

## **The ethnological collection of the Lippisches Landesmuseum in peripheral Detmold. A glocal history of conglomeration, fragmentation, indifference and contestation from 1835 to the present.**

Heeding Bénédicte Savoy's call for an "introspection" of ethnological museum collections, the "völkerkundliche Sammlung" of the Lippisches Landesmuseum (LLM) in Detmold tells a history of global-local linkages and parallel developments starting in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The LLM's roughly 3000 ethnological objects from around the world were collected by people from the central German principality of Lippe in contexts of German colonial conquest and administration, diplomatic encounters under varying power constellations, trade, and informal social interactions. Brought to Detmold, these objects have placed the region in a continuing if fractured relationship with places, cultures and peoples around the world.

What can global museum collections in less urbanised regions, with a nonetheless considerable proportion of people with immigration histories, tell us in our entangled societies today? Can such collections in small museums or other peripheral places of culture serve as archival alternatives to repositories of institutions more central to imperialism? Do they hold sources transcending rigid colonial epistemes and/or complicating post/decolonial approaches? And how did the regionalised nature of the German Reich impact Germany's integration into global processes and its perception among many extra-Europeans as an alternative centre that could serve as a model for their own paths to modernity? How were highbrow discourses of university cities from the Humboldt brothers to racialised anthropology mediated and translated for people in non-urban regions through such small-scale ethnological collections? Was colonial amnesia or aphasia all there was to the drastic decline of the relevance of ethnological collections starting in the late 1920s that lasted well into the 1980s, and how have reformulations of nationalism and regionalism played into this?

Taking the LLM's ethnological collection as a point of departure, several layers of a glocal history are explored in this project. Histories of objects that "came" to Lippe, their significance in their places of origin and the contexts and conditions under which they were acquired and brought to Detmold. This is tucked into the history of the museum, from its bourgeois foundation as a natural history collection in 1835, that was supplied by Lippeans from all continents, to its growth into a universal museum from the 1880s onwards, to its Germano-centric narrowing from the end of the 1920s to the 1980s, to the slow rediscovery of the extra-Lippean "cultures of the world" since then and with regard to post/decolonial debates in recent years. Remote from the large museums of the "glitzy" metropolises, in another layer the LLM is emblematic of the globally-nationally intertwined history of Lippe itself. Established in the sovereign principality of Lippe before 1870, the museum expanded vastly during Lippe's integration into the German Reich with its nationalist-imperialist agenda. Only after the abolition of the principality in 1918 and its transfer from civic into state ownership was it named "Landesmuseum", thus continuing to serve as a forum that cultivates regional forms of belonging and understanding of the world - until today.