which he developed shortly thereafter.

Like some of his contemporaries, including Virchow, Friedel may have been motivated by a vision of museums as "temples of science" and "powerful educational tools"⁴² and therefore as instruments of social progress. On one hand, this notion of a "powerful educational tool" was closely linked to colonial political ideas and—through the collection of colonial artifacts and objects—to practices of robbery, violence, and expropriation. On the other hand, through the *topos* of 'discovery' and 'exploration' of *terra incognita*—a violent motif underpinning colonial claims—it provided the framework for an understanding of the world that could be readily applied to local contexts and, conversely, for interpreting local realities in a global frame.

Against this backdrop, Friedel was able to combine the experience he had gained in colonial *and* local political interest groups and associations in the early 1870s into a new project: the conception and implementation of the MPM. All preparatory work for the museum's opening, which took place in October 1874, appears to have been a coordinated effort by city councilors Rudolf Virchow (unpaid) and Ernst Friedel (salaried). With the founding of the MPM, both implemented in the 'regional' space the ideas they had previously developed in the 'colonial' space within the BGAEU, grounded in the premise of exploring what was considered 'unknown' and 'hidden.'

Friedel's regional historical activities were likewise guided by a desire to collect and possess. After many years of dedicated work in the Association for the History of Berlin, he departed to establish his own association, *Brandenburgia* (full name: *Gesellschaft für Heimatkunde der Provinz Brandenburg* (Society for Local History of the Province of Brandenburg), later *Gesellschaft für Heimatkunde und Heimatschutz in der Mark Brandenburg* (Society for Local History and Homeland Protection in the March of Brandenburg)).⁴³ Given the historical suppression of colonial entanglements, it is hardly surprising that Friedel is primarily remembered “for his service for the community,”⁴⁴ as a developer of parks and cemeteries and as the initiator of today's *Stadtmuseum Berlin*. Yet it was precisely *through* his colonial references and collection strategies that Friedel used the museum to assert his self-proclaimed attachment to his homeland as a “true Prussian and German” with “healthy local patriotism.”⁴⁵ Significantly, despite this entanglement, only the ‘local’ Friedel is commemorated—a perspective that remains prevalent today and functions without acknowledgment of his pro-colonial activities.

Locating by Discourse: Friedel's Colonial Debut Work

As noted above, Ernst Friedel authored more than 470 publications on a wide range of subjects. Given his increasing engagement with colonial topics in the 1860s, his active involvement in associations, and his extensive networks, his first monograph merits closer attention. The work, published in 1867 under the extensive title *The Founding of Prussian-German Colonies in the Indian and Great Oceans with Special Consideration of East Asia: A Study in the Field of Trade and Economic Policy*, marks Friedel's earliest comprehensive intervention in colonial discourse. Although Friedel presented the study as the first of its kind, he explicitly drew on the ideas of the social economist Friedrich List (1789–1849). List is known not only as a key figure in the development of the German railway system and an advocate of the Customs Union,⁴⁶ but also as an influential theorist of colonialism and imperial expansion.⁴⁷ In his writings, List formulated an economically grounded, profit-oriented, and ostensibly scientific justification for European and Western supremacy—an approach that Friedel adopted and further developed.

Friedel took up what he described as the ‘necessary’ elements of a colonial program, formulating them in the context of the German War of 1866 as part of a broader vision of imperial unification. Alongside the consolidation of a German customs union, the expansion of the railway network and overseas steamship routes, the creation of a German war fleet, and the establishment of a general German consular system, this program

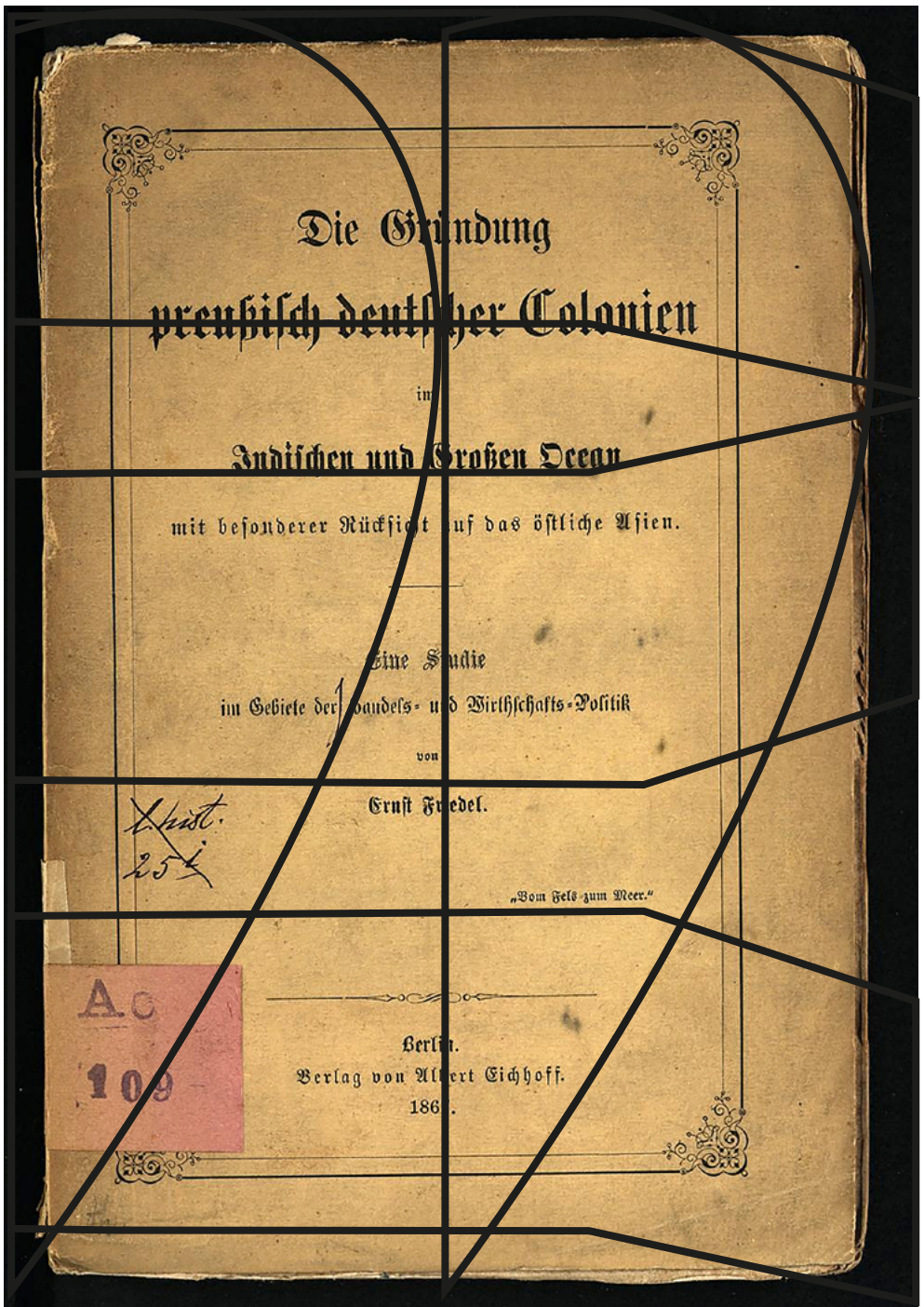


Figure 3:

Cover of Ernst Friedel's pro-colonial debut publication from 1867.

explicitly included the “establishment of German colonies” and the “regulation of German emigration overseas with the preservation of the German language and supremacy.”⁴⁸ Friedel elaborated in detail how an economically profitable colony could be established in _____ Formosa.⁴⁹ He referred to what he considered ongoing “trade-policy advantages” that Prussia had gained as a rising German power through its expedition to East Asia⁵⁰ and issued an unequivocal call for action, arguing that “the Prussian government, on behalf of the Germany it represents, can now proceed without delay to establish trading, plantation, and conquered colonies in the Indian and Great Oceans.”⁵¹

The contemporary reception of Friedel’s early colonial writings is illustrated by an article published in the *Freiburger Zeitung* on September 6, 1878. The article credits Friedel not only retrospectively as a pioneer with “the proper views on colonization,” but also as an author possessing profound, critical-comparative knowledge—an assessment that reflects the influence his work exerted on colonial advocates well into the period leading up to the First World War.⁵²

Early publications on colonial planning and national expansionist claims often drew on the colonial and imperial models of other European powers. Friedel, however, integrated both a national and a regional point of reference by invoking what he termed “Brandenburg-Prussian colonization.” This framing suggested historical continuity with the early modern period and implied a corresponding, supposedly ‘legitimate’

claim to colonial engagement. Friedel established this reference through his discussion of the construction of _____ fort Groß-Friedrichsburg (1663) and _____ fort Dorothea (1684) on the coast of what is today Ghana. In his account, Brandenburg-Prussian colonial activity in the 17th century connected three continents—“South Asia, Southwest Africa, and Central America”—and served as an important foundation for legitimizing the aspiration of a “united Germany” to “power and prestige beyond the ocean” in the author’s present or near future.⁵³

→ pp. 41–56 see the contributions by **Annika Bärwald**

→ pp. 59–76 see the contributions by **Andrea Weindl**

From today’s perspective, it is only possible to speculate about how Friedel arrived at these conclusions or which additional influences and doctrines shaped his thinking. Nevertheless, his writings clearly reflect a widely shared pro-colonial mindset articulated through recognizable discursive markers. They captured the spirit of the time, aligned with other contemporary ideas, and were taken seriously by his peers. This reception is illustrated by an article published in 1897 on the occasion of Friedel’s seventieth birthday, which retrospectively referred to his monograph as follows:

“The intellectual and political climate of the time was highly receptive to such proposals. The military successes in the wars against Denmark and Austria, together with the incorporation of the maritime provinces of Schleswig-Holstein and East Frisia as well as Hanover, substantially strengthened Prussia’s position as a great power. Having thus acquired new access to the North Sea and the Baltic, the Prussian government increasingly viewed its previous wait-and-see attitude toward colonial expansion as untenable. Article VI of the Constitution of the North German Confederation of 1867 accordingly framed the colonial question as part of Prussia’s future political agenda and formally acknowledged it as such by all member states.”⁵⁴

Final Thought

Almost two decades passed—until 1884–1885—before imperial Germany, which emerged from the North German Confederation, formally entered the circle of European colonial powers. Colonial thinking, however, with its patterns of perception and interpretation, its claims, and its capacity for mobilization, was a much older phenomenon. It developed over several centuries and encompassed cultural and intellectual dimensions of colonialism and imperialism whose effects extended across historical periods.⁵⁵ Friedel’s role as a pro-colonial, discourse-shaping figure may remain obscured by his activities as a municipal official, representative of the Prussian state, and founder of a museum. Likewise, his later focus on local and regional prehistory and early history—marked by collections of mammoth bones, snails, and small animals—may overshadow the global and colonial orientations that informed his earlier work. Yet the breadth of his activities, publications, and influence on Berlin’s urban history indicates that Ernst Friedel contributed significantly to the formation and dissemination of colonial thinking and practice in German-speaking contexts. He thus exemplifies a comprehensive, pervasive, and everyday form of colonialism whose traces remain visible today.

