

Culture war  
in Vienna

24

**Exhibition texts  
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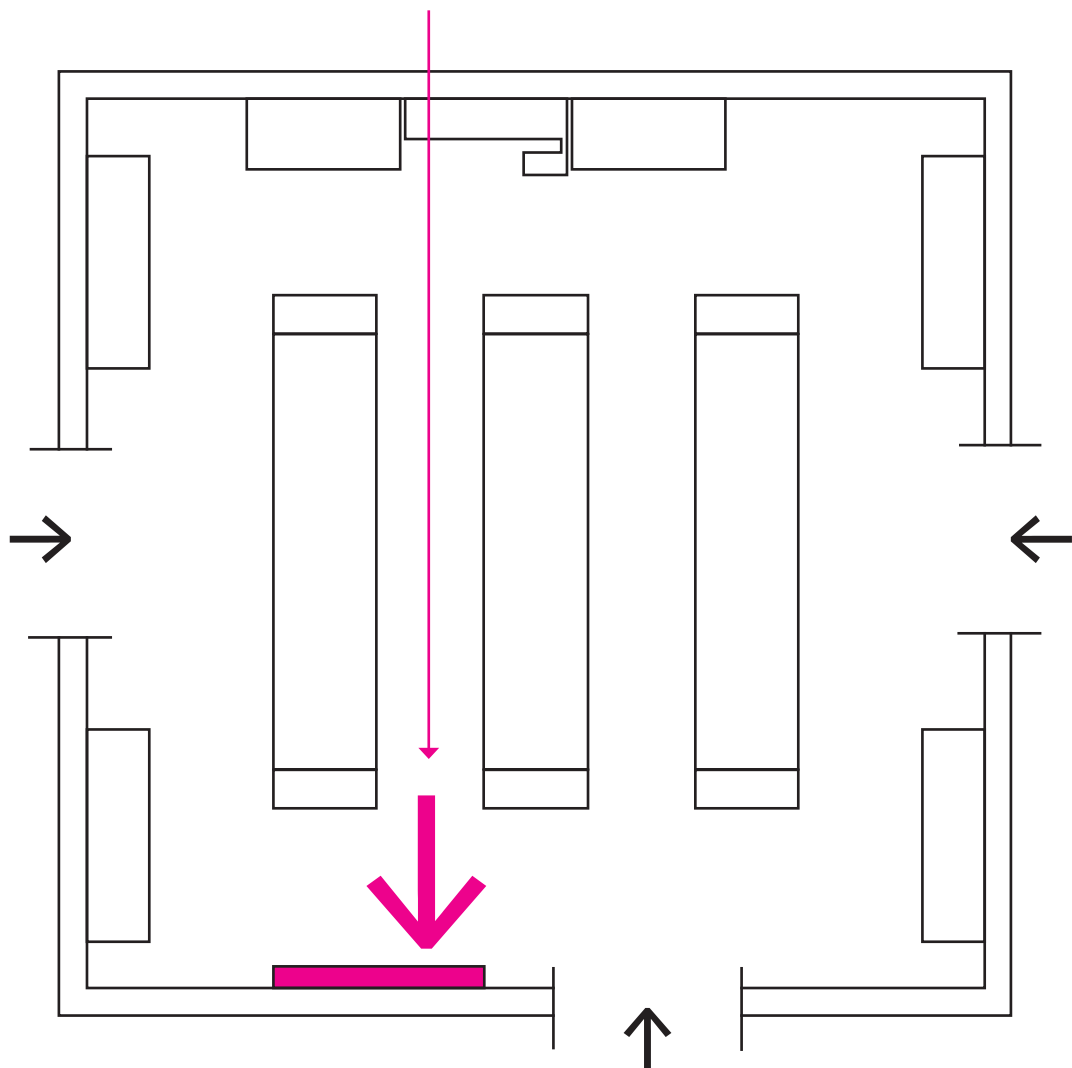
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Vienna, December 2024



# Room 24

Start



# Culture war in Vienna

In the late 19th and early 20th century, conservative Catholics engaged in a so-called culture war against the “godless” modern world, a fight that was to last until the National Socialists came to power in Austria in 1938. As a member of the missionary congregation S.V.D., Father Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954) considered the emerging discipline of ethnology to be an opportunity to scientifically support the social teachings of the Church.

Their basic principles: the development of humanity began in paradise; monogamy is the archetype of all human relationships; God had revealed himself to his creatures since the beginning of time. In order to substantiate these Christian values by means of ethnology, Wilhelm Schmidt encouraged his confreres and students F. Martin Gusinde and F. Paul Schebesta to document the material culture and religious beliefs of “lower hunters”, as these “most primitive” peoples living in inhospitable regions and dense primeval forests stood closest to divine creation.

Today F. Wilhelm Schmidt’s “universal history

of humankind" is obsolete. The collections compiled by his confreres, however, remain an invaluable cultural legacy.

## **Society of the Divine Word**

The St. Gabriel Mission Seminary was established in Mödling near Vienna in 1889. It was the first Austrian mission house of the Society of the Divine Word, or Societas Verbi Divini (S.V.D.) in Latin. Today the congregation has about 6,000 members all around the world, who are also called Steyler Missionaries after the order's place of foundation, Steyl in the Netherlands. At the seminary, future missionaries were instructed in ethnology and linguistics. In return, ethnological reports were sent back from these missions. In 1906, F. Wilhelm Schmidt founded the journal *Anthropos* to collect and share these studies and observations. *Anthropos* was edited in St. Gabriel until 1938 and has been published by the same-named institute in St. Augustin near Bonn since 1962.



## **Mission stations and field research sites of the Society of the Divine Word**

The map provides an overview of all the regions where Frs. Martin Gusinde, Wilhelm Koppers and Paul Schebesta conducted research. Moreover, it indicates where the religious order Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.) operated mission stations in the 1920s and 1930s, thus demonstrating that it was not the order's existing mission stations but the theoretical framework of F. Wilhelm Schmidt that determined their field research. Joint stays of the researchers are shown as well, although they were characterised by competition.