❶ This article is an abridged version of the research dossier prepared for the Berliner Stadtmuseum. The text was shortened and edited by Nicola Lauré al-Samarai. My sincere thanks go to the archivists of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv (GStA), especially Christiane Brandt-Salloum, as well as the staff of the GStA, the Landesarchiv, and the Stadtmuseum, particularly Marie Nörenberg and Andreas Bernhard for their initial consultation, and last but not least, to the highly dedicated staff of the Manuscripts Department of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, especially Wiebke Gröbel-Uhlig. Finally, a big thank you to Nicola Lauré al-Samarai for editing my text.

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- 45** Wagner, Phillip: *Anspruch und Realität von Ludwig Hoffmanns Kommunalarchitektur*. Berlin, 2009, p. 20.
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Figure 2: Inventory no. XI 12225; Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin. Reproduction photograph by Michael Setzpfandt, Berlin.

Figure 3: Digital copy of Friedel, Ernst: *Die Gründung preußisch-deutscher Colonien im Indischen und Großen Ozean mit besonderer Rücksicht auf das östliche Asien*. Berlin, 1867. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.



Behind the Scenes

*The Influence of Pro-Colonial Actors and Networks at the Berlin Conference (1884–1885)*¹

Laura Frey

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"The event presupposes Germany's position in the international order, a position grounded not only in assertive power but also in the confidence placed in it by other European states."

(Morning issue of the National-Zeitung, 15th October 1884)

The *Berlin Conference* took place from November 15, 1884, to February 26, 1885, in the Reich Chancellor's Palace and official residence of the then Reich Chancellor Otto von Bismarck at Wilhelmstraße 77. It was attended by representatives¹ of the German Empire, as well as delegates from Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Russian Empire, Sweden-Norway, and the Ottoman Empire. The conference resulted in a multilateral agreement designed to secure free trade in the Congo Basin, guarantee

free navigation on the Niger and Congo rivers, and codify the principle of the effective occupation as the governing norm for further colonial acquisitions by the European powers. Political representatives from the African continent were not invited, despite the fact that their territories and populations—spanning many millions of square miles and encompassing many millions of people—were directly affected by the outcome of this meeting. Ostensibly, the agreement combined two principal approaches, one focused on trade policy and one on 'humanitarianism.' The proceedings and the final act, however, make it clear that the agreement functioned primarily as a trade agreement and that the argument from 'civilization' served above all as justification for colonial violence against Africans and the exploitation of the African continent.

The significance of the conference and its outcomes remain contested to this day: Many African historians interpret it as the moment at which the structural conditions for the establishment of colonial borders on the African continent were established, thereby laying at least the foundations for the subsequent partition of the continent.² By contrast, mainstream European historiography has tended to ascribe comparatively limited importance to the conference itself, as much of what was decided quickly became obsolete. The International Association of the Congo, which—under the authority of the Belgian King Leopold II—acquired control over the Congo region as a consequence of the conference, instituted commercial monopolies in the Congo Free State (today: Democratic Republic of Congo as well as parts of other East and Central African states), which effectively nullified the principle of free trade. The enforcement of free navigation on the Congo river proved impossible because the river was not navigable from the sea, and the purported humanitarian provisions adopted at the conference, such as the renunciation of the trade with enslaved people, were rendered meaningless by the subsequent introduction of a system of forced labor in the Congo region

whose violence exceeded earlier practices.³ All of this already indicates that any analysis based on and restricted to the written outcomes of the conference fails to capture its specific significance for German colonial policy.

Against this backdrop, it is likewise inadequate to concentrate primarily on the foreign-policy constellation in which the German Empire—still without formally recognized colonies—seems to have played a less influential role up to that point. Even prior to 1884, the violent annexation of territories on the African continent was already well underway, frequently enforced through treaties with local rulers that were obtained by coercive or fraudulent means. The *Berlin Conference* thus functioned, in particular for the German Empire, as an instrument for preventing diplomatic conflicts among the competing European colonial powers on the one hand, and for consolidating and legitimizing its own colonial claims on the other.

Colonial enthusiasts played a significant, hitherto underexplored, role in this process. They advocated for an active colonial policy by the German Empire, both out of ideological conviction and with the aim of maximizing personal profit.⁴ In the following, I examine the specific interests that the German government and pro-colonial networks within the German Empire had in substantive results of the conference and their implementation. To this end, I focus on individuals and networks connected to Heinrich von Kusserow (1836–1900), the first colonial advisor at the Foreign Office, and Adolph Woermann (1847–1911), a Hamburg merchant. Both men were actively involved in the preparation and execution of the conference on behalf of the German side and served as delegates representing the German government. I demonstrate that in 1884–1885 a political window of opportunity emerged for the proactive shaping of German colonial policy—a policy that Reich Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had previously rejected.

Bismarck used the convening of the *Berlin Conference* as a means of positioning the German Empire as a European colonial power, both symbolically and practically. And he relied on the pro-colonial networks surrounding Heinrich von Kusserow and Adolph Woermann. In 1884, Woermann recognized that the moment had arrived to ensure that German trade interests in general—and his own commercial interests in particular—in West Africa and elsewhere were duly considered by the German government, and above all by the German military. Supporting Bismarck in these endeavors, Kusserow and Woermann were able, parallel to the preparation and execution of the conference, to secure governmental protection for German trade agreements in territories that later became German South West Africa (today: Namibia), Cameroon, and New Guinea.



Figure 1:

Reception room in the Reich Chancellery Palace
(date unknown).

Pro-colonial Networks in the Context of the *Berlin Conference*: Heinrich von Kusserow and Adolph Woermann

Colonial-Activist Network Building

Who were Heinrich Kusserow and Adolph Woermann, and what were they lobbying for during negotiations on the Congo region? Legation Councilor in the Foreign Office and a senior official responsible for trade relations with non-European states, Kusserow was a member of several colonial-policy interest groups, including the German Colonial Society, founded in 1882.⁵ Its aim was to promote the German Empire's participation in colonial enterprises among the public and within the business community, and to persuade Bismarck of the necessity of an active state colonial policy.⁶ Within the Foreign Office, von Kusserow was regarded as the Colonial Society's principal point of contact. He was also the brother-in-law

of Adolph von Hanseemann, owner of the Berlin based Disconto-Gesellschaft (Discount Company)⁷ and one of the few bankers in the German Empire who at that time invested in German colonial ventures.

The personal relationship between Hanseemann and Kusserow illustrates the strategic possibilities of influence on colonial policy, which were operating below the level of “high politics,” but could nevertheless have far-reaching consequences. Kusserow had already advocated pro-colonial motions during his tenure as a member of the Reichstag from 1871 to 1874. Hanseemann, in turn, used his connections to Kusserow to shape decision-making processes within the Foreign Office. Kusserow also assisted his brother-in-law in other ways: he introduced him, for example, to the Bremen merchant Adolf Lüderitz, who in April 1884 was issued the first German protectorate treaty by Bismarck for his land and trade contracts in _____ Angra Pequena (later: Lüderitz Bay in German South West Africa, today: Nami=Nüs in Namibia).⁸ In early summer 1884, Hanseemann himself acquired territories in southwestern Africa where copper mining appeared feasible.⁹ Through his position in the Foreign Office and his integration into pro-colonial networks, Kusserow became a key figure in German colonial policy. Even before the conclusion of the *Berlin Conference*, he was appointed the Foreign Office’s first colonial advisor, responsible for organizing the colonies and for deploying naval forces to protect colonial territories.¹⁰ The German Colonial Society as well as Kusserow and Hanseemann were unable to directly shape the decisive course of colonial policy since all major decisions of the Foreign Office ultimately required Bismarck’s approval—who exercised “quasi-dictatorial autocracy.”¹¹ Nevertheless, once Bismarck had committed himself to pursuing an active colonial policy, he did draw on these networks. At the same time, he remained cautious and ensured that figures such as Kusserow were granted “no kind of leeway for vested interests in political decision-making.”¹²

The Hamburg entrepreneur Adolph Woermann was also a member of the German Colonial Society. In 1880, he became senior partner of the C. Woermann Group and served on the supervisory boards of several banks, as well as on the management board of Hanseemann’s aforementioned Disconto-Gesellschaft (Discount Company) in Berlin.¹³ In 1884, he was elected to the Reichstag as a representative of the National Liberal Party, a mandate he held until 1890.¹⁴ By 1884, the C. Woermann Group had become one of the largest German companies operating on the African continent. The trading company exported consumer and industrial goods—including cotton fabrics, kitchenware, weapons, and alcohol—and imported raw materials and foodstuff such as rattan, rice, coffee, palm oil, and rubber. Until the 1880s, the company maintained trading relations with North and South America and Southeast Asia, but increasingly shifted its focus to West Africa. C. Woermann had maintained trading posts in Gabon and Cameroon since the 1860s.

The export of spirits from Hamburg in particular accounted at times for a substantial share of German trade with West Africa; by 1883, the brandy trade alone constituted nearly half of total exports.¹⁵ The Woermann Line, founded in 1885, played a central role in this trade, as it maintained regular sailings to West Africa.¹⁶ For the company's trade agreements in Cameroon, Woermann—together with the Hamburg-based firm Jantzen & Thormählen—received protection agreements from the German government as early as July 12, 1884, several months before the opening of the *Berlin Conference*.¹⁷ These treaties established German colonial rule in Cameroon and intended to secure trade by military means and to delineate German spheres of influence vis-à-vis other European colonial powers. After the conclusion of the *Berlin Conference*, the Woermann Line, the Cameroon-Land and Plantation Company (1885), the German East Africa Line (1890), and the trading company Woermann Brock & Co. (1894) emerged from the group. The company was thus closely intertwined with German colonial rule in West and Southwest Africa, which was still in its early stages in 1884.

Activating Pro-Colonial Networks

Historical research indicates that the networks associated with Kusserow and Woermann leveraged the negotiations over control of the Congo Basin to advance an active colonial policy by the German government. Prior to this, Bismarck had been skeptical of both formal colonial administration and the government's involvement in treaties that secured German trade through military means. This stance shifted due to the European balance of power in 1884–1885, England's reluctance to accommodate the demands of German merchants, and the readiness of certain Hanseatic merchants to endorse Bismarck's preferred model of *chartered companies*. This system was characterized by the state's avoidance of direct colonial annexation, thereby circumventing cost-intensive responsibilities such as administrative organization or infrastructure development. Instead, the policy sought to create conditions favorable for merchants to negotiate contracts with local rulers concerning land ownership and trade, which the state then reinforced through so-called 'declarations of protection.'¹⁸ Such 'protection' encompassed, for instance, military support in the event of attacks by local populations or rival European powers. The chartered company model, in turn, amplified the influence of pro-colonial commercial networks centered around figures such as Woermann.

In March 1883, following consultations with Kusserow and another Foreign Office official, Woermann submitted a memorandum—essentially a political position paper—to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Clemens Busch. In this document, he urged the German government to actively “shape the political situation on the west coast of Africa.”¹⁹ Although Woermann’s own interests in the Congo region were only indirect, he framed the memorandum in terms of German trade interests to secure Bismarck’s support for his objectives.²⁰ In April 1883, Woermann met again with Kusserow in Berlin and, following his advice, facilitated the submission of a memorandum by the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce to the Hamburg Deputation for Trade and Shipping, to be forwarded to the imperial government.²¹ This memorandum articulated various demands, including the promotion of free trade in West Africa, the “neutralization of the Congo estuary” and adjacent coastal areas, the establishment of a naval base on *Ētulá a Ēri* (today: Bioko in Equatorial Guinea)—an island in the Gulf of Guinea, then under Spanish colonial rule—and the annexation of a coastal strip in West Africa by the German Empire.²²

In historical research, this memorandum is regarded as a “key document in the establishment of the German colonial empire,” as it marked a significant step toward the annexation of Cameroon.²³ Although the Senate did not forward the memorandum to the imperial government as Woermann and Kusserow had intended, it nonetheless prompted a meeting between Woermann, Friedrich Richard Kaul—who represented the German government in Hamburg—and other merchants engaged in West African trade. At this meeting, Kaul indicated that while the establishment of a naval station was feasible, the annexation of a coastal strip was not anticipated. Despite this initial setback, just one year later, in July 1884, contracts previously concluded by the trading companies C. Woermann and Jantzen & Thormählen with Duala regents were placed under the protection of the German government by the newly appointed Imperial Commissioner Gustav Nachtigal. Thus, a central demand of the Hamburg merchants was realized despite earlier rejection. By issuing these protection treaties, Bismarck implemented a plan that Kusserow had already formulated at the end of November 1883.

Both Kusserow and Woermann were appointed to the German delegation at the *Berlin Conference*. In their overlapping roles as political representatives, network builders for colonial policy, and private capitalist entrepreneurs, they advanced the strategic interests of the German Empire while simultaneously safeguarding their own economic objectives.

Influence of the German Government on Conference Proceedings

At the conference, which convened in November 1884, Bismarck advocated the creation of the largest possible free-trade zone on the African continent, drawing on the precedent of East Asia. There, colonial powers such as Great Britain had violently—for instance, in the First Opium War against China (1839–1842)—secured access to previously highly regulated markets.²⁴ This violence was followed by the imposition of treaties that, since the 1920s, have been designated “unequal treaties.” These agreements compelled East Asian states to surrender their customs sovereignty and to admit foreign goods at very low tariff rates. Bismarck reiterated this position in his opening address to the conference, recommending that the delegates set up a comparable system for Africa. He argued that such an arrangement would confine commercial rivalries among European colonial powers to a “legitimate level of competition.”²⁵

The agenda of the German delegation, namely, establishing free trade across the widest possible area of the African continent became relevant already during the negotiations on the first agenda item—free trade in the Congo—and generated tensions between the German and French delegations. The Congo Basin, the central subject of the conference, could be defined in two ways: geographically, meaning the area encompassing the Congo River and its tributaries, or as an “organic economic area,” a substantially broader territorial conception.²⁶ At the commission meeting of November 24, 1884, Woermann reinforced the German position through a presentation that used the ivory trade as a representative example.²⁷ In order to avoid jeopardizing the Franco-German entente that had enabled the convening of the conference, the French and German delegations ultimately reached a compromise—through reciprocal concessions—on a definition of the Congo Basin that was acceptable to the other participating powers as well.²⁸

Another point of contention concerned the French delegation’s demand for the introduction of import tariffs to finance the administrative costs incurred by the respective colonial power. The German delegation, joined by several other delegations, regarded this as incompatible with the principle of free trade.²⁹ Woermann again intervened at the commission meeting with a presentation in which he argued that trade in West Africa was still predominantly based on barter, making import duties impracticable in the absence of a monetary system. His proposal to suspend import tariffs for a period of twenty years was ultimately adopted by the commission.

A further attempt to restrict trade was introduced a few sessions later by the British government, which called for a prohibition of the spirits trade on the Niger. The British delegation justified its motion by arguing that the Muslim rulers of the lower Niger and the Lake Chad region would themselves ban the spirits trade, a prohibition that the European powers would be obliged to respect.³⁰ In response, Woermann prepared an expert opinion for the German delegation, characterizing the British argument as merely a pretext. In a letter from the German delegate Clemens Busch to Bismarck, Busch noted that the British proposal was “incompatible with both free navigation and free trade” and thus “outside the scope of the conference.”³¹ The inclusion of such a clause in the Final Act therefore failed due to resistance from the German delegation. Woermann had a direct economic interest in this matter, as his company transported brandy, which already constituted a substantial share of German exports to the Congo region in 1883.³²

Connections Between the Course of the Conference and the Colonial Policy Measures of the German Government

The *Berlin Conference* had diplomatic, symbolic, and practical implications for the German Empire: it was formally recognized as a member of the European colonial powers.³³ Between 1884 and 1885, the German Empire itself became de facto a colonial power with dependent territories in Africa and the Pacific. In bilateral negotiations—initiated before the conference and continued afterward—the European powers resolved their territorial disputes and delineated their respective spheres of colonial influence. In this context, the issuance of protection treaties, which marked and legitimized these spheres of influence, played a central role.

The first declaration of protection issued by the German Empire for contracts concluded by merchants on the African continent was received by telegram on April 24, 1884, by the Bremen merchant Adolf Lüderitz—approximately six months before the opening of the *Berlin Conference*. Its issuance had been long in preparation and became known as the “Angra Pequena Crisis.” As early as November 1882, Lüderitz had requested that the Foreign Office place the territories south of Ezorongondo] Walvic Bay, in present-day Namibia, under German protection. The Foreign Office initially rejected this request, citing British interests in the region.

After the British government left a request from the German ambassador in London seeking clarification about the territories Britain claimed in the region unanswered for an extended period, and once nearly all areas in Southwest Africa had been claimed, Bismarck responded by issuing



Figure 2:

Headquarters of the Disconto-Gesellschaft at Behrensstraße 43/44 in Berlin (1887). Photograph by A. Schwartz.

a declaration of protection for Lüderitz's treaties. Four days later, Bismarck met with Adolph Woermann, Adolf Lüderitz, Heinrich von Kusserow, and the Bremen merchant Friedrich "Louis" Dyes. At this meeting, he presented his plan to establish a large chartered company that would assume responsibility for administration and trade in the German colonies.³⁴ Under this model, companies interested in colonial annexation would, as "ruling merchants," finance the colonies themselves. Woermann and his colleagues, however, argued that delegating imperial sovereignty to German firms could provoke conflicts with British companies active in the same regions. They therefore proposed instead the appointment of an imperial commissioner and a form of self-governing authority, and additionally requested the permanent stationing of imperial naval forces to ensure commercial security. Following the meeting, Woermann drafted a detailed plan for the acquisition of a coastal strip in West Africa, which he submitted to Bismarck later that month. His proposals subsequently formed the basis of the instructions issued to Gustav Nachtigal, who was dispatched to West Africa as Imperial Commissioner.³⁵ The demands of the Hamburg merchants were met: in July 1884, Nachtigal issued protection treaties for merchants in Togo and Cameroon and arranged for the German flag to be raised on site.³⁶

Due to the lack of experienced officials in so-called “African affairs,” Bismarck relied extensively on Adolph Woermann in the establishment of the German protectorates. Beyond drafting the annexation plan, Bismarck tasked him with forming a “syndicate for West Africa,”³⁷ which was constituted on October 8, 1884, in the offices of the C. Woermann company on Große Reichenstraße in Hamburg.

Woermann’s subsequent appointment as a technical delegate to the *Berlin Conference*—where he was able to advance the interests of German trade, including his own—stemmed from his reputation as an ‘expert’ on West African commerce and his close involvement in shaping German colonial policy in the region. Woermann also served as a negotiator in the bilateral discussions between Germany and France concerning mutual recognition of colonial acquisitions. For instance, the Foreign Office delegated to him the negotiations on the southern boundary of Cameroon, in which he secured a result highly favorable to German interests.³⁸

One day after the conference concluded, a protection treaty was issued for territories in East Africa, followed in May 1885 by a protection treaty for the New Guinea Company. The establishment of this consortium for acquiring colonial possessions in the Pacific, as well as the drafting of the protection treaty, resulted from the activities of the network surrounding Kusserow and Hansemann.³⁹ The Hamburg trading house Godeffroy, which operated posts in Samoa and several other Pacific islands, had fallen into financial distress due to speculative losses. Hansemann, together with Bismarck’s long-time banker Gerson von Bleichröder, devised a plan to rescue the firm. Hansemann subsequently assumed responsibility for subsidizing the company and founded the Neuguinea-Compagnie (German New Guinea Company), whose trade agreements were placed under German protection only a few months after the close of the conference.