**K** Field research Wilhelm Koppers

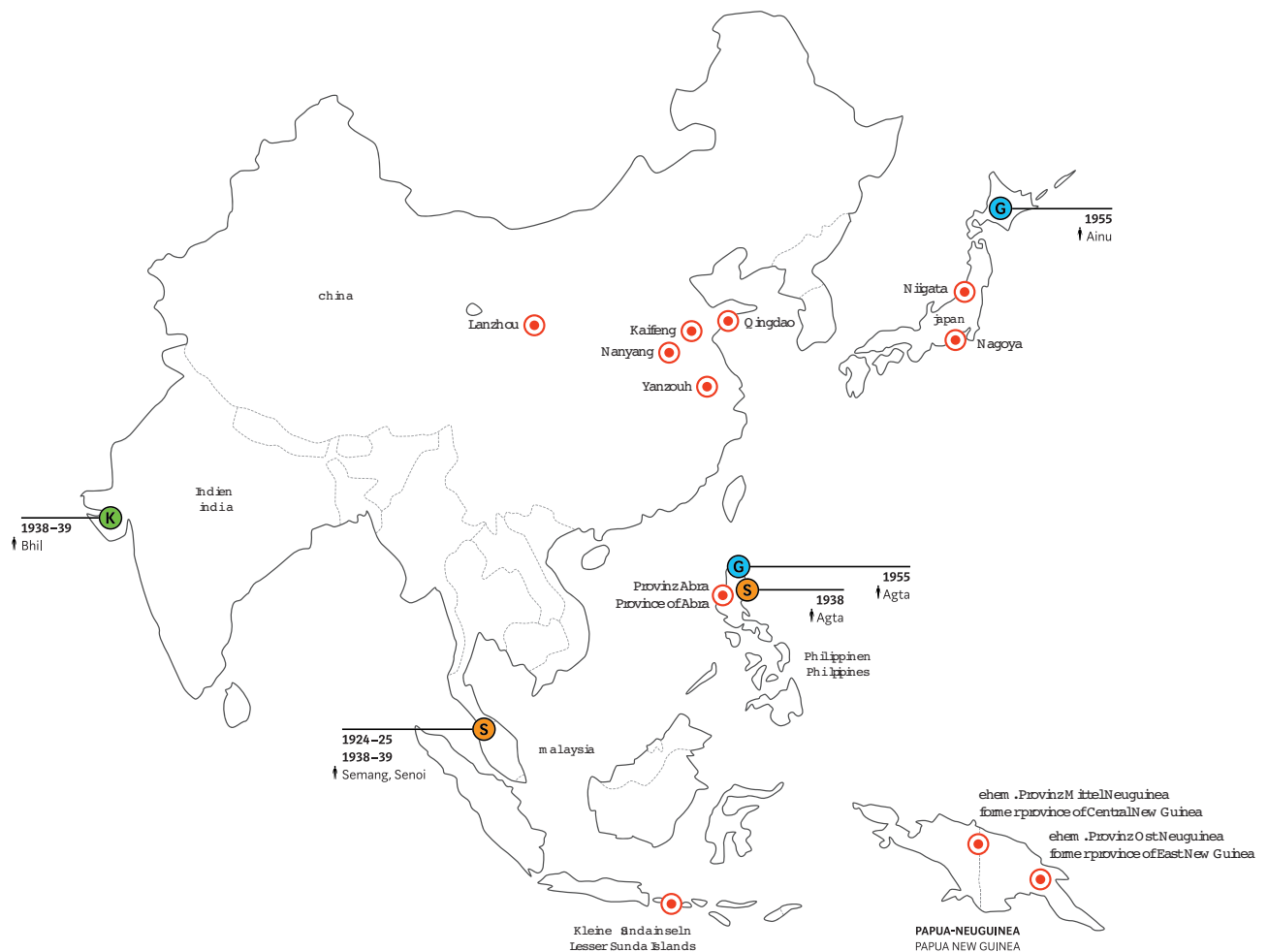
**G** Field research Martin Gusinde

**S** Field research Paul Schebesta

**●** S.Missions operated by S.V.D. in the 1920s and 1930s



Names of ethnic groups/ communities



## CHINA

● Lanzhou

● Nanyang

● Kaifeng



● Yanzhou

● Qingdao

## **JAPAN**



 Niigata



 Nagoya

 1955;  Ainu

## **PHILIPPINES**

 Province of Abra

 1955;  Agta



 1938;  Agta

## **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

 former province of Central New Guinea


 former province of East New Guinea

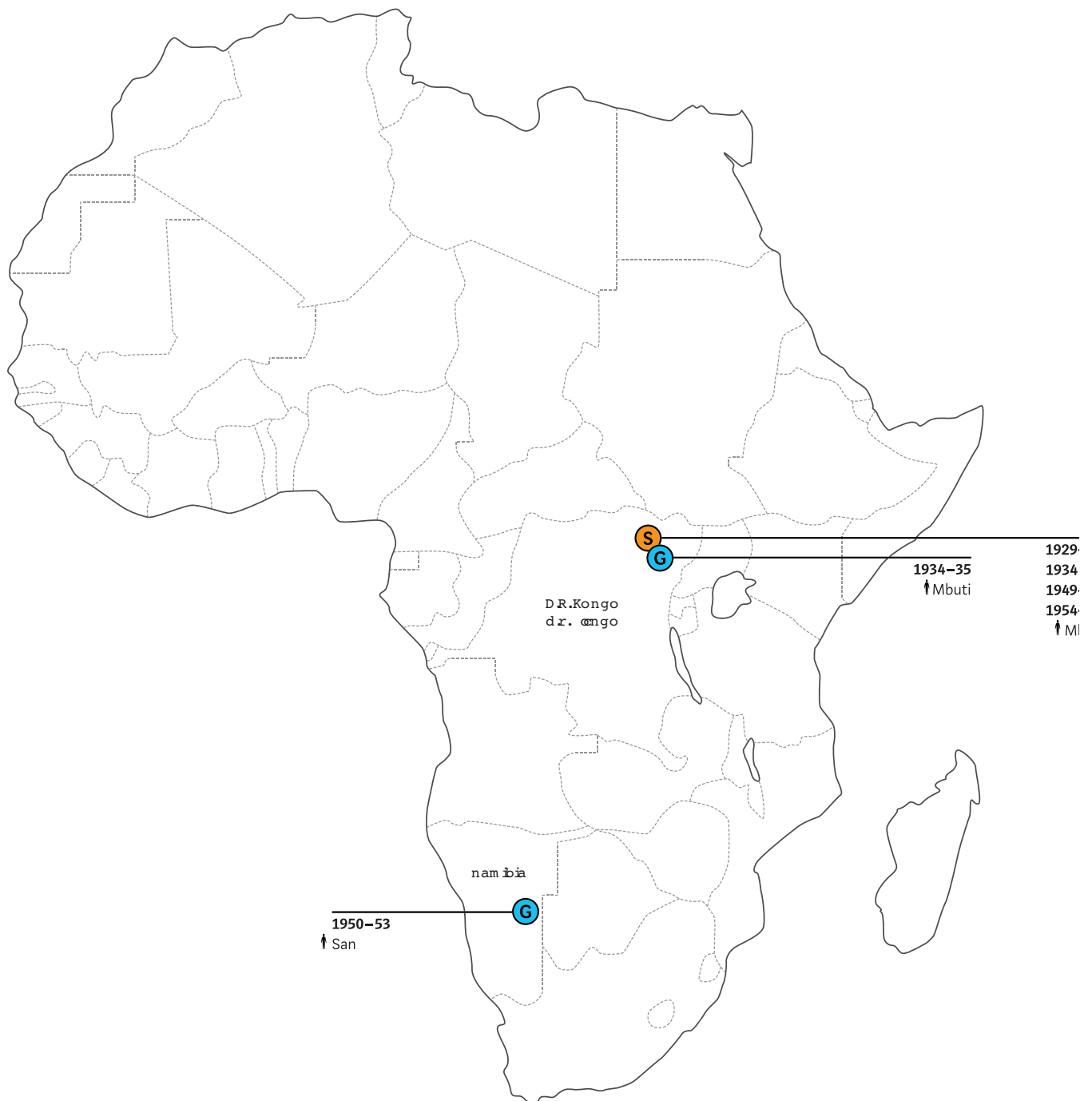
## **MALAYSIA**

 1924 – 25, 1938 – 39;  Semang, Senoi

 LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS


## INDIA

**(K)** 1938 – 39;  Bhil



## D.R. CONGO

**(S)** 1929-30, 1934-35, 1949-50, 1954-55;  Mbuti



**(G)** 1934 – 35,  Mbuti

# NAMIBIA

**G** 1950 – 53;  San





## VENEZUELA

 1954;  Yupa

## PARAGUAY

 „Indian mission“

## CHILE

 1922;  Selk'nam, Yaghan, Kawésqar

 1922;  Yaghan

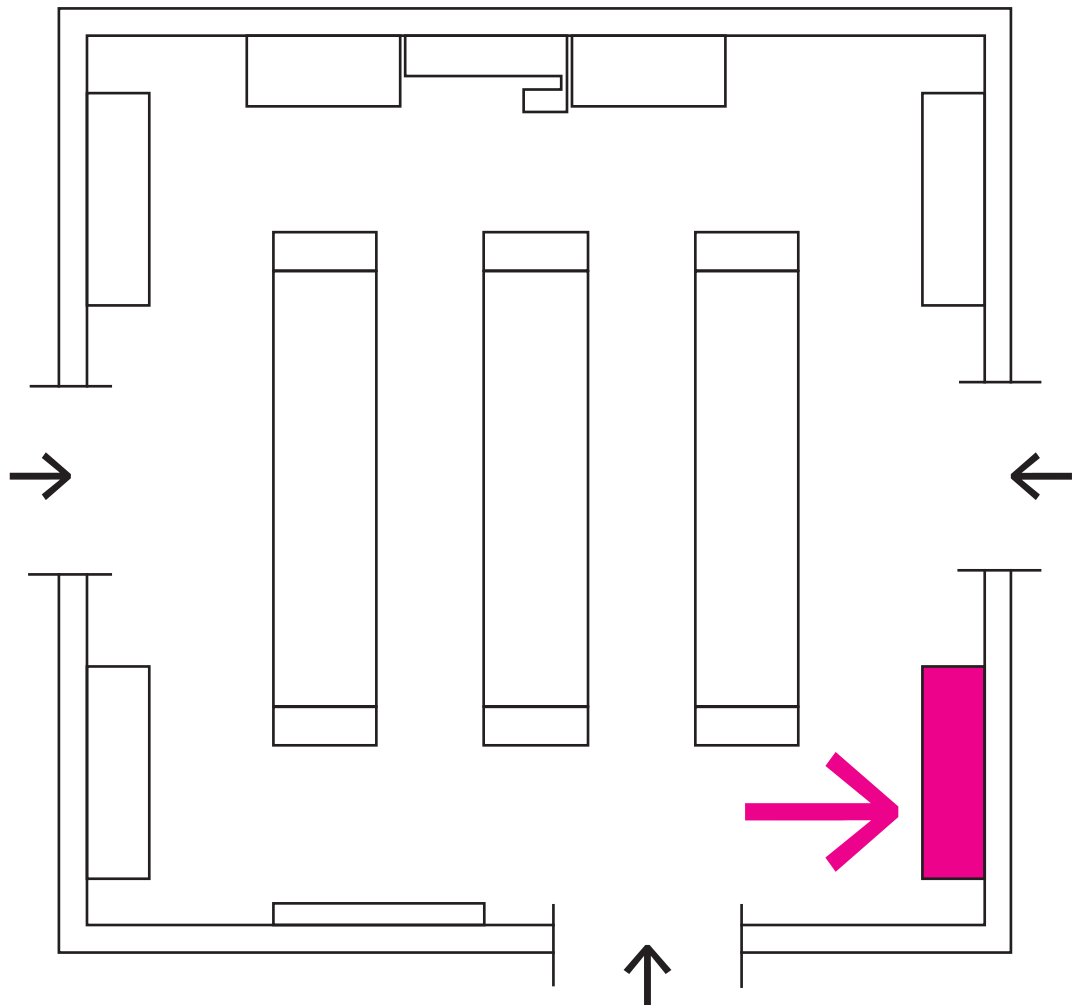








# Room 24







Father Wilhelm Schmidt

© Anthropos Institut St. Augustin

## **The Vienna School of Ethnology**

Founded by Father Wilhelm Schmidt, the so-called Vienna School of Ethnology was soon known worldwide. Schmidt was interested in finding representatives of “primeval culture” and assumed that these allegedly “most ancient societies” shared a belief in one god. Based on this assumption, he concluded that God must have revealed himself to them at the very beginning of the history of humankind. His hope of finding ethnological proof of God prompted Schmidt to interpret ethnographic reports in rather questionable ways.

The history of the Vienna School demonstrates the risks involved when mixing science and ideology. Moreover, it poses the question whether an objective and unbiased science could ever be achieved.

## Wilhelm Schmidt

Schmidt's publishing legacy comprises more than 600 articles and books, including his magnum opus of twelve volumes: *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* [The Origin of the Idea of God]. Although its theories are not sustainable from today's point of view, it is still a relevant source book of religious beliefs. Pope Pius XI assigned Schmidt the task of curating the ethnological collection of the Vatican's Universal Missionary Exhibition in 1925. The exhibition attracted enough interest to establish the Missionary-Ethnological Museum with Schmidt as its first director in the Lateran Palace in 1927. Today the collection is part of the Vatican Museums.



Father Wilhelm Schmidt with Pope Pius XI  
visiting the Missionary-Ethnological  
Museum in the Lateran Palace, Rome on  
December 20, 1929

© Photo Felici, Rom; Missionshaus St. Gabriel



## Die Wiener Schule für Völkerkunde The Vienna School of Ethnology

Die von Peter Wilhelm Schmidt begründete sogenannte Wiener Schule für Völkerkunde wurde bald weltweit bekannt. Sein Interesse galt der Suche nach „Urkulturen“. Schmidt ging davon aus, dass diese vermeintlich „ältesten Völker“ den Glauben an nur einen Gott gemeinsam hätten. Daraus leitete er ab, dass sich Gott diesen am Beginn der Menschheitsgeschichte offenbart habe. Seine Hoffnung, damit einen ethnologischen Gottesbeweis zu liefern, führte Schmidt zu manchen zweifelhaften Interpretationen ethnographischer Berichte.

Die Geschichte der Wiener Schule erweist die Gefahren, welche durch die Vermischung von Weltbild und Wissenschaft entstehen. Sie stellt uns aber auch vor die Frage, ob eine objektive Wissenschaft, die frei von unseren eigenen Wertvorstellungen ist, überhaupt erreicht werden kann.

Founded by Father Wilhelm Schmidt, the so-called Vienna School of Ethnology was soon known worldwide. Schmidt was interested in finding representatives of "primeval culture" and assumed that these allegedly "most ancient societies" shared a belief in one god. Based on this assumption, he concluded that God must have revealed himself to them at the very beginning of the history of humankind. His hope of finding ethnological proof of God prompted Schmidt to interpret ethnographic reports in rather questionable ways.

The history of the Vienna School demonstrates the risks involved when mixing science and ideology. Moreover, it poses the question whether an objective and unbiased science could ever be achieved.

Aussparung Grafik  
für Vitrine  
B 540 x H 350 mm

1

## Unauffhaltsam!

Das Lebensbild des J. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt

Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1955

Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1955  
Das Lebensbild des J. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt  
B 540 x H 350 mm

## Gegenwartsaufgaben und katholische Presse. Das Referat Professor Dr. Wilhelm Schmidts auf der Vertrauensleuteversammlung der großen katholischen Organisationen.

Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1955

Aussparung Grafik  
für Vitrine  
B 800 x H 450 mm

2

## Sind wir saniert?

Von Professor Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt: S. V. D.

Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1955

Wilhelm Schmidt

Die Wiener Schule für Völkerkunde wurde bald weltweit bekannt. Sein Interesse galt der Suche nach „Urkulturen“. Schmidt ging davon aus, dass diese vermeintlich „ältesten Völker“ den Glauben an nur einen Gott gemeinsam hätten. Daraus leitete er ab, dass sich Gott diesen am Beginn der Menschheitsgeschichte offenbart habe. Seine Hoffnung, damit einen ethnologischen Gottesbeweis zu liefern, führte Schmidt zu manchen zweifelhaften Interpretationen ethnographischer Berichte.



Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1955  
Das Lebensbild des J. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt  
B 540 x H 350 mm

1

# Wilhelm Schmidt & Wilhelm Koppers (1924): Peoples and Cultures.

Part I: Peoples' Society and Economy.  
Josef Habbel. Regensburg.

2

# Wilhelm Schmidt (1912–55): The Origin of the Idea of God. A Historical-Critical and Positive Study.

Bände 1–12. Verlag Aschendorff. Münster.  
Leihgabe Missionshaus St. Gabriel

# Unaufhaltsam!

Von Universitätsprofessor P. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt.

Wilhelm Schmidt: „Unaufhaltsam!“ in: Reichspost, 29. Mai 1932, Wien, S. 2.

## Gegenwartsaufgaben und katholische Presse.

Das Referat Professor Dr. Wilhelm Schmidts auf der Vertrauensleuteversammlung der großen katholischen Organisationen.

Wilhelm Schmidt: „Gegenwartsaufgaben und katholische Presse.“ in: Reichspost, 1. Juli 1925, Wien, S. 5.

## Sind wir saniert?

Von Professor Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt S. V. D.

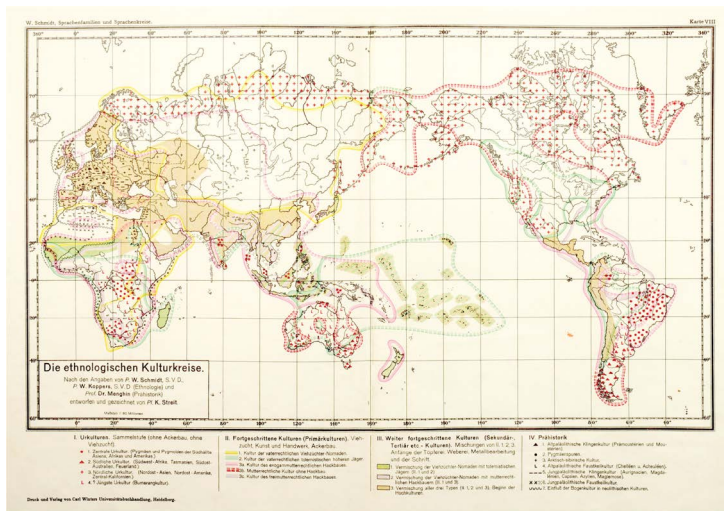
Wilhelm Schmidt: „Sind wir saniert?“ in: Reichspost, 24. Februar 1924, Wien, S. 1.



## Culture Circles

The concept of culture circles [Kulturkreise] grew in popularity in the late 19th century. In museums, it was introduced as an opportunity to organise ethnographic collections. F. W. Schmidt, however, went beyond the scope of material culture. He combined culture circles with language circles as well as alleged stages of ancient history. In his opinion, all cultures can trace back their roots to four primeval culture circles [Urkulturkreise]; when they mixed, new culture circles were formed.

Today the concept of “culture circles” is considered to be obsolete due to their alleged seclusion and immutability.



## Ethnological culture circles

aus: Wilhelm Schmidt (1926): Die Sprachfamilien  
und Sprachenkreise der Erde. Carl Winters  
Universitätsbuchhandlung. Heidelberg  
© Weltmuseum Wien, Bibliothek

# Die Sozialdemokratie als Predigerin eines neuen Gottesglaubens?

Von Professor P. Dr. W. Schmidt S. V. D.

Wilhelm Schmidt: „Die Sozialdemokratie als Predigerin eines neuen Gottesglaubens?“ in: Reichspost, 28. Juni 1925, Wien, S. 3.

# Besinnung.

Von Universitätsprofessor P. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt.

Wilhelm Schmidt: „Besinnung.“ in: Reichspost,  
1. Mai 1932, Wien, S. 1.

# Ehe und Staat.

Professor P. Dr. Wilhelm Schmidts zweiter Universitätsvortrag.

Wilhelm Schmidt: „Ehe und Staat.“ in: Reichspost,  
5. September 1925, Wien, S. 6.



Father Wilhelm Koppers



Father Wilhelm Koppers  
© UAW, Photosammlung,  
106.I.1083.