Together with the treaties in Southwest Africa and Cameroon, these measures laid the foundation for the German colonial empire. In other words, there was both a temporal overlap between the *Berlin Conference* and the issuance of protection treaties—issued both before and after the conference—and a mutually reinforcing development between events on the African continent and in Europe.

Conclusion

Although neither the German government, represented by Otto von Bismarck, nor the Hamburg merchant Woermann, nor the pro-colonial networker Kusserow had any direct interest in the primary subject of the *Berlin Conference*—the Congo Basin—they leveraged the conference for their own purposes. Symbolically, the German Empire was recognized as a member of the European colonial powers, while practically, the establishment of the German colonial empire was advanced through the issuance of protection treaties, which secured the colonial claims of German actors *vis-à-vis* other European powers. Woermann personally achieved his objective of state protection for his trade agreements in the Cameroon region even before the conference and enhanced his long-term role as a West Africa ‘expert.’ Kusserow, in turn, benefited directly from his participation, being appointed the first German colonial advisor to the Foreign Office. The German colonies were thus established through close collaboration among German merchants, colonial proponents, the Foreign Office, and the German government during both the preparation and implementation of the *Berlin Conference*.

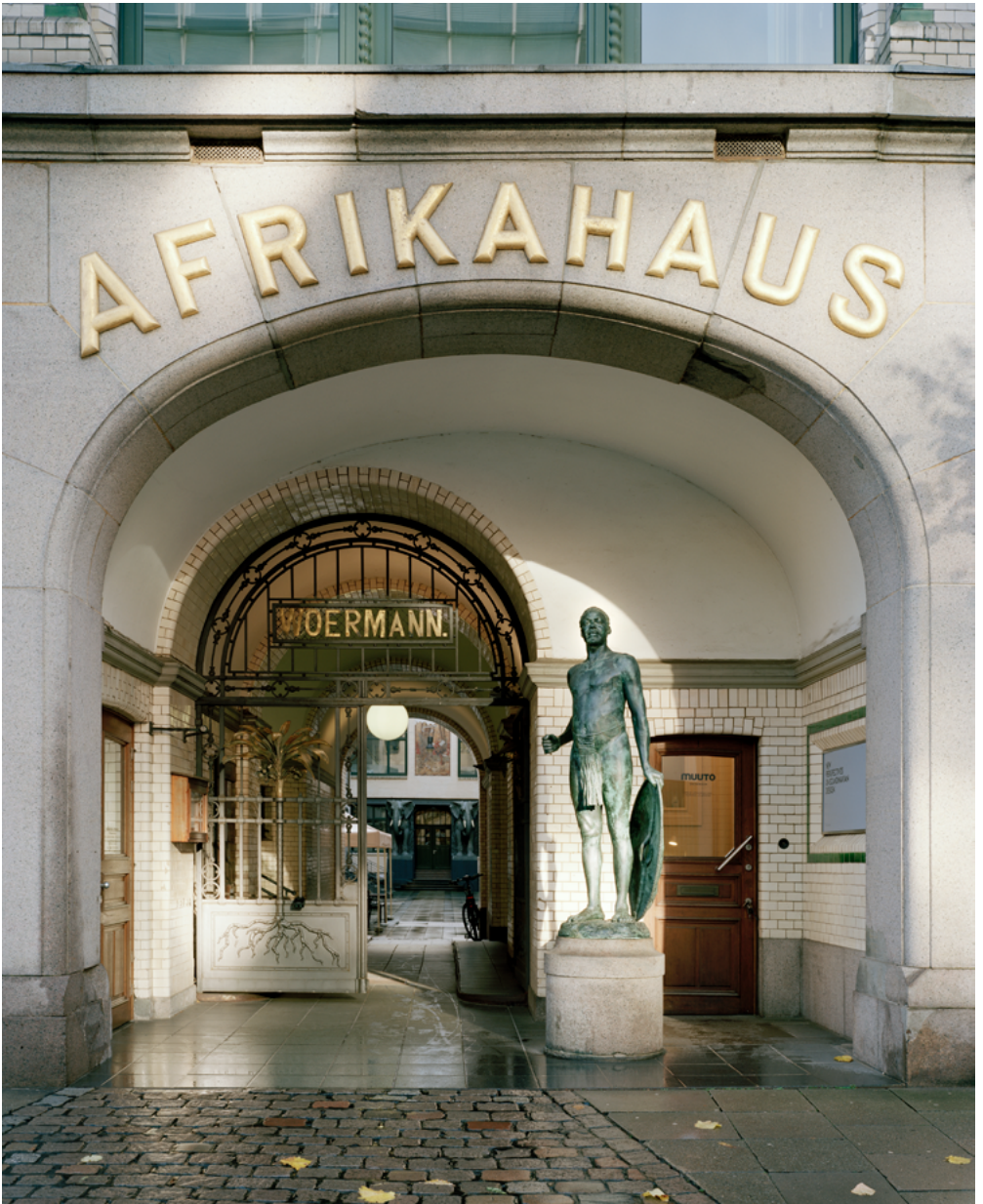


Figure 3:
Headquarters of the trading company and shipping company Woermann on Große Reichenstraße in Hamburg, 2023. Photograph by Markus Dorf Müller.

1 This article is an abridged version of a working dossier compiled for the Berlin City Museum. The abridgements were made in collaboration with Nicola Lauré al-Samarai.

Endnotes

1 In the German version of this article, the masculine form is used when, according to current historical research, it can be assumed that only persons identified as men were involved.

2 Uzoigwe, Godfrey N.: "European partition and conquest of Africa: an overview," in: Boahen, Albert Adu (ed.): *General History of Africa VII. Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*. UNESCO International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, 1985, pp. 29–31.

3 Eckert, Andreas: "125 Jahre Berliner Afrika-Konferenz: Bedeutung für Geschichte und Gegenwart," in: *GIGA Focus Afrika 12 (2009)*, https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/27459/ssoar-2009-eckert-125_jahre_berliner_afrika-konferenz.pdf;jsessionid=21950721274962A4B3DB97B-97682F750?sequence=1; Bley, Helmut: "Künstliche Grenze, natürliches Afrika? Um die Berliner Kongokonferenz von 1884–1885 ranken sich allerhand Mythen," in: *iz3w 282 (2005)*: p. 14 ff. (online at <https://www.freiburg-postkolonial.de/Seiten/Bley-Kongokonferenz.htm>)

4 Important contributions to this field have been made in recent research by Kim Sebastian Todzi and Martin Kröger, among others.

5 Wehler, Hans-Ulrich: *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*. Frankfurt/Main, 1985, pp. 162–67.

6 The association included important figures from industry and business, including Hansemann, a representative of the Bleichröder banking house, as well as representatives of the Krupp, Siemens, Schwartzkopff, Jantzen & Thormählen companies. Cf. Bade, Klaus: "Imperial Germany and West Africa. Colonial Movement, Business Interests and Bismarck's 'Colonial Polices'," in: Förster, Stig et al. (eds.): *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa. The Berlin Africa-Conference 1884–1885 and the onset of partition*. Oxford 1988, pp. 121–147; here p. 124.

7 Barth, Boris: *Die deutsche Hochfinanz und die Imperialismen*. Stuttgart, 1995, p. 46.

8 Indem, p. 46.

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10 Kröger, Martin: "Den 'Platz an der Sonne' verwalten. Die Kolonialabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes und das Reichskolonialamt," in: Haas, Carlos Alberto et al. (ed.): *Das Auswärtige Amt und die Kolonien. Geschichte, Erinnerung, Erbe*. München, 2024, pp. 29–62; p. 37.

11 Wehler, Bismarck und der Imperialismus, p. 419.

- 12** Bismarck an Hatzfeldt, 7.8.1884, PA AA, P1, 8384, cited via: Kröger, *Den 'Platz an der Sonne' verwalten*, S. 34.
- 13** Loth, Heinrich: *Kolonialismus und "Humanitätsintervention."* *Kritische Untersuchung der Politik Deutschlands gegenüber dem Kongostaat (1884–1908)*. Berlin, 1966, p. 24 Fn.3.
- 14** Cf. here and following. Todzi, Kim Sebastian: *Unternehmen Weltaneignung: Der Woermann-Konzern und der deutsche Kolonialismus 1837–1916*. Göttingen, 2023, p. 11ff.
- 15** In 1883, goods worth 12 million marks were exported from the German Empire to West Africa, 48% of which were spirits. Cf. Todzi, "Moralizing the Liquor Trade in German West Africa, 1884–1914," in: Rosenhaft, Eve / Brahm, Felix (eds.): *Global Commerce and Economic Conscience in Europe, 1700–1900. Distance and Entanglement*. Oxford, o.J., pp. 215–241; here p. 219.
- 16** Todzi, *Moralizing the Liquor Trade*, p. 219.
- 17** Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, p. 9.
- 18** Mommsen, Wolfgang J.: "Bismarck, the concert of Europe, and the future of West Africa," in: Förster et al., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa*, pp. 151–170; here p. 156.
- 19** Adolph Woermann to Unterstaatssekretär Clemens Busch, 4 March 1883, BArch R1001/4188, Bl. 81–85.
- 20** Woermann himself did not appear to have had any commercial interests in the Congo or the coastal area around the mouth of the river. However, this was not entirely true, as can be seen from the protest note issued by the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce on April 27, 1884: Steamships belonging to the C. Woermann company transported goods from Hamburg to the Congo region, the value of which Woermann estimated at 850,000 marks. Cf. Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, p.125. and "Nr. 4 Handelskammer Hamburg an das Auswärtige Amt, 24. März 1884," in: *Aktenstücke, betreffend die Kongofrage. Dem Bundesrat und dem Reichstag vorgelegt im April 1885. Deutsches Weißbuch*. Hamburg, 1885.
- 21** Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, p. 126f.
- 22** Memorandum from the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce to the Deputation for Trade and Shipping, July 6, 1885, BArch R1001/4189, Bl. 60–65.
- 23** Cf. here and following Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, p. 131ff.
- 24** Cf. Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*, p. 373–74 sowie "Erlass an den Gesandten in Paris," in: *Aktenstücke*, p. 1652. Also Osterhammel, Jürgen: "Zur Geschichte des Freihandels," in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 68, No. 4–5 (2018), pp. 11–17.
- 25** Gatter, Frank Thomas / *Übersee-Museum Bremen* (eds.): *Protokolle und Generalakte der Berliner Afrika-Konferenz 1884–1885*. Bremen, 1984, p. 102.