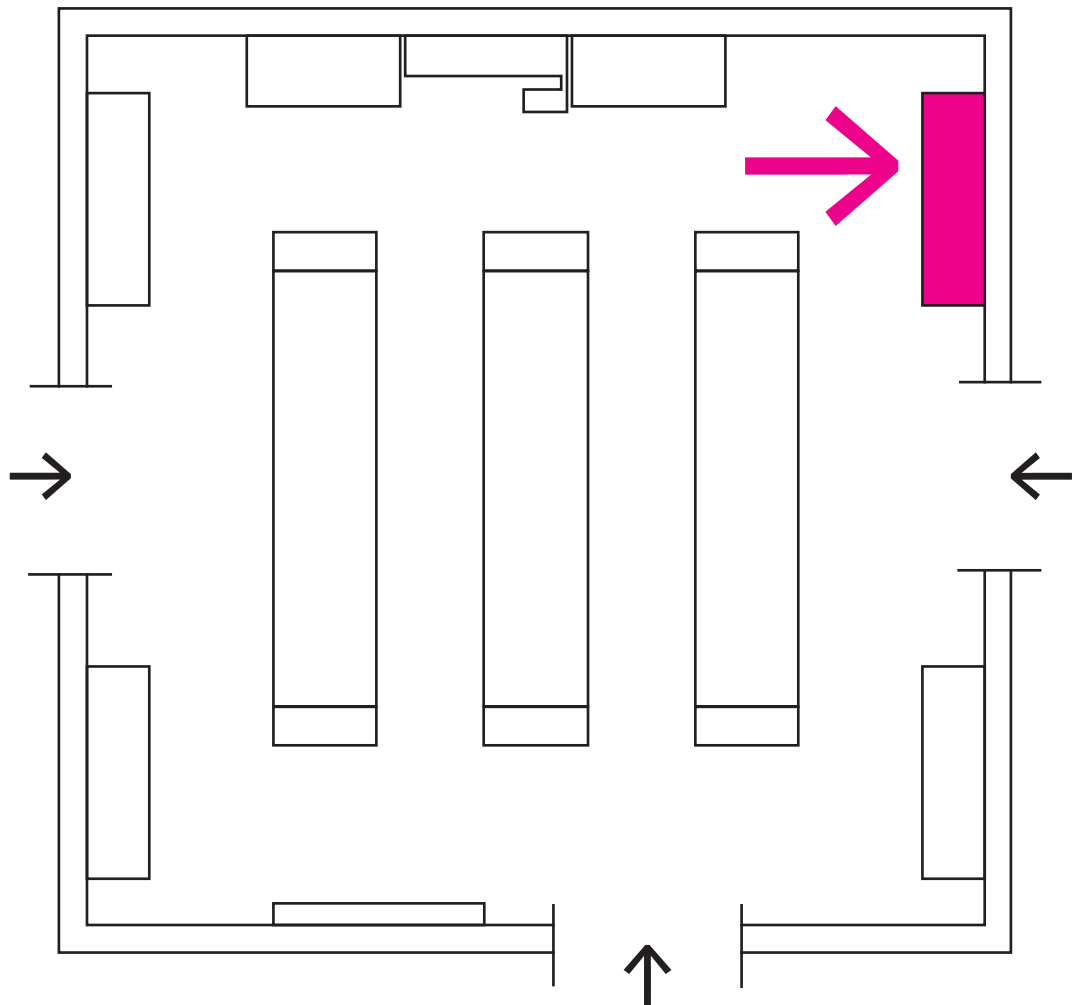
## **Wilhelm Koppers**

The Vienna Institute of Ethnology (today's Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology) was founded in 1928. Its first Director for Ethnology was Father Wilhelm Koppers, F. W. Schmidt's student and close academic colleague. In consequence, the theories of Schmidt and Koppers became the dominant doctrine of Viennese ethnology for decades to come. When the National Socialists seized power in Austria, Koppers was removed from office and had to leave the country. He returned to assume his previous position as director for ethnology in 1945.





# Room 24



## Value-Free Science?

In the period between the two world wars, liberal Social Democrats and conservative Christian Socialists alike were interested in human science. Both groups were searching for evidence to substantiate their ideology. Questions of marriage, property, religion, the social system and housing policies were addressed and discussed from an ethnological as well as protohistoric perspective. The university was turned into an arena for political proxy wars. The central point of criticism against the theories of the Vienna School was based on the anticlerical position that the priest researchers were not able to engage in unbiased science. Each side was only willing to recognise the influence of their opponent's ideology on scientific work.





Poster: "The socialist says: ... Vote for the Social Democratic Party!"

Victor Slama, Wien, 1927 © Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Plakatsammlung, P-441

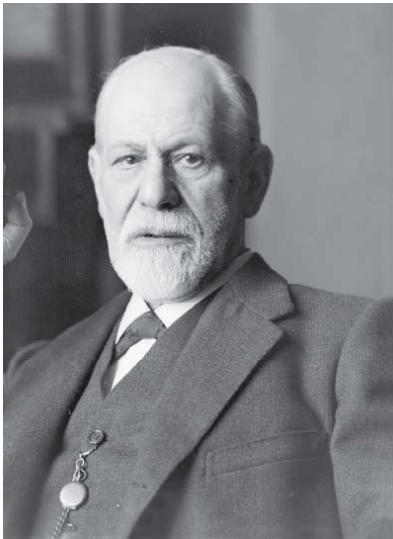
## Aus der Radiowoche.

St. Gabriel von der Südbahn ist ein großer und starker Heiliger, er einigt alle Völker auf dieselben „Kulturideale“. Das macht ihm so leicht kein weltlicher Außen-seiter nach.

Otto Koenig: „Weltäther-Unglaublichkeiten“ in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, 30. November 1930, Wien, S. 18.



Poster: "This will be your fate if reaction wins!  
Vote for the Social Democratic Party!"  
Mihály Biró, Wien, 1920 © Wienbibliothek  
im Rathaus, Plakatsammlung, P-268

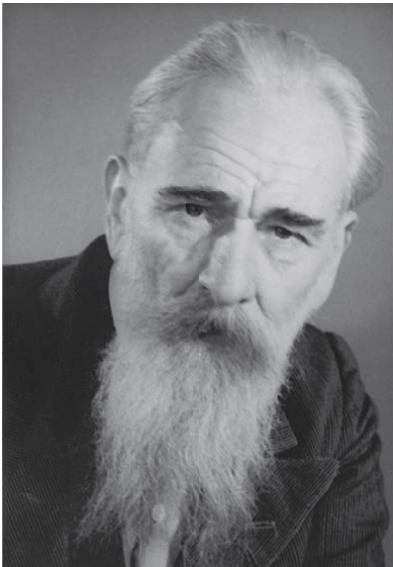


Sigmund Freud

© ÖNB/Wien, LSCH 0066-B

## **Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)**

Sigmund Freud is known as the father of psychoanalysis. He never spoke out against Schmidt in public. According to his letters, however, Freud considered Schmidt to be a politically influential opponent. Their differences were blatantly obvious. In Freud's eyes, religion and particularly monotheism was a form of neurotic father complex. The priest Schmidt saw this as an attack against his "primeval monotheism" [Urmonotheismus] concept, and the Christian ideal of the harmonious family challenged by Freud's Oedipus complex theory. The latter assumes a sexually-driven conflict between a child and its same-sex parent.



Otto Koenig

© WStLA, Presse- und  
Informationsdienst,  
FC1.16: 47246/1

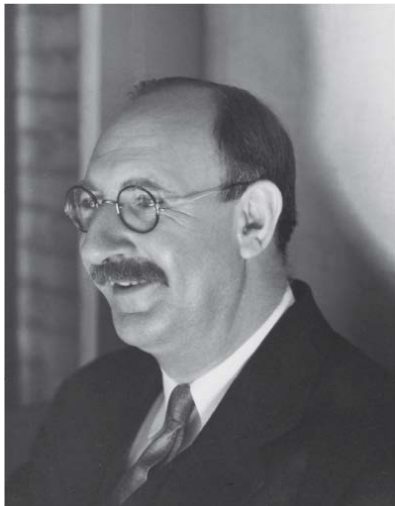
## **Otto Koenig (1881–1955)**

Otto Koenig was an Austrian educator of the people and journalist for the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the primary voice of the Austrian Social Democratic Party. He also wrote feature articles and polemically attacked the professed objectivity of the Catholic missionary ethnologists.

In the period between the two world wars, all political parties engaged in public education.

In many cases, this practice was not only intended to convey popular scientific knowledge but also to shape the ideological opinion of the public.

Aside from newspaper articles, lectures and presentations at clubs and associations as well as on the radio were a highly effective medium to reach the broader public.



Robert Lowie

© Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

## **Robert Lowie (1883–1957)**

Robert Lowie was a US-American ethnologist. The native Viennese was among the first students of Franz Boas.

Lowie defended Schmidt against accusations that, as a priest, he was more influenced by ideological prejudice than other scientists. He pointed out that nobody was ever free of such bias.

Many American ethnologists of that time had German-speaking roots just like Lowie and Boas. As German was, therefore, important in the academic world of the early 20th century, the international scientific community was certainly aware of and took the Vienna School seriously.



Robert Heine-Geldern  
© ÖNB/Wien, 200.573-B.

## **Robert Heine-Geldern (1885–1968)**

Robert Heine-Geldern was an Austrian ethnologist and student of F. W. Schmidt. Although he also championed a form of diffusionism, Heine-Geldern adamantly rejected the system of culture circles. From 1938 through 1945, he was forced to live in exile due to his Jewish origin and only returned after the war to resume his earlier professorship at the department in Vienna.

The person of Heine-Geldern clearly demonstrates that the Vienna School did not speak with just one voice, as has often been claimed by critics. Criticism was always also expressed among its own ranks. His professorship enabled Heine-Geldern to teach a different approach than Koppers at the university.





Oswald Menghin

© ÖNB/Wien, Pf 11823:D.

## **Oswald Menghin (1888–1973)**

Oswald Menghin was an Austrian prehistorian at the University of Vienna. He was one of only a few scientists from other disciplines to adopt and apply the culture circle system. His attempt to explain the “World History of the Stone Age” did not meet with great approval, though.

The relationship between Menghin and Schmidt exemplifies the highly politicised conditions at universities in the period between the two world wars. The Catholic Menghin was a close companion of Schmidt at first. Later on, he changed sides, joined the National Socialists, and became an opponent of Schmidt due to his ideological and theoretical views.



Walter Hirschberg

© Die Presse / Fritz Klinsky

## Walter Hirschberg (1904–1996)

Walter Hirschberg was an Austrian ethnologist. Although he was a student of Schmidt and Koppers, he rejected the cultural circle theory as a speculative universal history. Instead he preferred a historically verifiable historiography. Hirschberg's criticism was also based on ideological reasons. As a National Socialist, the conception of racial hierarchy was at the forefront of his thinking. Schmidt did not share this opinion due to religious reasons, though. He believed that it was not the body but the soul that defined human beings. As the soul was not inherited but given by God, all people were equal in Schmidt's eyes. Notwithstanding this, it is also possible to find anti-Semitic statements in his work.



Morgenblatt ×

# Arbeiter-Zeitung

Zentralorgan der Sozialdemokratie Deutschösterreichs

## Aus der Radiowoche.

Hochwürden Martin Gusinde ist nun einer von diesen Wunderdoktoren der Völkerkunde, denen es in ihren Vorträgen vorsonderlich darauf ankommt, einen bodenständigen Eingottglauben und eine möglichst unlösliche Einehe allen primitiven Völkern, wenn dich oder ich friß dich, nachzuweisen.

Aber diese geistlichen Völkerkundler haben gemeiniglich eine üble Gewohnheit. Sie missionieren doppelt! — Wenn sie zum Beispiel lange genug Feuerländer bekehrt haben, wogegen, weil das eine rein patagonische Angelegenheit ist, von uns aus gar nichts einzumenden wäre, dann kehren sie nach Europa zurück, und versuchen hier "ganz voraussetzungslos" die Wissenschaft zu bekehren. Nicht das sie sich begnügten, ihr wissenschaftliches Material mitzuteilen, daran wäre nicht das geringste auszusetzen, sondern sie heben sofort an zu "deuten". Es ist merkwürdig, wie exakt und widerspruchsfrei sich ihre geistliche Wissenschaft erweist.

Otto Koenig: „Aus der Radiowoche“ in:  
Arbeiter-Zeitung, 20. März 1927, Wien, S. 11.