26 Cf. Königk, Georg: *Die Berliner Kongo-Konferenz 1884–1885. Ein Beitrag zur Kolonialpolitik Bismarcks.* Essen, 1938, pp. 125–132.

27 Adolph Woermann's presentation at the commission meeting on November 24, 1884, BArch R1001/4163, Bl. 67–71.

28 Emerson, Barbara: *Leopold II of the Belgians. King of Colonialism.* London, 1979, p. 113.

29 Cf. here and following Königk, *Die Berliner Kongo-Konferenz*, p. 132.

30 "Proposition de M. le Plenipotentiaire de la Grande Bretagne," No. 38, BArch R1001/4153, Bl. 26.

31 Transcript of Clemens Busch's letter to Bismarck, 6 Januar 1885, BArch R1001/4153, Bl. 28.

32 Schröder, Norbert: "Hamburgs Schnapsfabrikanten und der deutsche Kolonialismus in Westafrika," in: *Zeitschrift für Hamburgische Geschichte* 76 (1990), pp. 83–116.

33 Cf. here and following Pogge von Strandmann, *Imperialismus am Grünen Tisch*, pp. 20–29.

34 Cf. here and following, Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, pp. 142–161.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

36 Bade, *Imperial Germany and West Africa*, p. 125.

37 Todzi, *Unternehmen Weltaneignung*, p. 62.

38 Rudin, Harry Rudolph: *Germans in the Cameroons 1884–1914. A Case Study in Modern Imperialism.* New Haven, 1938, p. 74.

39 Cf. here and following Barth, *Die deutsche Hochfinanz*, p. 52

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Figure 3: From: *Koloniales Hamburg*, Markus Dorfmueller, 2023, <https://www.markusdorfmueller.eu/home/koloniales-hamburg>.



The 'African Quarter'

*Colonial Street Names
in Berlin-Wedding*

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The year is 1927: two men examine a map of the Wedding district alongside a map of the African continent, shifting their gaze between the two. Their aim is to familiarize the residents of northern Berlin with the geography of the African continent. To this end, they identify key geographical markers—rivers, mountains, and selected location names—and assign them to the then-unnamed streets along Seestraße. One of these men, Walter Rieck (1885–1974), city councilor for public education and schools in Wedding, later recounted in a 1974 memoir the circumstances surrounding the naming of **Dualastraße**, **Ugandastraße**, **Sambesistraße**, **Senegalstraße**, and **Tangastraße** as follows:

“When I expressed the opinion in the discussion that the naming of many streets in Berlin was the result of chance, my mayor Karl [sic!] Leid explained that naming fell under the remit of ‘the education of the people’ [*Volksbildung*] so I myself would now have the opportunity to do better. [...] With the help of my teaching colleagues and a thick *Diercke World Atlas*, and in particular my colleague and friend Erich Schwarz (†), I soon compiled a register titled ‘African Street’, a list of ‘African’ street names, which served the district office for decades [...]”¹

According to Rieck, Carl Leid (1867–1935), mayor of the Wedding district, commissioned him to name the streets under the pretext of educating the people. Rieck claims to have based his selections on other streets in the neighborhood that already bore the names of African locales. Yet a closer examination beyond the map’s boundaries reveals that this account obscures the actual origins of the ‘African Quarter.’ This article presents the individual street names chronologically and examines the colonial references they inscribed into the urban landscape.

Colonial Capital Berlin

Following the founding of the German Empire in 1871 and Berlin’s designation as its capital, the city emerged as a major industrial and commercial center, with its infrastructure expanding continuously including in the northern districts.² Companies such as Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft and Borsig-Werke established operations in Wedding, spurring rapid development marked by large-scale tenement construction that peaked around 1900.³ Wedding exemplifies the demographic consequences of this growth: within six decades, its population increased more than fortyfold, reaching 337,193 inhabitants by 1917.⁴

New street names were required for the emerging residential area. These were intended to reflect not only Berlin's prominence as the capital of the newly founded German Empire but also its central role in German colonial administration.⁵ The colonial enthusiasm of the late 19th century permeated the city. For example: Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), the physician after whom the Rudolf Virchow Hospital—opened in 1906 adjacent to the 'African Quarter'—was named, presented his 'ethnological' research to the public at an event in Berlin's Zoological Garden in November 1880. In his presentation, he advocated for holding *Völkerschauen* (human zoos) in part so that he could subsequently conduct anthropometric measurements on the individuals displayed in these spectacles.⁶

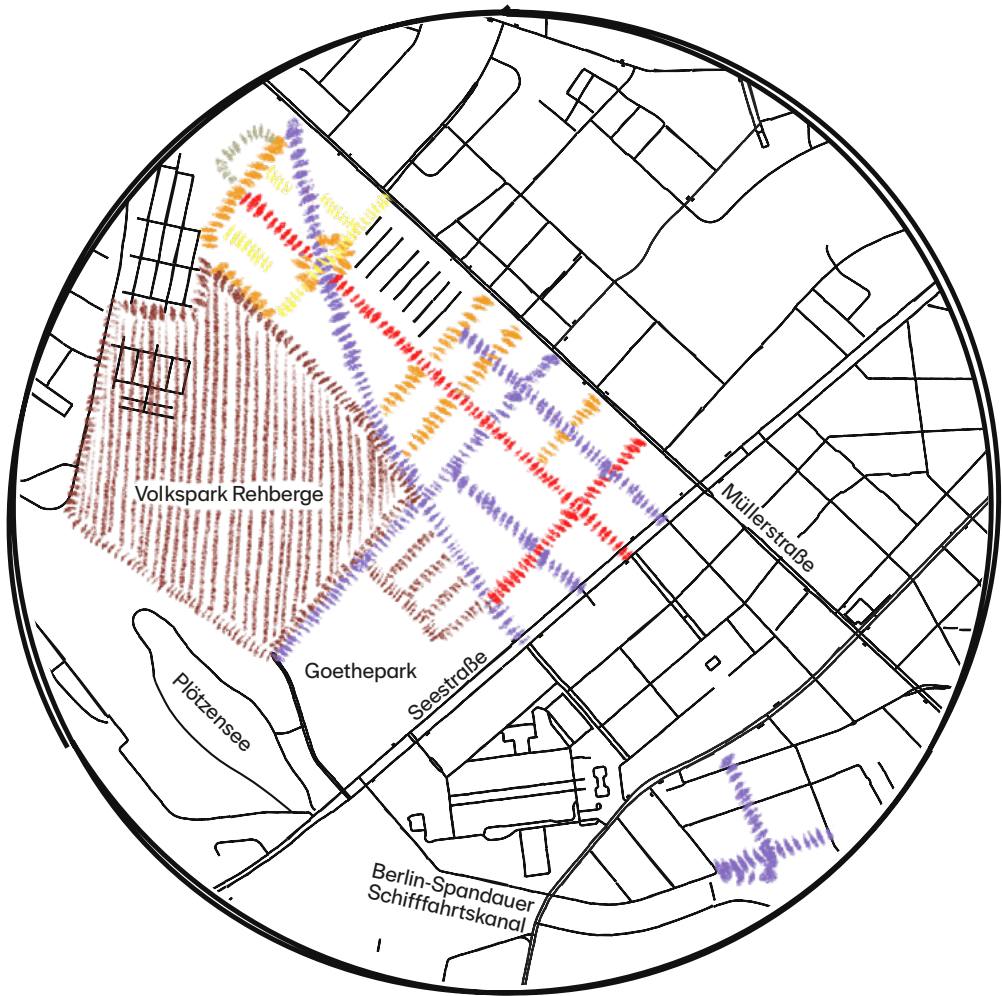
In 1896, Berlin hosted its first colonial exhibition. In Treptower Park, approximately one hundred individuals from Africa, Oceania, and Asia were displayed in reconstructed villages as living demonstrations of colonial rule and purported civilizational hierarchies.⁷ The exhibition attracted millions of visitors and reinforced the imperial self-image of the German Empire.⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that the German Colonial Society convened its annual general meeting at Berlin City Hall on 27 May 1899—just one week before the decision to establish a Colonial Quarter in Wedding.⁹

According to a 1813 regulation, the naming of streets and squares required the approval of the king or emperor. The Berlin magistracy and the police headquarters held the right to propose names. In practice, the magistracy compiled lists of proposals and submitted them to the Ministry of Public Works, which then forwarded them to the monarch for approval, typically on an annual basis. The police were responsible for implementing the approved names.¹⁰ The magistracy itself was elected by the 102 men which constituted the city council and comprised ten salaried and fifteen unsalaried councilors, with the mayor serving as chairman, subject to confirmation by both the magistracy and the emperor.¹¹ Within the magistracy, responsibilities were internally divided.

Ernst Friedel (1837–1918), a city councilor and long-serving member of the magistracy, stated that he oversaw street naming as a department head.¹² His mission was clear: the new names were to represent the German Empire in its entirety—a mandate publicly reinforced by the Ministry of Public Works in an 1892 newspaper article:

"The great deeds of our fatherland's history, the names of military commanders, scholars, poets, artists, etc., are written on our street signs, and many streets are also, in a sense, signposts to the German Reich, as all important places are commemorated by street names. One can visualize and envision entire sections of German history and study the country with the help of a Berlin street map."¹³

→ pp. 79–95 see
the contribution
by **Aischa Ahmed**



Decades of Naming

-  1890
-  1900
-  1910 (all naming before 1918)
-  1920
-  1930 (all naming from 1937-1939)
-  1950

Colonial Revisionism

-  1918 -  1928 Phase 1
-  1928 -  1933 Phase 2
-  1933 - 1942/43 Phase 3

Figure 1:

Chronological map of street naming in the 'African Quarter.' Map by Josepha Jendricke, Clara Westendorff | Design by visual intelligence.