## Aus der Radiowoche.

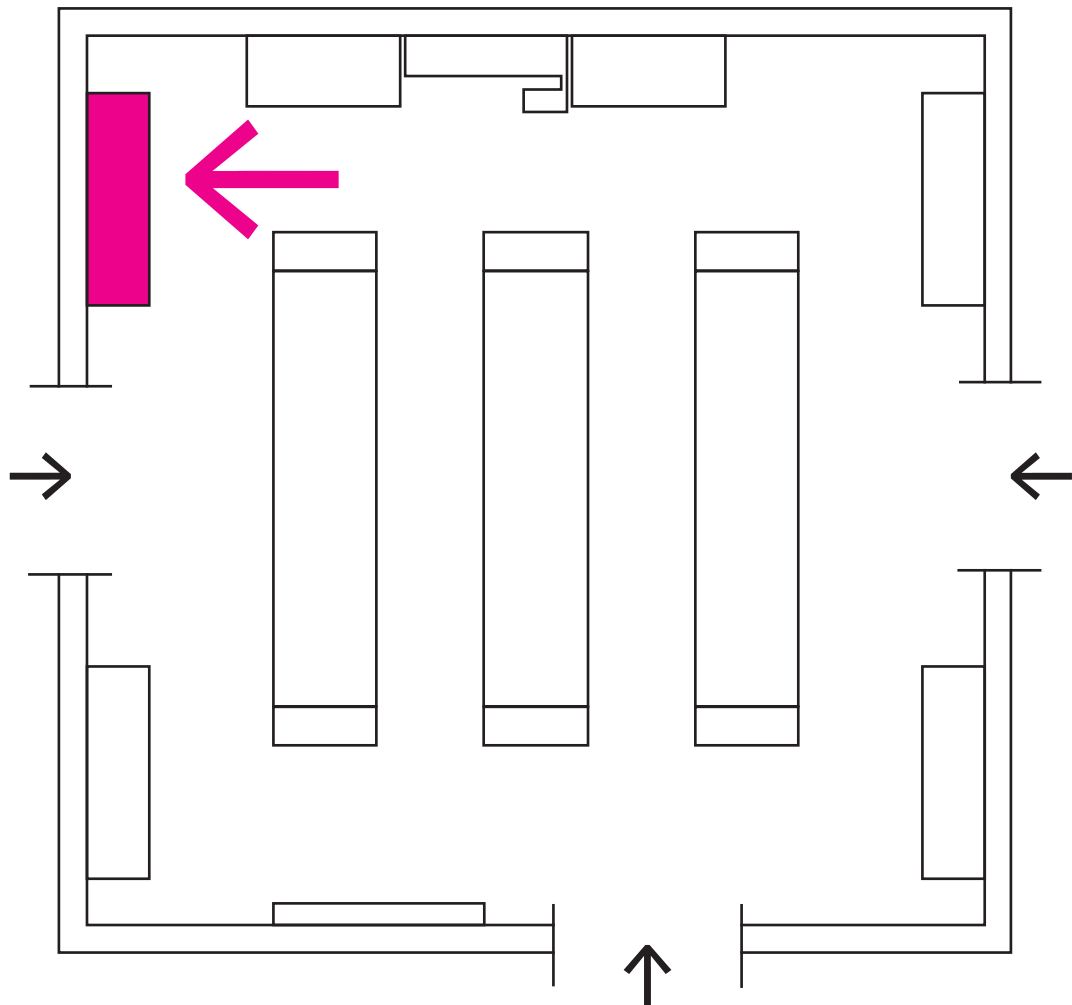
Aber das Wunder hat Gott bisher eben noch nicht getan, daß er das Kalb beim Schwanz aufzäumt und in der Wissenschaft Schlußfolgerung und Synthese vor die Voraussetzungen, die Prämissen, die Erscheinungen setzt. Traum, Furcht, Zauber, Geisterglaube hat er, das ist das Ergebnis der Erfahrungswissenschaft, vor die große Synthese eines Eingottglaubens gesetzt. Aber die katholische Kirche braucht's anders und so muß der Eingottglaube womöglich mit der allerdings nicht ganz ausnahmslosen unlöslichen Einehe als eine göttliche Offenbarung am Anfang aller Menschheit und Kultur stehen.

Otto Koenig: „Aus der Radiowoche“ in:  
Arbeiter-Zeitung, 27. März 1927, Wien, S. 11.





# Room 24





Paul Schebesta conducting field research in the Ituri Forest, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1929–1930  
© ÖNB/Wien, 59.679-B

### **Pater Paul Schebesta (1887–1967)**

Schebesta was a missionary, scientist and writer. His research first led him to the peninsula of Malacca, Malaysia. From 1929 to 1954, he travelled to the Ituri Forest in the northeast of today's Democratic Republic of the Congo four times. In between these research stays, he conducted research in the Philippines. Following the spirit of his time, Schebesta focused on environmental and religious issues but also showed great interest in linguistics. In line with the theories of F. Wilhelm Schmidt, he primarily strived to work out that the groups he selected were culturally independent from their neighbours and believed in one god. His research focus was already disproved by the objects he collected.



Paul Schebesta with two Mbuti men (names unknown), Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1929/30 or 1934/35  
Original title: Paul Schebesta with his Pygmy Friends



Paul Schebesta with two Senoi-Ple (names unknown) on the peninsula of Malacca, Malaysia, ca. 1925



Paul Schebesta auf einer Holzbank  
vor dem Haus in der Gegend von  
Kongolo, 1929-1930  
Paul Schebesta, Missionar und  
Forscher, 1929-1930  
Kongolo, Provinz Kasai (Belgien),  
1929-1930  
© 2019 WPA, Inc.

## Pater Paul Schebesta (1887–1967)

Schebesta war Missionar, Wissenschaftler und Autor. Seine Forschungen führten ihn erst auf die Halbinsel Malakka (Malaysia). Danach reiste er von 1929 bis 1954 insgesamt vier Mal in den Ituri-Wald, im Nordosten der jetzigen Demokratischen Republik Kongo. Zwischen diesen Aufenthalten war er zu Forschungszwecken auf den Philippinen. Gemäß seiner Zeit setzte Schebesta Schwerpunkte auf ökologische sowie religionspezifische Fragen, hatte aber auch großes Interesse an Sprachforschung. In Abstimmung mit den Theorien seines Vorgesetzten Pater Wilhelm Schmidt wollte er vorrangig herausarbeiten, dass die von ihm aufgesuchten Menschen von ihren Nachbarn unabhängige Kulturen waren und monotheistisch an einen Gott glaubten. Dieser Fokus seiner Arbeiten wird bereits durch die von ihm gesammelten Objekte widerlegt.

Schebesta was a missionary, scientist and writer. His research first led him to the peninsula of Malacca, Malaysia. From 1929 to 1954, he travelled to the Ituri Forest in the northeast of today's Democratic Republic of the Congo four times. In between these research stays, he conducted research in the Philippines. Following the spirit of his time, Schebesta focused on environmental and religious issues but also showed great interest in linguistics. In line with the theories of F. Wilhelm Schmidt, he primarily strived to work out that the groups he selected were culturally independent from their neighbours and believed in one god. His research focus was already disproved by the objects he collected.

Aussparung Grafik  
für Vitrine  
B 540 x H 500 mm

1

- 1 Paul Schebesta, *Die Kultur der Pygmäen im Ituri-Wald*, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 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3746, 3747, 3748, 3749, 3750, 3751, 3752, 3753, 3754, 3755, 3756, 3757, 3758, 3759, 3760, 3761, 3762, 3763, 3764, 3765, 3766, 3767, 3768, 3769, 3770, 3771, 3772, 3773, 3774, 3775, 3776, 3777, 3778, 3779, 3780, 3781, 3782, 3783, 3784, 3785, 3786, 3787, 3788, 3789, 3790, 3791, 3792, 3793, 3794, 3795, 3796, 3797, 3798, 3799, 3800, 3801, 3802, 3803, 3804, 3805, 3806, 3807, 3808, 3809, 3810, 3811, 3812, 3813, 3814, 3815, 3816, 3817, 3818, 3819, 3820, 3821, 3822, 3823, 3824, 3825, 3826, 3827, 3828, 3829, 3830, 3831, 3832, 3833, 3834, 3835, 3836, 3837, 3838, 3839, 3840, 3841, 3842, 3843, 3844, 3845, 3846, 3847, 3848, 3849, 3850, 3851, 3852, 3853



# 1

Among the fundamental assumptions of the culture circle theory [Kulturkreislehre] was the idea that cultures only changed due to “external” influence by adopting cultural traits or components from “outside”. The so-called concept of cultural diffusion stood in opposition to the paradigm of evolutionism prevailing at that time; the latter assumed independent cultural development.

Diffusionism was later abandoned. Nevertheless, it generated knowledge on cultural exchange and mutual influence that is still valid today, such as Schebesta reconstructing how the Semang had adopted the blowpipe and ornaments from the Senoi.

## **Blowpipe dart quiver (goh)**

The Semang originally used to hunt with bow and arrow. Later on, they adopted the blowpipe from the adjacent Senoi. This quiver is a modification of a Semang arrow quiver for blowpipe darts. Semang-Menri, Malaysia, 1924–25; bamboo, rattan

## **Blowpipe dart quiver (goh)**

Blowpipe dart quivers were decorated with ornaments. Schebesta concluded that the Semang had adopted the decorative technique with the blowpipe from the Senoi.

Semang-Kenta, Malaysia, 1924–25; bamboo, wood

## **Blowpipe dart quiver (bano')**

The Semang kept their specific form of modified arrow quivers. Together with the blowpipe, however, they also adopted this typical form of blowpipe dart quivers from the Senoi.

Senoi-Ple, Malaysia, 1924–25; bamboo, rattan

## 2

Many scientists still consider Schebesta's three volumes of "Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri" [The Bambuti Pygmies of the Ituri] to be a central publication. In his numerous popular science works, he often depicted himself in paternalistic fashion as the "Father of Pygmies", which is also documented in photographs. His oeuvre not only includes sound recordings but also human body measurements as was customary in physical anthropology of that time. Despite his appreciation for the forest peoples, Schebesta still believed his Christian mission work to be indispensable to secure their future.

### **Sleeping mat, rolled up**

This mat was rolled up when transported. It is made exclusively of intertwined leaves and is an example of how the immediate surroundings were used for making objects of everyday life. Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930; palm leaves, wooden splinters



Martin Gusinde with his  
godparents of his first youth  
initiation ceremony  
aus: Martin Gusinde (1946):  
Urmenschen im Feuerland. Vom  
Forscher zum Stammesmitglied.  
Zsolnay. Wien

## **Pater Martin Gusinde (1886–1969)**

Gusinde was a missionary and priest of the Society of the Divine Word. His ethnological interest was engaged during his years in Chile (1912–1924) where he travelled to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego to conduct anthropological research on behalf of the government. He was driven by the desire to document cultures threatened with extinction. Back in Vienna, he studied ethnology and physical anthropology. Although Gusinde joined Schebesta on his trip to today's Democratic Republic of the Congo, his connection to the Vienna School was troubled: his relationship to Koppers was characterised by competition after a joint journey to Tierra del Fuego. As Schmidt did not consider Gusinde to be a true representative

of the culture circle theory, he gave him hardly any support. Not even Gusinde's adjustment to the ideology of National Socialism could help him to an academic career.

Martin Gusinde's texts and photographs reveal a high degree of familiarity with the people. In his view, they are not only representatives of a culture but also individuals with all their strengths and weaknesses. The great interest and appreciation Gusinde showed for the "Fuegians" and their culture prompted the Yaghan and Selk'nam to arrange their initiation rites and secret men's ceremonies for him under the condition that he had to participate in the ritual. According to his records, Gusinde took pride and joy in being accepted into the communities.



Portrait photos with comments  
by Martin Gusinde  
Martin Gusinde, 1918–1924



Guinze war Ordenspriester und Missionar. Sein ethnologisches Interesse wurde während seiner Jahre in Chile (1912–1924) geweckt, wo er im Auftrag der Regierung zwecks anthropologischer Studien Patagonien und Feuerland bereiste. Dabei wurde er von dem Wunsch getrieben, vom Aussterben bedrohte Kulturen zu dokumentieren. Zurück in Wien studierte er Anthropologie und Völkerkunde. Er reiste mit Schebesta in die jetzige Demokratische Republik Kongo, doch sein Verhältnis zur *Wiener Schule* war getrübt: Die Beziehung zu Koppers war nach einer gemeinsamen Feuerlandsreise von Konkurrenz geprägt. Von Schmidt, der Guinze nicht als wahre Vertreter der Kulturkreislehre sah, kam kaum Unterstützung. Auch Guinzes angepasste Haltung während des Nationalsozialismus verhalf ihm nicht zu einer akademischen Karriere.

Gusinde was a missions and priest of the Society of the Divine Word. His ethnological interest was engaged during his years in Chile (1912–1924) where he travelled to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego to conduct anthropological research on behalf of the government. He was driven by the desire to document cultures threatened with extinction. Back in Vienna, he studied ethnology and physical anthropology. Although Gusinde joined Schebesta on his trip to today's Democratic Republic of the Congo, his connection to the Vienna School was troubled: his relationship to Koppers was characterised by competition after a joint journey to Tierra del Fuego. As Schmidt did not consider Gusinde to be a true representative of the culture circle theory, he gave him hardly any support. Not even Gusinde's adjustment to the Ideology of National Socialism could help him to an academic career.

Texte und Fotografien von Martin Gschinde zeigen von einer hohen Wertung des Lichts bei den Menschen. Sie sind für ihn nicht einfach Vertreter einer Kultur, sondern Personlichkeiten mit all ihren Stärken und Schwächen. Das große Interesse an der Menschlichkeit, die Gschinde den Fotografieren und in ihrer Kultur immer mehr einbrachte, veranlasste ihn, das Tag und die Nacht, das Jahr, die für ihn tief bedeutsamen und geheimnisvollen Mächte des Kosmos zu vereinen. Allerdings geschah dies in der gegenseitigen Begegnung, dass auch Gschinde sich dem Licht aussetzte. Aus seinen Schriften geht hervor, dass die Aufnahme in die Gruppe der Stolz- und Freudenritzen.

Martin Gasteiras's words and photographs reveal a high degree of familiarity with the people. In his view, they are not only representatives of a culture but also individuals with all their strengths and weaknesses. The great interest and appreciation Gasteiras showed for the "Fagundes" and their culture prompted the Yaghan and Selk'nam to arrange their traditional and sacred music ceremonies for him under the condition that he would participate in them all. According to his records, Gasteiras took pride and joy in being accepted into the communities.



Partis alijabianis cum Examine abbas  
cum Martinis Gualterio  
Partis alijabianis cum Examine abbas  
cum Martinis Gualterio  
Martinis Gualterio cum Examine



**Q** What are the symptoms of a stroke?

**A** The symptoms of a stroke can vary widely, depending on the location and size of the stroke. Some common symptoms include sudden weakness or numbness in the face, arm, or leg; sudden confusion or difficulty understanding; sudden trouble speaking or writing; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking; sudden dizziness or loss of balance; and sudden severe headache.

[illegible][illegible]

Aussparung Grafik  
für Vitrine  
B 320 x H 1150 mm

In der von Arbutnotz verteilten G ist neben der A noch ein Schindels, dass die Feuerfährer zu den „Wolbräner“ zählten. Das die Mönchsreihe als Kennzeichen solcher sei, „videtur G nicht in der von populäre Schrift „Urmannschaft in Feinstadt“ dieses Thema ein eigenes Kapitel. Das dort steht ist: die Grube als „...die Wunsch der beiden Liebenden nach lebenslänglicher Vereinigung“.

Allerdings finden sich in seiner Beschreibung, Hinweis darauf, dass bei den Tälern kein auf Maßnahmen sei daraus. Diese werden von Gügel jedoch einfach als Auslassung bezeichnet, die die Grube betreffen.

Guidice shared Schindler's identification of the "Tugsters" as representatives of "primitivist culture" (Wolcott). As one of his indicators, Guidice dedicated an entire chapter to the issue of monogamy and described it as "...the decline [of] love is based [for] 'wilding' men" in his popular book *Urmenschen in Feuerland* ("Feral Peoples in Tierra del Fuego"). His account also includes references to polygamy among the Selk'nam but Guidice simply noted them as exceptions proving the rule.



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**Mitsunaga-Tanaka (Tegami) Family**  
**Mitsunaga-Tanaka (Tegami) Family**

### 3

Gusinde shared Schmidt's scientific opinion that the "Fuegians" were representatives of "primeval culture" [Urkultur]. As one of its indicators, Gusinde dedicated an entire chapter to the issue of monogamy and described it as "... the desire [of those in love] for lifelong union" in his popular book "Urmenschen in Feuerland" [Primeval Peoples in Tierra del Fuego].

His account also includes references to polygamy among the Selk'nam but Gusinde simply treated them as exceptions proving the rule.

### **Bridal bow**

When a young couple decided to marry, the boy presented the girl with such a bow to publicly declare his love. If she accepted the bow, she was willing to marry him. The bow was then kept for their firstborn.

Selk'nam, Isla Grande, 1916–1923; wood, animal tendon

## **Arm cuff**

A girl made such an arm cuff as a sign of her intentions to get married. One day after accepting the bridal bow, she publicly presented her suitor with the arm cuff. He wore it until it came apart. Then he received another one from his wife.

Selk'nam, Isla Grande, 1916–1923; tendon fibres

## **Drinking vessel**

Gusinde believed that using seashells as drinking vessels demonstrated the Yaghan's high degree of adaptation to their environment instead of their "primitiveness" as assumed by other researchers.

Yaghan, southwestern Tierra del Fuego, 1916–1923; voluta shell





Monogamous Yamana (Yaghan) family  
Martin Gusinde, 1918–1924



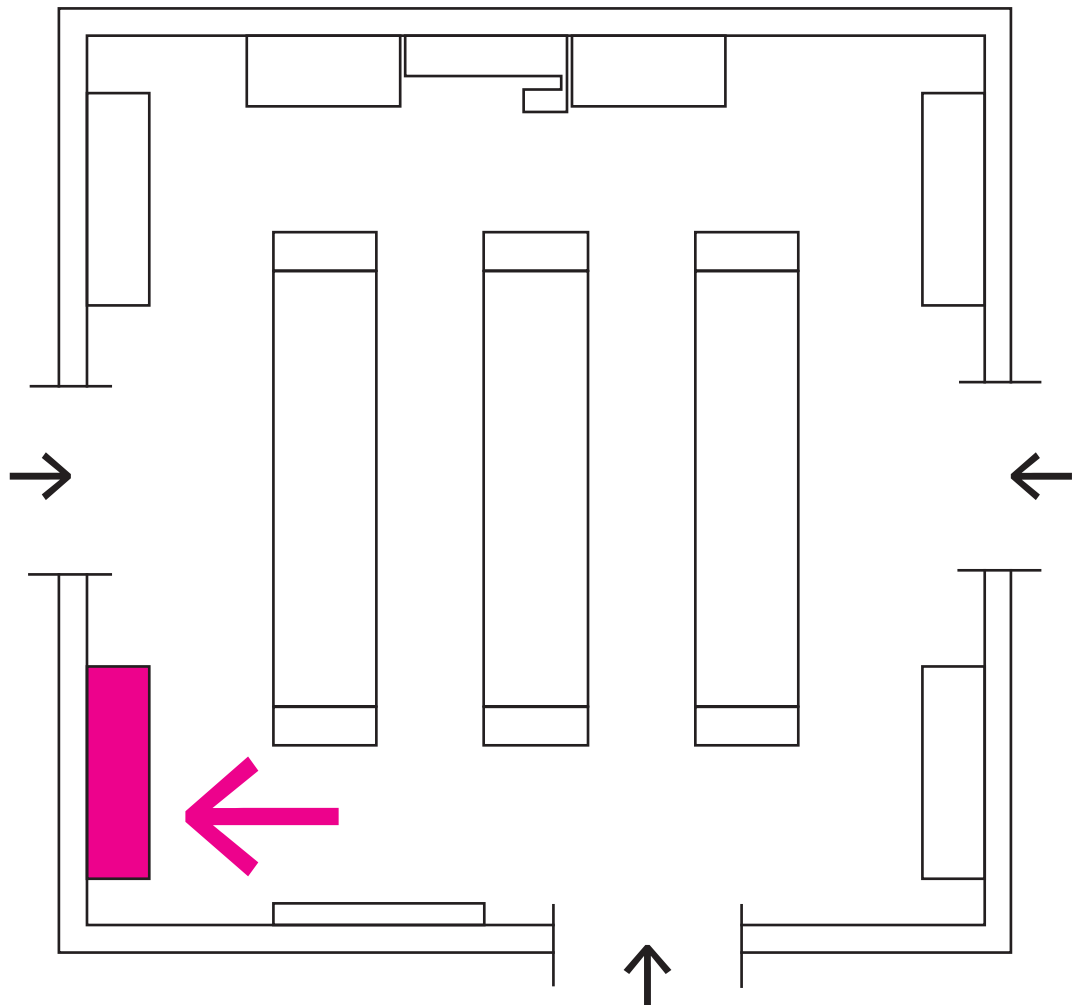
Monogamous Yamana (Yaghan)  
family  
Martin Gusinde, 1918–1924







# Room 24



# Contemporary Views on the Vienna School

The glory days of the Vienna School are already half a century behind us. Its history makes clear that science is always tied to a particular time. Social and cultural anthropology, as ethnology is called today, has changed considerably in the last few decades. For this reason, it is inconceivable to directly continue the work of the Vienna School. Nevertheless, Schmidt and his colleagues gave impulses that have left a deep impression. They played a decisive role in establishing not only the discipline in Vienna but also this museum. As pioneers of modern hunter-gatherer studies, they dedicated their scientific work to those societies that had previously been largely ignored.

## **Hunter-gatherer societies today**

Hunter-gatherer societies live primarily on collected and caught food. They do not live separated from the rest of the world, just as their culture is not a relic of the Stone Age. The groups indicated here vary considerably in size. Many of them also gave up certain aspects of their traditional way of life in the last few decades. Nevertheless, they are all connected in the struggle for their rights to land and self-determination.

## **GREENLAND**

Kalaallit

## **ALASKA**

Yupik

## **CANADA**

Inuit

Tlingit

Nisga'a

Kwakwaka'wakw

Cree

## **USA**

Shoshonen

## **VENEZUELA**

Cuiva

## **ECUADOR**

Huaorani

## **BRAZIL**

Pirahã



## **PARAGUAY**

Aché

## **CHILE**

Yaghan

## **CAMEROON**

Baka

## **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Aka

## **UGANDA**

Mbuti

Yaka

## **TANZANIA**

Hadza

## **NAMIBIA**

!Kung

Ju/'hoansi

## **RUSSIA**

Chanten

Ewenken

Jukagiren

Tschuktschen

## **JAPAN**

Ainu

## **THAILAND**

Maniq

## **ANDAMAN ISLANDS**

Jarawa

## **PHILIPPINES**

Agta

Batak

## **MALAYSIA**

Jahai

## **INDONESIA**

Orang Rimba

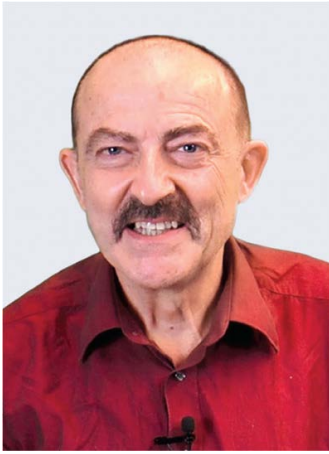
Penan

# AUSTRALIA

Pintupi

Warlpiri

Arrernte



Film still: Thomas Gregorc, 2016

## Helmut Lukas

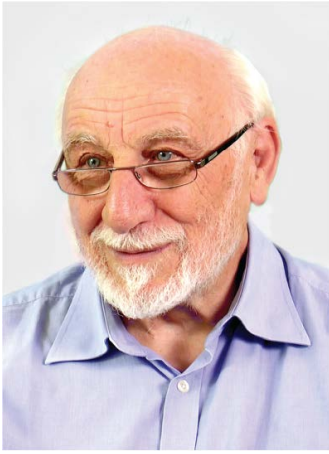
Helmut Lukas is an Austrian social anthropologist at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the University of Vienna. He has conducted numerous field studies among hunter-gatherer societies in Southeast Asia, such as the Orang Rimba in Sumatra or the Maniq in Thailand, since the 1970s. His research focuses on the fields of ecology and linguistics. The research questions of today's hunter-gatherer studies differ considerably from those of the Vienna School. Since the 1960s, for example, the relationship to the environment has been given a more central role. Nevertheless, today's scientists are still able to fall back on Schebesta's work.



Photo: Thomas Gregorc, 2016

## **Khaled Hakami**

Khaled Hakami is an Austrian social anthropologist at the University of Vienna with a focus on hunter-gatherer studies. In cooperation with Helmut Lukas, he conducts field studies among the Maniq in southern Thailand. Hakami is also secretary of the International Society for Hunter Gatherer Research. This society seeks to specifically promote research about hunter-gatherer societies in the past and the present. Hunter-gatherer societies are extremely often confronted with land grabbing and the destruction of their basis of existence. The objectives of the Society for Hunter Gatherer Research also include supporting the struggle of these societies for their rights



Film still: Thomas Gregorc, 2016

## **Pater Anton Fencz**

F. Anton Fencz was a Steyler Missionary in Ghana for 18 years. He has been the rector of the St. Gabriel Mission Seminary since 2013.

In the last few decades, the mission had to undergo significant changes. The missionary community became smaller due to a lack of new order members. Not only the in-house printing press but also the Missionary Ethnographic Museum had to be closed down. Similarly, the theological faculty at St. Gabriel no longer exists. Today Steyler Missionaries are trained at the Philosophical-Theological Faculty in St. Augustin near Bonn. The Anthropos Institute is located in the same place and still connects ethnology and missionary work within the congregation.

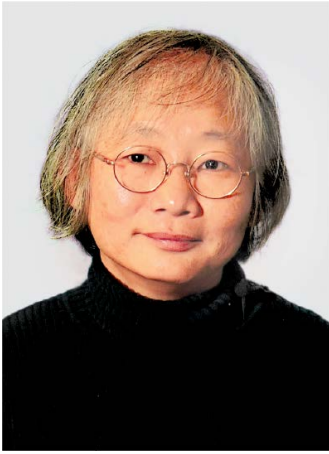
Film still: Thomas Gregorc, 2016



## **Andre Gingrich**

Andre Gingrich is an Austrian social anthropologist and director of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences. Among his research fields is the process of coming to terms with the past of Austrian ethnology.

Addressing our own history was a difficult task for a long time. Right after Schmidt's death in 1954, the representatives of the Vienna School declared obsolete and abandoned the culture circle theory. The first generation after Schmidt clearly intended to dissociate themselves from their predecessors. It was not until the early 1990s that the discipline's history and especially the pre-1945 period was critically examined.



Film still: Thomas Gregorc, 2016

## **Tuck-Po Lye**

Tuck-Po Lye is a Malaysian social anthropologist at Universiti Sains Malaysia [University of Science]. Repeatedly since the 1990s, she has been conducting lengthy field study stays among hunter-gatherer societies in Southeast Asian rainforest regions. Her work is primarily dedicated to environmental issues by examining what the hunters and gatherers know about their surroundings. This focus also addresses political aspects, as both the government's environmental policies and climate change affect local communities.

Moreover, by means of her blog, Lye Tuck-Po tries to document her work and bring the life of Malaysian hunter-gatherer societies to the attention of a broader audience.