In addition to the requirement that street names be short, easy to pronounce, and as unique as possible, the magistracy—and thus Friedel—enjoyed a degree of creative freedom. It is therefore plausible that personal interests or ideological commitments also influenced the naming of streets in Berlin. Friedel pursued a range of such interests and was active in various associations involved in local history as well as in colonial policy-making. He published numerous colonial propaganda writings and was a member of the German Colonial Society—the very association that had held its general meeting at Berlin City Hall in 1899.¹⁴

The extent to which other magistrates were involved in colonial ventures is unclear. However, as they are listed alongside the department head and citizens as contributors on the street-name proposal lists, it can be inferred that Friedel was not solely responsible for the colonial names.

Establishment of the Colonial Quarter

The reasons for selecting section X1 of the development plan for Berlin-Wedding—based on the Hobrecht Plan of 1862—as the site of the Colonial Quarter are unknown.¹⁵ The first street to be named was **Kameruner Straße** (formerly Straße 23A) on 4 June 1899, followed later that year by **Togostraße**, “at the request of the local magistracy:”

“In line with the similar proposal for non-German capitals, streets should also be named after colonial figures. [...] In addition, the section of the development plan between Müllerstraße, Seestraße, and Jungfernheide offers an opportunity to gradually commemorate the remaining German colonies in street names.”¹⁶

The initial impetus thus officially came from the magistracy as a whole. It is also evident that the concept of a Colonial Quarter was inspired by “non-German capitals” and was an integral part of the quarter’s founding. The first two street names subsequently served as justification for additional streets with colonial references. In this way, **Kameruner Straße** and **Togostraße** established a precedent for legitimizing future names. This was followed by **Lüderitzstraße**, named in 1902—which was named, as colorfully described, “in honor of the founder of German colonialism”—at the request of the local “citizenry,” and **Guineastraße** in 1903, justified with the explanation that “part of the current German colonies (Togo) are located on the Guinea coast; the first Brandenburg colonies were also located there in the 17th century.”¹⁷

Colonial Names in the Sprengelkiez

The streets **Samostraße** and **Kiautschoustraße** are notable exceptions, as they are located in Berlin-Wedding, but outside the ‘African Quarter’ in the present-day Sprengelkiez on the north bank. Their names are closely connected to Norddeutsche Lagerhaus AG, a company that rented storage space. On 2 January 1899, the magistracy submitted a request to the city council to include three streets on the company’s premises—designated streets 7A, 7B, and 7C—in the development plan, which was subsequently approved.¹⁸ On 7 November 1905, the streets were named: 7A became Sprengelstraße, 7B **Kiautschoustraße**, and 7C **Samostraße**. The magistracy chose the names to commemorate the “German colonial possessions in China.” As with the streets in the ‘African Quarter,’ the apparent proximity to already named streets with colonial associations served as a further justification.¹⁹ It is also possible that the names were intended to draw public attention to the model colony of Qingdao in contrast to the ongoing war in German South West Africa (present-day Namibia).²⁰

The actual signage and numbering of the streets were not completed until 1918.²¹ At the request of the municipal, Square A4 in Section X1 was designated **Pekinger Platz**.²² Its name, chosen in 1905 after the capital of China, likely also commemorated the suppression of the *Yihétuán* *Yùndòng* in Beijing in 1900.²³

The Colonial Quarter Grows

The first street name directly attributed to department head Friedel is **Afrikanische Straße**, which cuts diagonally across the quarter and was designated in 1906.²⁴

Notably, there was a significant delay in road construction during the 1910s. Municipal building authority files indicate that **Transvaalstraße** had already been named in 1907, the magistracy citing its “proximity to African street names” as justification.²⁵ However, the actual implementation, i.e., installation of signage and numbering, was not completed until 1918, as construction remained ongoing.

The same applies to **Swakopmunder Straße** and **Windhuker Straße** (both formerly part of Straße 21a). Both names were submitted in 1908 by department head Friedel with reference to the Colonial Quarter,

but the street signs were not installed until 1918.²⁶ Swakopmund and Windhoek—then part of the colony of German South West Africa (present-day Namibia)—were the sites of two of the first three concentration camps established by German protection troops between 1904 and 1908 to exterminate the local Ovaherero and Nama populations.²⁷

Similarly, the naming of **Nachtigalplatz** took several years.²⁸ The square name, proposed in 1908 and implemented in 1910, was still designated Platz Z on the "Overview Map of Berlin" from 1900–1901. It was not until the surrounding areas were developed in the architectural style typical of the 1930s that the current **Nachtigalplatz** was realized around 1938.²⁹

The name **Otawistraße** was also proposed by the magistracy with the annotation Colonial Quarter, and the name was approved in 1911.³⁰ The name may be linked to the Otavi Railway of the Otavi Mining and Railway Company, which opened in 1906 and was sold to the administration of the German South West Africa protectorate in 1910. In 1937, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* described the railway in a colonial revisionist manner as "[...] one of the most flourishing German colonial enterprises in the old German Empire." According to the article, the company constructed the economically and militarily significant Otavi Railway, spanning 570 kilometers from Swakopmund to Tsumeb.³¹

The name **Kongostraße** (formerly Straße 24a) was proposed by the magistracy in 1911 and approved in 1912, simultaneously with **Sansibarstraße** (formerly Straße 28b).³² The naming of **Kongostraße** can be understood in the context of the Morocco-Congo Treaty of 1911, in which Germany recognized French supremacy in Morocco and, in return, received a French colonial territory known as New Cameroon or German Congo.³³ Zanzibar, while not a German colony, was considered part of Germany's so-called 'areas of interest.' The street signs for both streets were not installed until 1918, likely due to delays caused by World War I (1914–1918).³⁴

Myth One: The 'African Quarter' and Carl Hagenbeck's Tierpark-Project

The planned zoo (*Tierpark*) of Hamburg entrepreneur, animal dealer, and zoo director Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913) is often cited as the origin of the name 'African Quarter.' Hagenbeck intended to use the fallow Rehberge northwest of the quarter, part of the vast Jungfernheide area, which at that time extended to Spandau and was largely unsuitable for agriculture due to its sandy soil.³⁵ Whether because of the soil conditions or simply the availability of space, Hagenbeck envisioned a zoo modeled on the one he had founded in Hamburg in 1874. He was committed to promoting the

colonial idea and profited from it: through animal exhibitions and human zoos, he could both present colonial ideologies to the public and popularize them for commercial gain. In Berlin, his project received public support from Rudolf Virchow and emperor Wilhelm II (1859–1941).³⁶ In 1896, Hagenbeck presented his ice panorama as a backdrop for an animal exhibition at the Great Industrial Exposition of Berlin, achieving considerable success. That same year, he patented his method of displaying animals within replicas and therefore in their supposed ‘natural environments,’ an innovative approach at the time.³⁷

From 1909 onward, Hagenbeck planned a landscaped zoo spanning approximately 50 hectares, in which animals would be displayed in enclosures modeled on geographic regions—a direct competitor to the Berlin Zoological Garden. Although a contract was signed between the city of Berlin and Hagenbeck, it was never implemented, as Hagenbeck terminated the agreement on 30 September 1912.³⁸ Conflicting press reports about the project continued until 1913. The free weekly magazine *Das Afrikanische (Hagenbeck) Viertel einschließlich des Weddings* (The African (Hagenbeck) Quarter including Wedding) published a series of reports by “Prof. Immerschläuer” on the negotiations in its 1913–1914 issues 2–6. These articles appear to have been satirical in nature but demonstrate that the plans remained in public discourse.³⁹ Hagenbeck died on 14 April 1913, and with the outbreak of World War I the following year, plans for the Tierpark in northern Berlin were finally abandoned. Notably, as late as 1915, a Berlin city map still referred to the area as the “Hagenbeck Animal Show Grounds.”⁴⁰ However, the persistent myth that the street names in the ‘African Quarter’ derive from Hagenbeck’s Tierpark-Project can be firmly refuted: the street names had already been established in 1899, a full ten years before project planning began.

Colonialism without Colonies

With the end of World War I and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Germany not only lost the war and its claim to great-power status but also all of its colonies. Under slogans such as “Shame of Versailles” and the “lie of colonial guilt,” colonial revisionism emerged during the Weimar Republic, aiming to regain the lost colonial territories. Despite the formal loss of its colonies, Germany continued to pursue an active colonial policy after 1919. The colonial revisionist movement was primarily driven by the German Colonial Society, along with former settlers, officers, and other colonial actors.⁴¹



Figure 2:

Memorial stele at Manga Bell Square highlighting the new namesakes and their anti-colonial contexts (as part of the exhibition *Dekoloniale—what remains?!*, 2025). Photograph by Moritz Weber.

At the initiative of the German Colonial Society, the Colonial Reich Working Group (KORAG) was founded in 1922 to provide organizational coherence to revisionist efforts. The working group “organized slide shows, commemorative events, and exhibitions, published magazines, and, above all, entered schools to mobilize young people.”⁴² Colonial imaginaries thus remained deeply embedded in public consciousness and enjoyed broad political support, with the notable exception of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). The limited intensity of the party’s political demands for colonial restitution can be attributed to Germany’s defeat in World War I and the burden of reparations. From 1924 onward, the new colonial department within the Foreign Office officially regarded the recovery of colonies as unlikely. Consequently, by the mid-1920s, demands for the return of all colonies found little support among either the government or political parties—yet the colonial idea itself continued to be actively propagated.⁴³

In 1928 alone, the German Colonial Society distributed 70,000 pamphlets and 100,000 colonial programs and supplied the German press with propaganda articles and reports. Efforts were increasingly directed toward mobilizing the working class for colonial revisionism, with the NSDAP—following its entry into the Reichstag in 1928—identified as a particularly promising partner.⁴⁴

Myth Two: The ‘African Quarter’ and the *Diercke World Atlas*

As outlined above, Walter Rieck named five streets in the ‘African Quarter’ around 1927: **Dualastraße, Ugandastraße, Sambesistraße, Senegalstraße, and Tangastraße**. These streets are often said to have been named after entries in the *Diercke World Atlas*. Additional street names were needed for naming the newly developed residential area along Seestraße. After 1919, responsibility for street naming lay with the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, while the police remained the executive authority.⁴⁵ Following the regional reform of 1920, each of Berlin’s twenty administrative districts was assigned a district assembly and a district office, which then assumed responsibility for street naming.⁴⁶