Film still: Margit Atzler, 2016

## **Cristina Calderón**

Cristina Calderón is the niece of Nelly Calderón Lawrence, probably the most important informant of Martin Gusinde. His book on the Yaghan was dedicated to her. Cristina worked closely with the ethnologist Anne Chapman. Her aunt had told her a lot about the former life and history of the Yaghan. Although she attended the last initiation rite performed in 1933, Cristina was still too young and could only watch. In 2005, Cristina Calderón published *Hai Kur Mamashu Shis* (I want to tell you a Story) with her sister Ursula and her granddaughter. In 2016, she was living in Ukika, the last Yaghan settlement near Puerto Williams on Isla Navarinho. Her nephew José Gonzalez Calderón is the head of the community.



Film still: Thomas Gregorc, 2016

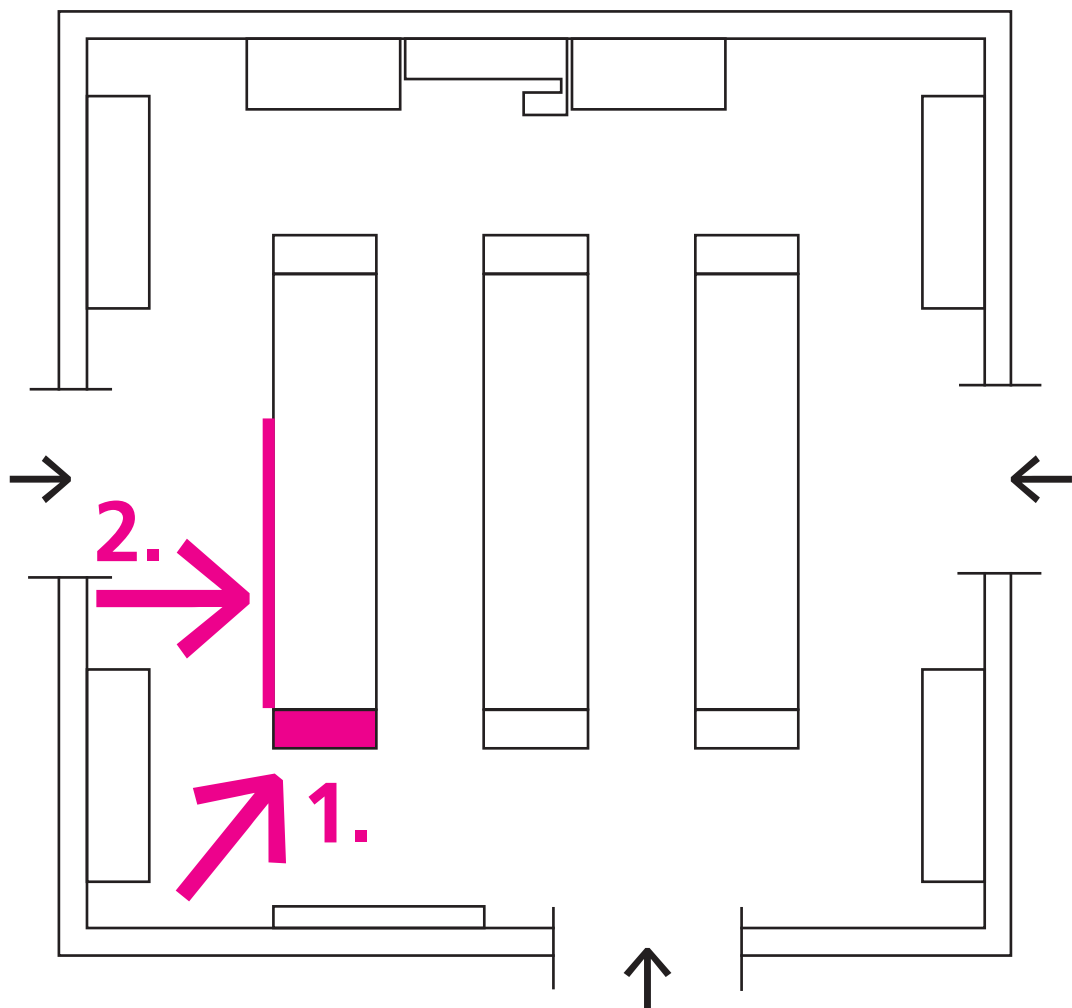
## **Jerome Lewis**

The anthropologist Jerome Lewis has been specialising in Central Africa as well as hunter-gatherer societies since 1993. In the course of his long-term research and field studies among the Yaka forest hunter-gatherers in the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), he has been studying egalitarian political systems, rituals, music and dance. Moreover, Lewis also examines the relationship between hunter-gatherers and farmers as well as public officials, and the consequences of deforestation and environmental protection initiatives. Such measures are the reason for many groups to lose their access to the forest as well as hunting rights. In consequence of this difficult situation, Lewis' work also includes applied research to support the environmental protection initiatives of forest peoples as well as their representation.





# Room 24



1.

## Collection from the Malay Peninsula

Schebesta's first research trip took him to the Malay Peninsula in 1924–25. F. W. Schmidt encouraged him to undertake this expedition and arranged for him to receive funding from the Vatican. Aside from local clerical institutions, Schebesta was also supported by the British Colonial Office.

His first step was to get an overview of the many different ethnic groups and subgroups. Schebesta visited various Semang communities as well as several Senoi and Jakun settlements. Therefore, the objects he gathered also helped him to document the cultural exchange between the groups, so he could ultimately reconstruct the underlying "primeval culture" [Urkultur].

## 2. Hunting

Hunting equipment was made of bamboo as well. On the Malay Peninsula, the most important hunting weapon was the blowpipe. Its ornaments had two separate functions: they were supposed to attract wild game and prevent it from running away.

Bamboo was not the only material to be used. Metal was acquired by trading with neighbouring groups and then processed into, for example, arrow heads.

### 1 Purse

Jakun-Semilai, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
cotton cloth, palm leaves

### 2 Purse

Jakun-Semilai, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
plant fibres, cotton cloth

### 3 Blowpipe (bĕlau)

Semang-Kensiu, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo, rattan

**4 Blowpipe (bĕlau)**

Semang-Kensiu, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo

**5 Blowpipe (bĕlau)**

Senoi-Temiar, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo, rattan

**6 Blowpipe (bĕlau)**

Semang-Batek, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo, rattan

**7 Blowpipe (bĕlau)**

Semang-Batek, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo, rattan

**8, 9**

**Quiver for blowpipe darts (goh)**

Semang-Kenta, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**10 Quiver for blowpipe darts (goh)**

Semang-Kensiu, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo



**11 Quiver for blowpipe darts and poison spatula (bano')**

Senoi-Ple, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo, wood

**12 Pouch for squeezing tubers**

Senoi-Temiar, Malaysia, 1924–1925; palm leaves

**13 Rice seeding basket (ro beni)**

Jakun-Semilai, Malaysia, 1924–1925; rattan

**14 Quiver with two arrows**

Semang-Jahai, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo, metal, rattan

**15 Splitting knife (taji)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; iron, wood, rattan, cotton cloth

**16 Knife(parang)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; iron, wood

**17 Quiver for blowpipe darts (bano')**

Senoi, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bamboo, rattan, palm leaves

**18, 19**

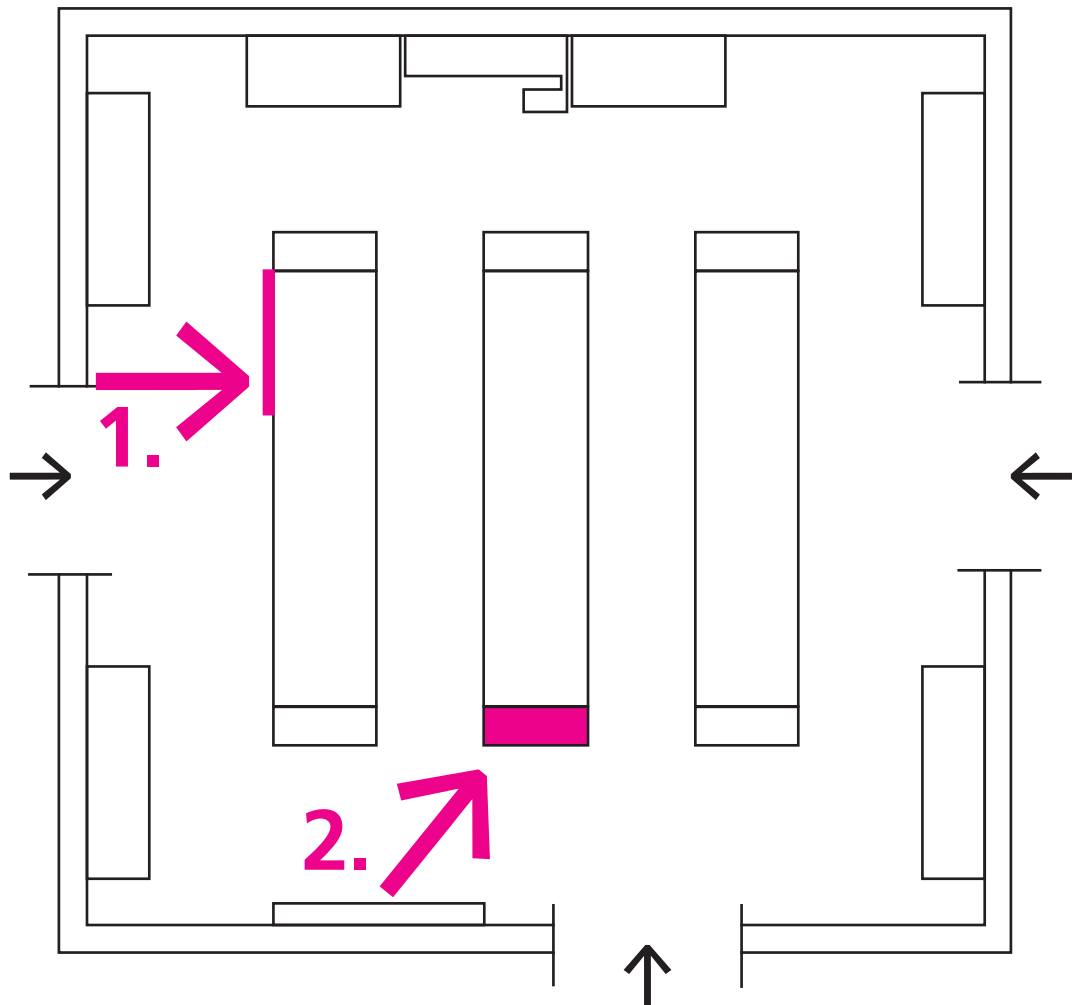
**Quiver for blowpipe darts (bano')**

Senoi-Ple, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo





# Room 24





# 1. Ornaments

For the Semang, bamboo was the most important material for making objects of everyday life. Schebesta concluded that the Semang lived in the “Bamboo Age”. The women’s decorative combs feature a wide range of remarkable carved markings and often have fragrant herbs attached to them. Arranged in individual lines, the flower patterns and rows of teeth can be clearly identified and matched to specific plants or animals. The ornaments protect against disease.

## 1 Mat

Jakun, Malaysia, 1924–1925; plant fibres

## 2 Cooking spoon (ranoy)

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
coconut, bamboo

## 3-6

Decorative comb (ken’ai)

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**7 Decorative comb (ken'ai)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**8, 9**

**Decorative combs (ken'ai)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**10 Decorative comb (ken'ai)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**11 Guimbarde (ranguñ)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**12 Guimbarde (ranguñ)**

Senoi-Semai, Malaysia, 1924–1925; bamboo

**13, 14**

**Bracelet (kěnlah)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; rattan

**15 Headdress**

Jakun, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
rattan, palm leaves



**16 Necklace (kě́cau)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
mussels, bast cord

**17 Decorative comb (ken' ai)**

Senoi-Ple, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
bird and chicken feathers, rattan

**18 Necklace (gě́gog)**

Semang-Jahai, Malaysia, 1924–1925;  
monkey teeth, glass beads

**19 Headband (benolag' n)**

Semang, Malaysia, 1924–1925; artocarpus  
bast, red colouration from the areca nut