According to Rieck’s recollections, the street names introduced in 1927 can be traced back to his colleague Carl Leid and the aforementioned *Diercke World Atlas*. Rieck offered little insight into his personal motivations, stating only that orientation within the city was important to him. Given that numerous streets in the surrounding area already were named after African locales, it seemed obvious to continue this thematic pattern and to frame the naming process as an opportunity for geographic education. It may be assumed, however, that the selected locations on the African continent were not chosen at random. Rather, shaped by his Prussian socialization, Rieck appears to have established implicit connections to German colonial history—connections he may have deliberately downplayed in his 1974 account.⁴⁷

Dualastraße is named after the city of Douala in present-day Cameroon, a former German colony. The subsequent street names suggest a—possibly intentional—biographical linkage to Carl Peters (1856–1918), a politician, publicist, and colonialist notorious for his extreme racism. **Ugandastraße**, for instance, may allude to the Uganda Treaty concluded by Peters but later dissolved. **Sambesistraße**, named after the Zambezi River and diverging from the prevailing pattern of city or country names, may reference Peters's research expeditions in the region between 1899 and 1901, which he later documented in his book *Im Goldland des Altertums. Forschung zwischen Sambesi und Sabi* (In the Gold Country of Antiquity. Research between Zambezi and Sabi). **Tangasträße** refers to the city of Tanga in present-day Tanzania, part of the former colony of German East Africa, which was founded by Peters.⁴⁸

Street Names in the 'African Quarter' during National Socialism

The administrative structures of the Weimar Republic remained largely intact after 1933. In line with the National Socialist policy of *Gleichschaltung* [Translator's note: The term *Gleichschaltung* can best be approximated as the Nazification of State and Society.], the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) was banned in June 1933 following the dissolution of the Communist Party of Germany, while the remaining bourgeois parties subsequently disbanded themselves. Members of the Communist and Social Democratic parties in particular were subjected to systematic persecution by the Nazi regime.⁴⁹ Walter Rieck was dismissed from all public offices. Together with his wife, Jenny Rieck, he hid the Jewish woman Inge Deutschkron and her mother, who both survived the Nazi period. After the war, Rieck returned to political life, serving as district mayor of Wilmersdorf.⁵⁰

On 25 January 1935, the Prussian State Ministry issued a new law regulating the naming and renaming of streets in the cities of Berlin and Potsdam, transferring responsibility to the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior.⁵¹ This was followed on 1 April 1939 by the "Ordinance on the Naming of Streets, Squares, and Bridges," which reassigned responsibility to the municipality.⁵² Under this ordinance, decisions on street names were made by the mayor, subject to approval by the local NSDAP representative.⁵³

Even after 1933, the list of street names compiled by Rieck continued to serve as a basis for naming streets in the 'African Quarter.' A notable exception was the renaming of part of Londoner Straße as **Petersallee** in 1939.⁵⁴ Carl Peters's dishonorable dismissal during the imperial period,

prompted by his brutal rule in the former colony of German East Africa, had been revoked by the Nazi regime in 1937—which likely motivated the renaming. A folder in the Landesarchiv Berlin labelled *Stolzenberger Schnellhefter* documents several buildings and their numbering in Wedding. These include **Mohasistraße**, probably named after 1937; **Damarastraße**, named in 1937; and **Usambarastraße**, named in 1938. **Sambiastraße**, a street that no longer exists, is likewise listed.⁵⁵ As with the other streets derived from Rieck's list, these names can be linked to Carl Peters and the establishment of German East Africa. In 1884, Peters began 'acquiring' the core territories of the future colony around Lake Mohasi.⁵⁶ **Usambarastraße** refers to the Usambara Mountains in the former colony, while **Damarastraße** derives its name from Damaraland, a region of the former colony of German South West Africa (present-day Namibia).

Naming of Streets in the 'African Quarter' after World War II

Shortly after the end of World War II, in 1946, efforts were undertaken to rename **Togostraße**, initiated by the Committee for Victims of Fascism. According to historian Gisela Hahn, the committee proposed renaming the street after Ella Trebe (1902–1943), a member of the resistance against the Nazi-Regime who had previously lived on the street and was murdered in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. However, no corresponding application appears in the records of the district office, and the renaming was never implemented.⁵⁷

In 1958, on the occasion of the state visit by Ghanaian head of state Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), **Ghanastraße** (formerly No. 21c and No. 219) was officially renamed.⁵⁸

Changes in the 'African Quarter' since the 1980s

Since the 1980s, civil society initiatives, Afro-diasporic groups, and political parties have repeatedly called for the renaming of streets in the 'African Quarter' that commemorate colonial perpetrators. In 1986, the Wedding-based Alternative Liste submitted a motion to rename **Petersallee**, **Lüderitzstraße**, and **Nachtigalplatz**.⁵⁹ The proposal suggested naming the streets and square after "heroes of the Herero era," such as Samuel Maharero (1856–1923) and Hendrik Witbooi (1830–1905), as well as

contemporary figures including Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) and Albert John Luthuli (1898–1967), thereby articulating a public stance against colonialism. After failing to secure majority support from the other parties, the Alternative Liste focused its efforts on **Petersallee**, proposing that it be renamed Namibiastraße, after the present-day state on the territory of the former colony of German South West Africa. This proposal was opposed by the other parties. The Social Democratic Party of Germany suggested naming the street after Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965), who had already been commemorated in East Berlin—yet without addressing the problematic entanglement of his ostensibly 'humanistic' work with colonial contexts.⁶⁰

On 8 May 1985—the 40th anniversary of the end of the war—two members of the Alternative Liste symbolically reinforced their proposal by affixing small supplementary signs to the existing street signs on **Petersallee**:

“(1856–1918) / known as: ‘Hänge-Peters’ [Peters, who hangs them] / colonialist, racist, sadist / honored by the Nazis in 1939 by renaming this part of London Street.”⁶¹

They were approached by the police but not fined, as no law in West Berlin prohibited the addition of supplementary signs. At the same time, on 17 May 1985, the Berlin Social Democratic Party of Germany—whose Wedding branch opposed the renaming—submitted a motion to rename streets “[...] named after intellectual and political pioneers of nationalism and racism.”⁶² Shortly thereafter, the former chairman of the party’s Wedding-branch, Bernd Schimmler, who was also chair of the Wedding Heritage Association, introduced a proposal to rename the street after the politician from the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) Dr. Hans Peters. This proposal was supported by the party and the street subsequently ‘re-dedicated’.⁶³ Once again, the colonial history of the neighborhood remained unaddressed.

On 21 March 1987, the Socialist Youth Association Karl Liebknecht symbolically renamed **Togostraße** after Ella Trebe (1902–1943), drawing on the renaming initiative that had failed in 1946. A commemorative plaque was installed in front of her former residence. A few months later, the Alternative Liste submitted a formal renaming proposal to the district council, which was rejected on 10 October of the same year.⁶⁴

Following the rededication of **Petersallee** and the rejection of the subsequent proposal, district-level political institutions remained largely inactive for an extended period. While Black, African, and Afro-diasporic communities in Berlin consistently drew attention to the continued commemoration of colonial perpetrators in public space and advocated for renaming, support from the broader majority society remained limited. This dynamic was particularly pronounced in the ‘African Quarter.’ Only in more recent years have some streets been officially renamed with the

backing of local political structures, which increasingly frame the decolonization of urban space as part of cultural memory.⁶⁵ In 2012, a commemorative plaque addressing the history of the neighborhood was installed, featuring one text authored by the district council and another by Black, African, and Afro-diasporic communities.⁶⁶

Present and Future of the ‘African Quarter’

In December 2022, two streets in the ‘African Quarter’ were renamed. **Cornelius-Fredericks-Straße** replaced the name of the colonial perpetrator Lüderitz and now commemorates the Nama resistance fighter Cornelius Fredericks (1864–1907). **Manga-Bell-Platz** was renamed in honor of the Duala royal couple Emily (1881–1936) and Rudolf Duala Manga Bell (1873–1914), replacing the former dedication to Reich Commissioner Nachtigal. At the request of a Cameroonian delegation, this renaming initiative led to the establishment of a town twinning between Berlin-Mitte and Douala, which has since been strengthened through several reciprocal visits. The new names thus retain a connection to the colonial histories of the streets while reversing the perspective from which these histories are narrated.

In 2024, the long-anticipated renaming of **Petersallee** was finally implemented. The street has been divided into two new commemorative references: **Anna-Mungunda-Allee**, honoring the Herero activist Anna Mungunda (1932–1959), and **Maji-Maji-Allee**, commemorating the resistance of the Tanzanian population against German colonial rule between 1905 and 1907. Informational panels accompanying the new names were installed on a series of memorial steles unveiled on 25 September 2025 in the ‘African Quarter’ and the Sprengelkiez. This intervention in urban space, titled *Paths of Remembrance*, was realized as part of the project Dekoloniale Memory Culture in the City (Dekoloniale) and is scheduled to remain on display for one year.⁶⁷

The renaming processes in the ‘African Quarter’ focused primarily on streets that had honored colonial perpetrators, reflecting the perception that the commemoration of such figures was more painful than that of geographical locations or bodies of water. Nevertheless, a map of colonial-imperial references continues to circulate in Wedding—much as it did before Walter Rieck’s invocation of the *Diercke World Atlas*—bearing witness to a painful chapter of German and Berlin history that has long been marginalized in public consciousness. A marginalization that extends well beyond the boundaries of the ‘African Quarter.’



Figure 3:

Anna Kakurukaze Mungunda (1932–1959), standing at the center of the image. Photographer could not be identified by the author(s).

Endnoten

- 1** Rieck, Walter: "Bericht über Namensgebung für die Straßen im Afrikanischen Viertel im Verwaltungsbezirk Wedding von Gr.-Berlin," 10.07.1974, Mitte Museum Archive. The reference to the African Street is unclear here, as it had already been named; this may be a typographical error.
- 2** In 1872, the circular railway line for passenger transport was put into operation with stations in Wedding and Gesundbrunnen. In the 1890s, the Stettiner Bahn was extended to Wedding (Bornholmer Straße). Between 1895 and 1902, all horse-drawn railways were replaced by electric trams, which led to improved transport and, as a result, increased urban expansion. Cf. Stephan, Bruno: 700 Jahre Wedding. Berlin, 1951, p. 60, p. 67.
- 3** Handrich, Jürgen et al.: Stadtplätze im Wedding. Berlin, 1991, p. 14.
- 4** Dettmer, Klaus: Wedding. Berlin, 1988, p. 81.
- 5** Handrich et al., Stadtplätze, p. 14.
- 6** German History Intersections (ed.): "Rudolf Virchow, Bericht aus der ausserordentlichen Zusammenkunft im Zoologischen Garten: 'Eskimos von Labrador' (7 November 1880)," available online: <https://germanhistory-intersections.org/de/wissen-und-bildung/ghis:document-189> sowie Charité (ed.): "Charité Campus Virchow-Klinikum," available online: https://www.charite.de/die_charite/campi/campus_virchow_klinikum.
- 7** Honold, Alexander: "Ausstellung des Fremden. Menschen- und Völkerschau um 1900. Zwischen Anpassung und Verfremdung. Der Exot und sein Publikum." In: Conrad, Sebastian | Osterhammel, Jürgen (eds.): Das Kaiserreich transnational. Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914. Göttingen, 2006, pp. 170–190.
- 8** Krug, Carl: "Die Sonderausstellung Kairo." In: Kühnemann, Fritz et al. (eds.): Berlin und seine Arbeit. Amtlicher Bericht der Berliner Gewerbeausstellung 1896. Berlin, 1898, p. 873 f.
- 9** Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, Document Collection SM 2024-02184, 1.
- 10** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2, Vol. 17.
- 11** Der Regierende Bürgermeister (eg.): "Die Oberbürgermeister Gerlach, Büsching und Bärensprung – Berlin unter der Städteordnung von 1808," available online: <https://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/politik/senat/buergermeistergalerie/artikel.4535.php>.
- 12** Friedel, Ernst: Die Deutsche Kaiserstadt Berlin. Stadtgeschichte, Sehens- und Wissenswertes aus der Reichshauptstadt und deren Umgebung. Berlin/Leipzig, 1882, p. 124; cf. also Vogt, Hermann: Schriften des Vereins für die Geschichte Berlins. Issue XXII: Die Straßen-Namen Berlins. Berlin, 1885.

- 13** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA) PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2 Vol. 16.
- 14** Krohn, Marius | Kopp, Christian: "Blues in Schwarz-Weiß: Die Black Community im Widerstand gegen rassistische Straßennahmen in Berlin-Mitte," available online: <https://www.berlinartprize.com/recherche/blues-in-schwarzweiss>.
- 15** It is unclear when the Colonial Quarter began to be called the 'African Quarter.' What is clear, however, is that the quarter was planned by authorities as a Colonial Quarter and was also communicated as such to the outside world. A short article in the Berliner Börsen-Zeitung on October 21, 1900, mentions that the newly emerging district was "commonly" called the 'African Quarter' by Berliners. At the same time, it is made clear that the newly laid streets are named "after our African colonies." Cf. <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/newspaper/item/JHW6V63WWHZJC5EEEQP-F63FWPEPMGLOSR?query=%22afrikanische%20viertel%22&issuepage=8>.
- 16** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2, Vol. 17, p. 4 f.
- 17** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2, Vol. 17, p. 4 f. It was not possible to determine to what extent citizens were actually able to make suggestions to the authorities regarding the naming.
- 18** Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB) A Rep. 000-02-01: 916.
- 19** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2, Vol. 17, p. 4 f.
- 20** Kuß, Susanne: "Die deutsche 'Musterkolonie' Qingdao (1897-1914)". In: Bechhaus-Gerst, Marianne | Zeller, Joachim (eds.): Deutschland postkolonial? Die Gegenwart der imperialen Vergangenheit. Berlin, 2021, pp. 57-79, here p. 64 f.
- 21** Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A. Pr. Br. Rep. 030 / No.: 18479; Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A. Pr. Br. Rep. 030 / No.: 18478.
- 22** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2 Vol. 17.
- 23** Handrich et al., Stadtplätze, pp. 60-62.
- 24** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2 Vol. 17.
- 25** The naming of Transvaalstraße should be viewed in the context of the so-called 'Boer War.' The Boers were white settlers of Dutch origin who settled in southern Africa after forcing out the Zulu people. In the 'Boer War,' they fought against white British rivals who also wanted to gain influence over the area, with the German colonial movement sympathizing with the Boers due to its own rivalry with Great Britain. On the files on street naming cf. Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2 Vol. 17; see also Krohn | Kopp, Blues in Schwarz-Weiß.

- 26** Ibid.
- 27** Adhikari, Mohamed: *Destroying to Replace. Settler Genocides of Indigenous Peoples*. Indianapolis, 2022, p. 136.
- 28** Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A. Pr. Br. Rep. 030 / No.: 18530.
- 29** Handrich et al., *Stadtplätze*, p. 52.
- 30** Prussian Secret State Archives (GStA), PK I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 1319, Berlin No. 2 Vol. 17.
- 31** Federal Archives (BArch), R 2/11645.
- 32** Ibid.
- 33** Lebendiges Museum Online (Lemo) (ed.): "Die deutsche Kolonie Kamerun," available online: <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/kapitel/kaiserreich/aussenpolitik/die-deutsche-kolonie-kamerun.html>.
- 34** Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A. Pr. Br. Rep. 030 / No.: 18578; Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), A. Pr. Br. Rep. 030 / No. 18586.
- 35** Stephan, *700 Jahre Wedding*, p. 8, p. 65.
- 36** Kuenheim, Haug von: Carl Hagenbeck. Hamburg, 2007, p. 112f; see also German History Intersections, "Rudolf Virchow."
- 37** Brandt, Bodo et al.: "Der Kaiser, Hagenbeck und Heck: Das nicht verwirklichte Vorhaben eines Tierparks in der Berliner Jungfernhede," in: *Buletete*, Vol. 12, 2023, pp. 234–244, here p. 237.
- 38** Ibid., p. 234, p. 240.
- 39** Mitte Museum Archive, HMW AB 696-699: *The African (Hagenbeck) Quarter, including Wedding*: No. 2–5. 1913–1914.
- 40** Berliner Stadtplansammlung (ed.): "1915 Pharus-Plan Berlin Fahrtfinder Ausgabe," available online: <https://www.berliner-stadtplansammlung.de/index.php/karten/1915-pharus-plan-berlin-fahrtfinder-ausgabe>.
- 41** There was no single colonial revisionism as a unified idea or cohesive movement, even though the following outline generally refers to "the colonial revisionist movement."
- 42** Bechhaus-Gerst | Zeller, Joachim, p. 105 f.
- 43** Ibid.
- 44** Ibid., p. 107, p. 110.
- 45** Joop, Heidrun: *Berliner Straßen. Beispiel: Wedding*. Berlin, 1990, p. 17.
- 46** Dettmer, *Wedding*, p. 103f.
- 47** Nonn, Christoph: *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich*. München, 2017, p. 78.
- 48** Britannica (ed.): "Carl Peters," available online: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carl-Peters>.
- 49** Lebendiges Museum Online (Lemo) (ed.): "Die Gleichschaltung 1933," available online: <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/kapitel/ns-regime/etablirung/gleichschaltung>.

- 50** Bezirksamt Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (ed.): "Gedenktafel für Jenny und Walter Rieck," available online: <https://www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/ueber-den-bezirk/geschichte/persoennlichkeiten-und-gedenktafeln/artikel.125817.php>.
- 51** Joop, *Straßen*, p. 29.
- 52** Karwelat, Jürgen: "Straßenbenennungen. Eine höchst bürokratische Angelegenheit." In: Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (ed.): *Sackgassen. Keine Wendemöglichkeit für Berliner Straßennamen*. Berlin, 1988, pp. 79-82, here p. 79.
- 53** Joop, *Straßen*, p. 31.
- 54** Mitte Museum Archive: "Geschichtlicher Abriss über die Entstehung des Afrikanischen Viertels." Witthaus 04.04.2012.
- 55** Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB) A Rep. 010-01-04.
- 56** Kauperts (ed.): "Mohasistraße," available online: <https://berlin.kauperts.de/Strassen/Mohasistrasse-13351-Berlin>.
- 57** Hahn, Gisela: "Der Platz an der Sonne. Das 'Afrikanische Viertel' im Wedding." In: Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, *Sackgassen*, pp. 112-124, here p. 112; cf. also *Stolpersteine in Berlin* (ed.): "Ella Trebe geb. Beyer," available online <https://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/de/togostr/78/ella-trebe>.
- 58** Kauperts, "Ghanastraße," available online: <https://berlin.kauperts.de/Strassen/Ghanasstrasse-13351-Berlin>.
- 59** Mitte Museum Archive, print No. 1418, 1985.
- 60** Hahn, p. 122.
- 61** Ibid.
- 62** Weddinger Stachel (ed.): "Petersallee bald mit neuem Namen?" Juni 1985.
- 63** Mitte Museum Archiv: Unknown editor: "Petersallee. Nazi-Idol soll nicht mehr Namenspatron sein. Petersallee soll aber Namen behalten," 07.11.1985.
- 64** Hahn, p. 121.
- 65** Official Gazette (Amtsblatt) 3, 2020. Implementing regulation for Section 5 of the Berlin Road Traffic Regulations. Announcement dated February 1, 2017, last amended by administrative regulation dated December 1, 2020.
- 66** Gedenktafeln in Berlin (ed.): "Afrikanisches Viertel," available online: <https://www.gedenktafeln-in-berlin.de/gedenktafeln/detail/afrikanisches-viertel/2828>.
- 67** *Korientation* (ed.): "Gedenkstellen im Afrikanischen Viertel und in den Asiatisch-Pazifischen Straßen: Einweihung und Führung am 25.09.2025 in Berlin-Wedding," available online: <https://www.korientation.de/dekoloniale-gedenkstellen-asiatisch-pazifische-strassen-berlin-wedding/>. The project Paths of Remembrance is part of the Dekoloniale project, which was implemented by Berlin Postkolonial e.V., Each One Teach One, the Initiative of Black People in Germany, and the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin.

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