**20 Ball**

Jakun-Semilai, Malaysia, 1924–1925; rattan

## 2.

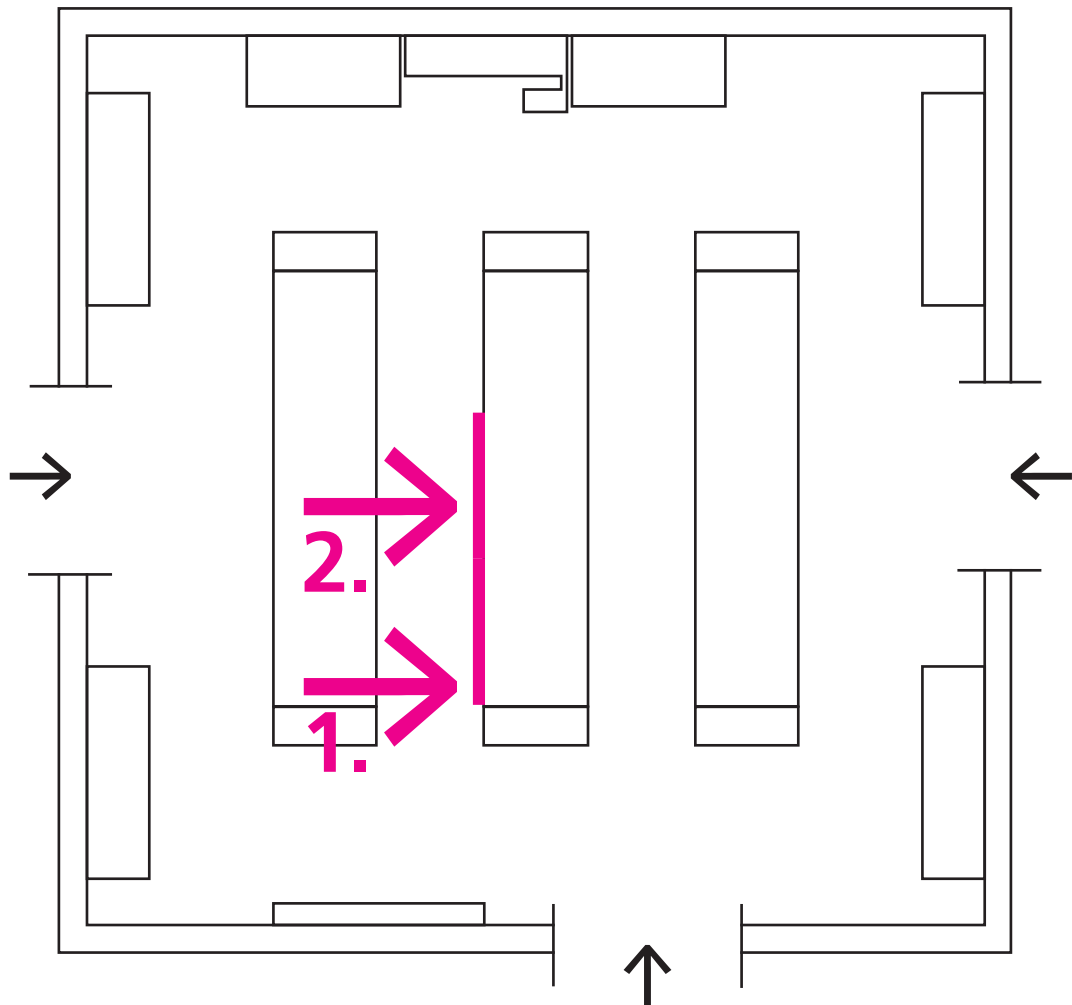
# Collections from the Ituri Forest (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

The museum's collections of Father Paul Schebesta comprise some 1,700 objects. They document Schebesta's goal of collecting not only material culture of the Mbuti in the Ituri Forest but also objects of comparison from their neighbours. In this context, he divided the Mbuti into Efé, Aká and Sua based on the language they spoke. Schebesta's collection is also remarkable for another reason: the nomadic lifestyle reduced any belongings to a minimum. When the people moved on, many objects were left behind in the forest but were nevertheless thus preserved. The selection displayed reveals the environmental focus of Schebesta's research, which was a logical decision due to the forest surroundings. It is this environment that becomes a point of reference in the material culture and use of the displayed objects.





# Room 24



1.

## Hunting and Gathering

Among the basic equipment for various forms of hunting are bows and arrows or nets as well as gathering baskets. In this context, there are also other essential objects, the purpose of which is not as obvious. Bracelets for successful hunting or hunting pipes, which were used for communicating, averting storms and other functions, are just two such examples.

A fire basket was used to smoke out beehives and harvest honey; the honeycomb is covered in leaves and the delicacy distributed to everybody.

### **1 Fire basket for harvesting honey (boo)**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; tree bark

### **2 Honey hatchet**

Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930; wood, iron

### **3 Bark container for honey**

Lendu-Lese, Nduje, DR Congo, before 1935

- 4 Dog bell (lere)**  
Sua, DR Kongo, 1929–1930; wood, plant fibre
- 5 Quiver with arrows**  
Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; leather, fur, wood, leaves, iron
- 6 Hamper (juka)**  
Twa, Boimbo, DR Congo, 1929–1930; strips of cane, bast
- 7 Hunting net (budzira)**  
Ruanda, before 1935; twisted plant fibre cord in knotted mesh technique
- 8 Spear for hunting elephants**  
Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930; wood, iron, plant fibre wrapping
- 9 Signal and hunting whistle (manzangba)**  
Basa (Medje), DR Congo, 1929–1930; wood, monkey tail
- 10 Bow with arrows**  
Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930; wood, leaves, iron, monkey tail

**11 Tendon guard**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; leather, moss, fibres, colour

**12 Game snare (sakasa)**

Bali (Bantu), DR Congo, before 1935; twisted plant fibre

**13 Magic hunting flute**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; wood, bone, bast

**14 Charm (adziro)**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
wood, plant fibre, skin

**15 Container with magical contents (babu)**

Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
bark, wood, antelope horn

**16 Container with lid (lekebe)**

Medje, DR Congo, before 1935; bark



## 2.

# Male Initiation

Initiations also serve as a setting for the transition from child to adult. Forms and functions of such rites are manifold and not static. The exact procedures are usually secret, which affects the way research is conducted and imposes restrictions on knowledge transfer.

Schebesta's collections document his interest in the circumcision ritual nkumbi of the Mbuti and their neighbours. The mask, upper arm swings, foot rattle and cloth are worn by the chief initiator.

### 1 Stool for circumcised boys

Bira, Mambasa – Irumu, DR Congo,  
before 1935; palm leaves

### 2 Adornment of boys for the circumcision ceremony (betungbe)

Bali (Bantu), DR Congo, before 1935;  
wood, bast

**3 Upper arm swings**

Ndaka, DR Congo, before 1935; braided bast

**4 Foot rattle for dancing**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; leather, fruit peels, liana, stones

**5 Mask of the chief initiator**

Ndaka, DR Congo, before 1935; leather

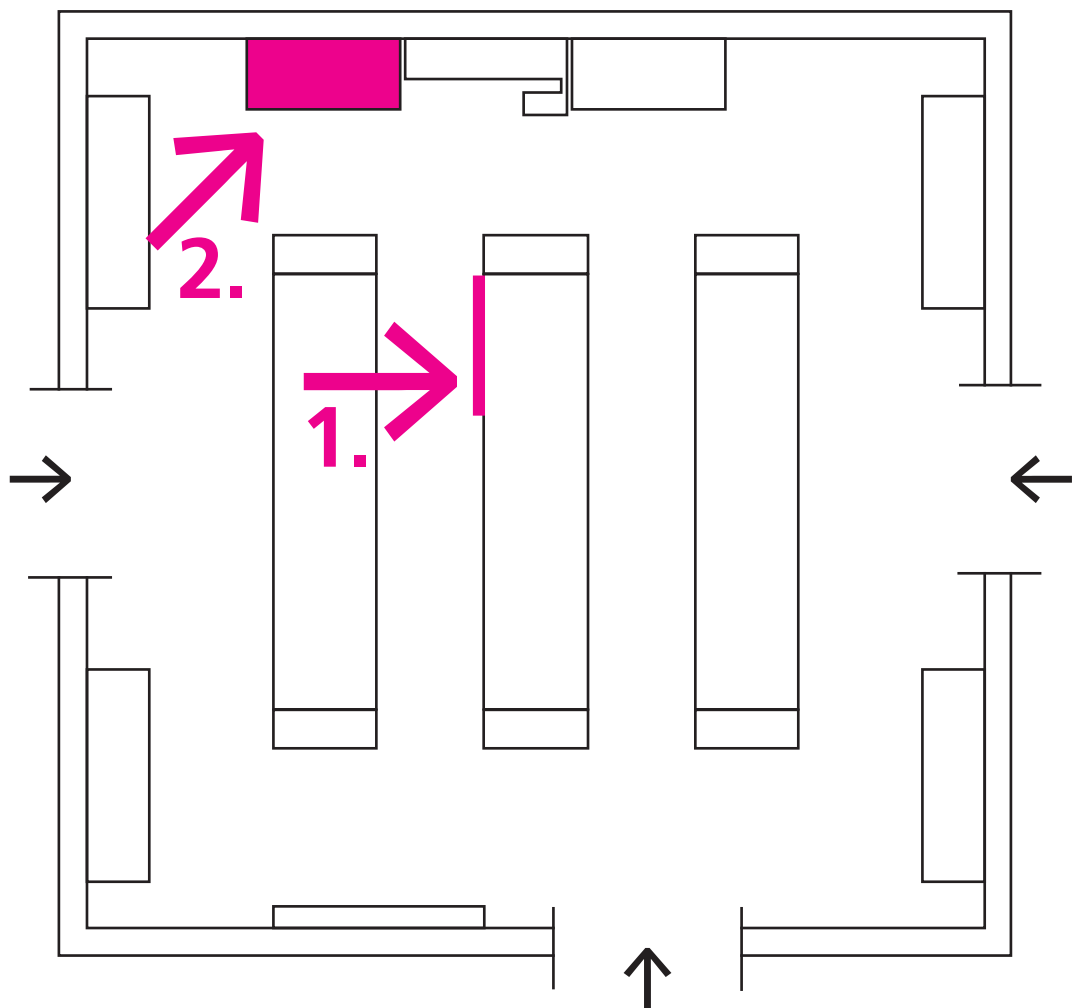
**6 Cloth of puberty and circumcision ceremonies**

Ndaka, DR Congo, before 1935;  
bark cloth, painted





# Room 24





# 1.

## Personal Objects

These objects represent just a few examples of the personal belongings of nomadic societies; here from the Ituri Forest. Property and possession are organised both collectively and individually. Clothes, such as hats, loincloths or bark cloths were owned individually, while houses and all utensils in it, such as baskets, belonged to the women. Phrynium leaves were not only used as roofing material but also for making fans, pipes or back aprons.

### 1 Painted cloth

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; bark cloth

### 2 Bark hammer

Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
wood, ivory, plant fibre

### 3 Men's hat

Bali (Bantu), DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
rotang wickerwork, feathers

**4 Men's hat**

Bali (Bantu), DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
rotang wickerwork, feathers, ivory pin

**5 Men's hat (umbunga)**

Bali (Bantu), DR Congo, before 1932;  
rotang wickerwork, feathers

**6 Basket**

Efé, DR Congo, 1929–1930; coiled plant fibres

**7 Basket**

Bira, DR Congo, 1929–1930; coiled plant fibres

**8 Women's back apron**

Lese, DR Congo, before 1935;  
braided grasses and leaves

**9 Head ornament for dancing (ngoa)**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
boar bristles, leather

**10 Women's back apron**

Balika, DR Congo, before 1935;  
palm leaves, bast



**11 Pipe (toro-toro)**

Mbuti Bira, DR Congo, 1929–1930;  
rattan, raffa palm leaves wrapped around

**12 Fan for collecting ants and fanning flames  
(mouba)**

Sua, DR Congo, 1929–1930; palm leaves,  
strips of cane

## 2.

# Visual Language

Looking at art without considering its immediate surroundings leaves out an important dimension. The various functions forests assume in human life play a decisive role in artistic representations. Bark cloth is decorated with patterns and images of forest, its life, movement and sound. The reduced artistic style of these artworks led to their reception among Modern-Age artists in Europe.

Painted bark cloth served as everyday clothing but was also worn on ritual and ceremonial occasions. The cloths were made by harvesting tree bark and pounding it with a bark hammer. Both colour preparation and painting are the responsibility of women. Although the work is done individually, making and painting the cloths is still a social activity.

## **1 Painted bark cloth (epoho)**

Budu, Bafwabaka, DR Congo, before 1935

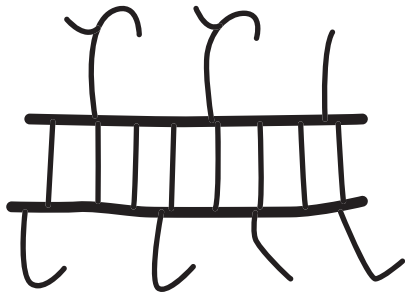
## **2 Painted bark cloth**

Basa (Mbuti), DR Congo, 1929–1930

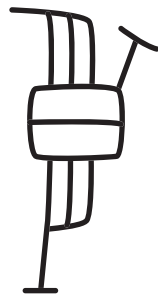
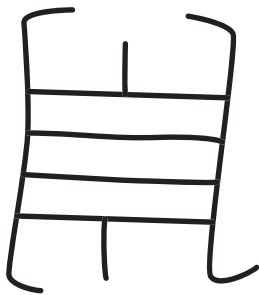
### **Meaning of the Paintings**

The diversity of patterns and motifs found on bark cloths in museum collections is truly remarkable. In most cases, only the artist is able to offer a clear explanation of individual motifs. Nevertheless, they always directly refer to the forest as their environment; some representations also refer to other objects. This wide range of motifs may, for example, depict various techniques to tie knots or make wickerwork for baskets, or similar types of face paintings. Some depictions on these two examples make it possible to find clear references:

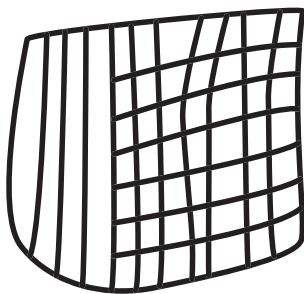
Thorny liana



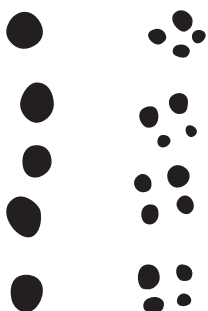
Variations of beetles



Spider web or hunting net



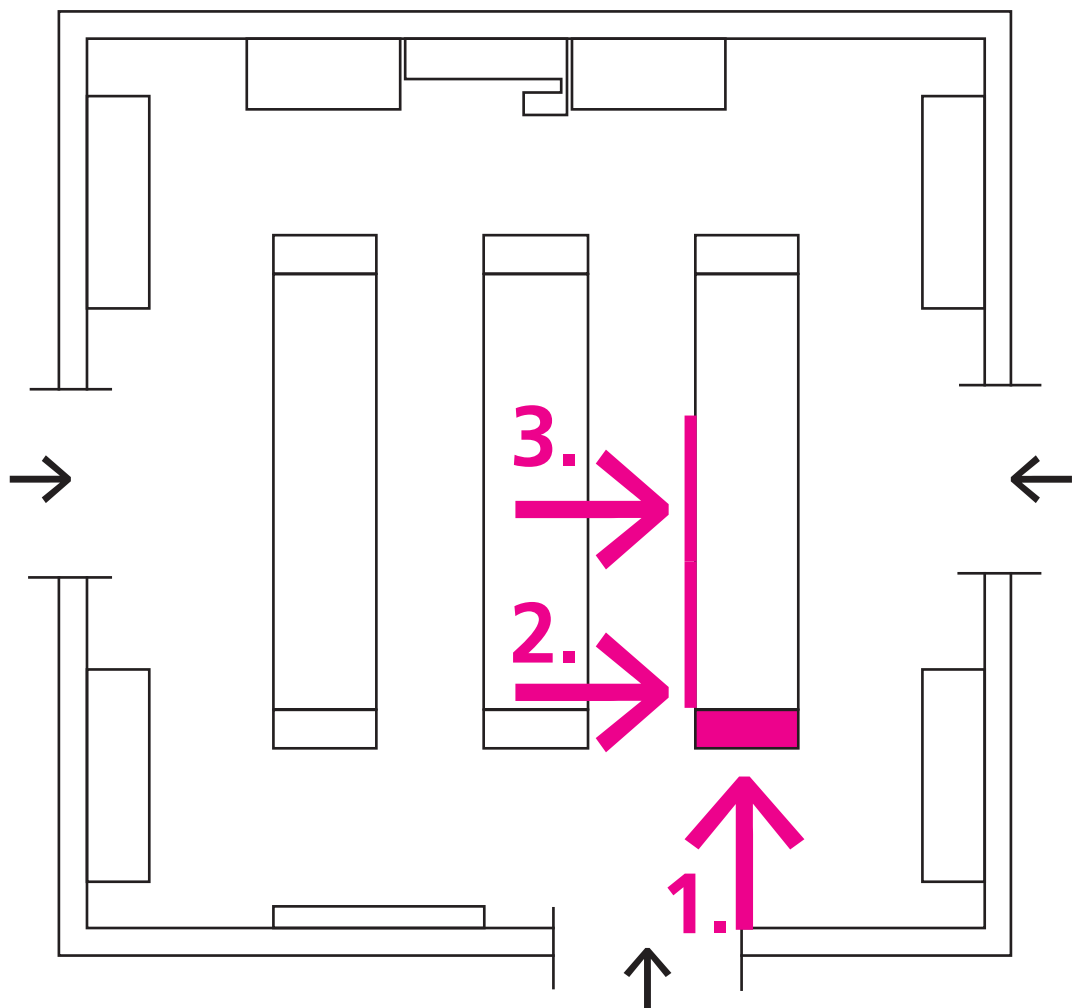
Animal tracks







# Room 24







1.

## **SCollections from Tierra del Fuego**

BGusinde was most popular and appreciated for his extensive work on indigenous “Fuegians”. In three volumes or 3,500 pages, he described in detail the life and beliefs of the Yaghan, Selk’nam and Kawésqar. His findings contradicted the stereotypical accounts of Fuegians as primitive, held first and foremost by Charles Darwin.

His ethnographic collections comprise only 130 objects in our museum. According to Gusinde, their “sparse” and simple material culture was the result of their high degree of adaptation to their environment. In line with their rich spiritual culture, he believed to have found further evidence of their “nativeness”, as economic-technological progress, in his opinion, always went hand in hand with the loss of spiritual culture and ethics.

## 2.

### **Selk'nam: Extinct!**

The Selk'nam lived as hunters and gatherers in the Tierra del Fuego hinterland, out of the way and influence of the travel routes of explorers, researchers, missionaries and whalers, until the second half of the 19th century. Starting in 1881, however, prospectors and sheep farmers began advancing into and taking possession of their territory. As the Selk'nam considered sheep to be game that was easy to hunt, conflicts erupted. The ranchers answered with unprecedented violence which ultimately meant the end of the Selk'nam. Those who survived were relocated to Salesian missions and subjected to cultural re-education. Out of the 4,000 Selk'nam estimated to be alive in the second half of the 19th century, only 100 remained in 1930. Their culture was destroyed. Angela Loij, the "last" Selk'nam, died in 1974.

- 1 Arrow with a flight distance of up to 170 metres**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; wood, bottle glass, feathers, animal tendon
- 2 Bow for hunting guanacos, a member of the camelid family and parent species of the domesticated llama**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923;  
wood, animal tendon
- 3 Arrow quiver**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; untanned sea lion skin, animal tendons
- 4 Rack for carrying babies**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; wood, leather
- 5 Awl for sewing and basket weaving**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; fishbone, wild goose bones, animal tendon
- 6 Headdress, worn by men when hunting**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; guanaco fur, animal tendon

- 7 Eye protection for babies**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923;  
guanaco leather
- 8 Comb made from baleen plates of a whale's upper jaw**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; baleen
- 9 Doll**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; wood,  
guanaco fur, animal skin
- 10 Basket**  
Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923; rushes

### 3.

## Kawésqar: Children of the Sun

Martin Gusinde still knew them as Halakwulup. Today these nomadic seafarers call themselves Kawésqar. Their area west of the Strait of Magellan and the archipelagos of Patagonia was a major whaling region in the 19th century. Their encounters with whalers usually ended in violence and led to heavy losses among the Kawésqar. The region's extreme environmental conditions made it unattractive to settlers; a fact that made their survival possible. Today many Kawésqar are fishermen or make handicraft products, e.g. boat models, for the souvenir market. Only very few of them still speak their own language. The culture of the Kawésqar is the culture of their ancestors; as memory it is still a source of identity, regardless of whether their ancestors also include Chileans.

**1 Feather headdress**

Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; albatross feathers, animal tendons

**2 Feather headdress of a healer**

Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; feathers of the great egret or cormorant, cord

**3 Basket for collecting mussels**

Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; rushes

**4 Harpoon heads for fishing as well as hunting birds and smaller mammals**

Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; whalebone

**5-6**

**Fire plough**

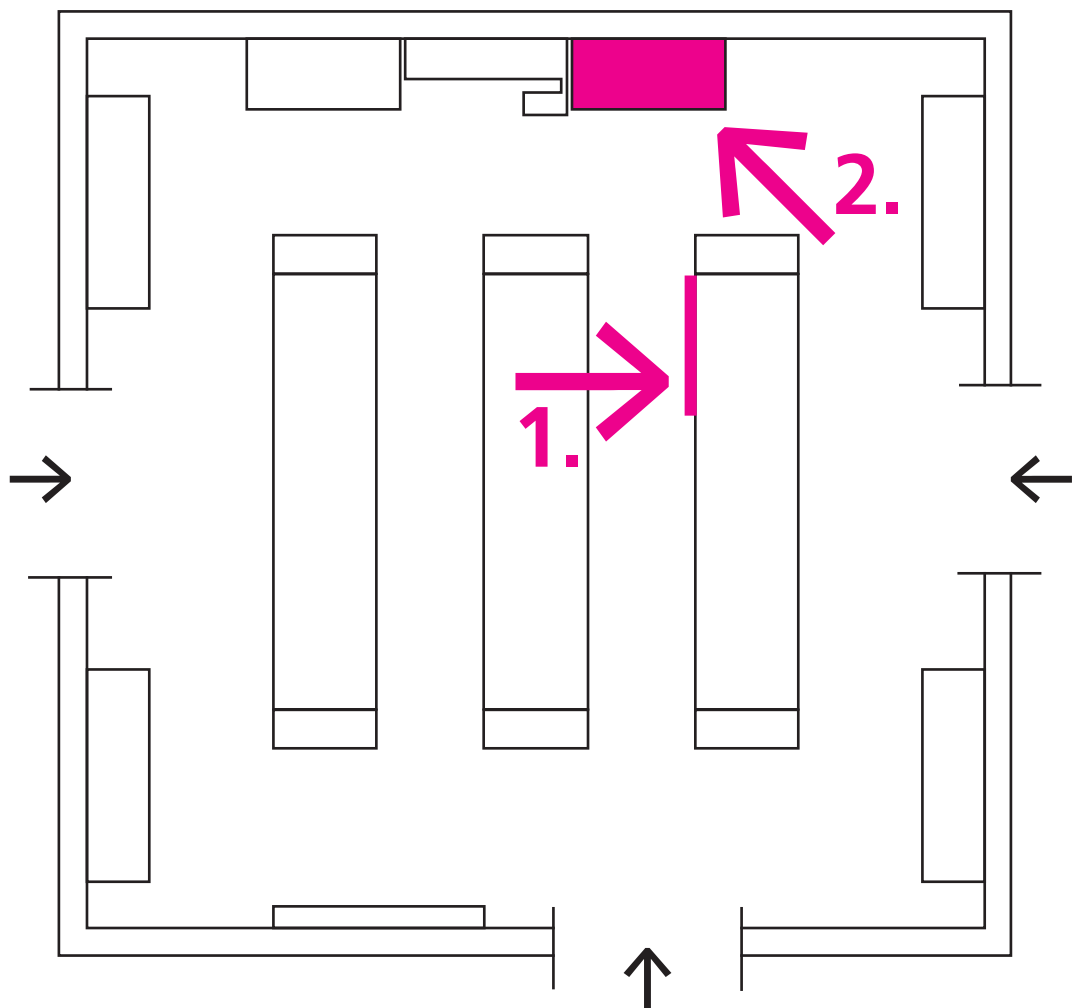
Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; cypress wood







# Room 24



1.

## Yaghan

The Yaghan, whom Martin Gusinde called Yamana, still live south of Isla Grande and all the way down to Cape Horn. As nomadic seafarers, they lived by hunting fish and marine mammals. Even in the early period of contact in the 19th century, the Yaghan maintained close relations to mission stations. Under their administration, they were less directly subjected to colonial violence than other groups of “Fuegians”. Living in missions also had its downsides, though: epidemic diseases could spread more easily. In the years between 1896 and 1900, pneumonia and tuberculosis killed half the population living at the mission in Argentinian Ushuaia. The missionaries pressed them to give up their way of life and beliefs. Located on Isla Navarino, Ukika is the last autonomous community of today’s Yaghan people. Here they keep up the struggle to maintain their language and identity.

**1 Headdress**

Southwestern Tierra del Fuego,  
Chile, 1916–1923; molina goose skin, down  
feathers, animal tendons

**2 Sling for hunting birds**

Southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile,  
1916–1923; fur, animal tendon, bird skin (?)

**3-5**

**Harpoon heads for hunting seals**

Smith Channel, Chile, 1923; whalebone

**6 Harpoon head**

Southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile,  
1916–1923; whale rib

**7 Model of a boat as the original home of the  
Yaghan and Kawésqar**

Tierra del Fuego, Chile, 1938; bark, wood,  
baleen strips, bone  
N. Gerl Coll.

## 2.

# The Great Ceremonies

As families usually moved around individually, major ceremonies were the only opportunity for them to come together. For the Selk'nam, everything revolved around initiation, the ritual by which boys became adult males. The Yaghan and Kawésqar initiated boys and girls together. A special hut was built for this occasion and served as the ritual space. This is where the initiates were separated from the public for a longer period of time. Religious specialists instructed them in mythology and moral conduct. They also received support from spirits that manifested in masked men with elaborately painted bodies. After the initiation rite, young men of the Yaghan and Kawésqar had to pass another ritual which Gusinde called "secret male ceremony".

- 1 Mask representing one of the most important spirits (tólon)**  
Selk'nam, Isla Grande, Chile, 1916–1923;  
leather, pigment
- 2 Mask of the secret male ceremony**  
Kawésqar, Smith Channel, 1923;  
bark, pigment, iron, baleen
- 3 Mask of the secret male ceremony**  
Kawésqar, Smith Channel, 1923;  
bark, pigment
- 4 Mask representing a spirit (usmina)**  
Yaghan, southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile,  
1916–1923; fur, pigment
- 5 Bowl for blending body colour**  
Southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile,  
1916–1923; mytilus mussel shell

**6 Headdress for all participants of the initiation rite (hapaxel)**

Yaghan, southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile, 1916–1923; albatross skin, down, animal tendons

**7 Feather hat of a “medicine man”**

Kawésqar, Smith Channel, 1923; part of a bird’s skin

**8 Masking held in front of the face**

Kawésqar, Smith Channel, 1923; baleen

**9 Model scaffolding of an initiation hut symbolising a cave, home of the sea lions**

Yaghan, southwestern Tierra del Fuego, Chile, 1916–1923; wood, pigment



