

# **BASLER AFRIKA BIBLIOGRAPHIEN**

**Namibia Resource Centre - Southern Africa Library**

**Lisa Roulet & Dag Henrichsen**  
(Basler Afrika Bibliographien)

**Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz's 'Ethnographic Object  
Collection' from Namibia and Southern Africa**

**BAB Working Paper No 1: 2020**

**ISSN 14228769 © The authors © Basler Afrika Bibliographien**

**Basler Afrika Bibliographien Klosterberg 23 CH 4051 Basel Switzerland**

**Tel + 41 61 228 93 33 Fax + 41 61 228 93 30 Email [bab@baslerafrika.ch](mailto:bab@baslerafrika.ch)**

# **BASLER AFRIKA BIBLIOGRAPHIEN**

**Namibia Resource Centre - Southern Africa Library**

## **BAB Working Papers** (ISSN 1422-8769)

The BAB Working Papers are being published since 1995. Recent numbers include:

**Working Paper No 1: 2017 Dag Henrichsen, Giorgio Miescher**

Namibian and Southern African Studies in Basel:  
A case for an intellectual project

**Working Paper No 2: 2017 Lisa Roulet**

Die Fotografin Anneliese Scherz und die „Marshall Expedition“ von 1953 in die Nyae Nyae Region/Kalahari.  
Anmerkungen zum Bildarchiv

**Working Paper No 3: 2017 Katrin Müller**

Felsbildforschung und Forschungsnetzwerke in Namibia.  
Anmerkungen zur Korrespondenz von Anneliese und Ernst Rudolf Scherz, 1960–1975

**Working Paper No 1: 2018 Isabelle Haffter**

Die Fotografin Lieselotte Prozesky-Schulze. Ihr fotografisches Schaffen und Bildarchiv zu Namibia (1957)

**Working Paper No 1: 2020 Lisa Roulet, Dag Henrichsen**

Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz's 'Ethnographic Object Collection' from Namibia and Southern Africa

**ORDER** (CHF 5.00 each + p&p):

**Basler Afrika Bibliographien Klosterberg 23 CH 4051 Basel Switzerland  
[www.baslerafrika.ch](http://www.baslerafrika.ch)**

# **Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz’s ‘Ethnographic Object Collection’ from Namibia and Southern Africa**

Lisa Roulet & Dag Henrichsen

(Basler Afrika Bibliographien)

The Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB) houses the multi-media archives of the well-known German-Namibian photographers and (rock-art) researchers Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz. Their vast and diverse collections consist predominantly of image and paper documents and also include a so-called ethnographic object collection.<sup>1</sup> This survey attempts to make the latter collection accessible to research in the form of a Working Paper. It comes at a time when the various Scherz collections at the BAB have been catalogued and digitalised to a larger extent.

The object collection comprises 47 objects and relates, as do all other Scherz collections, to their period of residency in Namibia (formerly South West Africa) between the mid-1930s and the late 1970s. The following introductory notes reveal that the objects formed part of a vast personal memory archive of documents, images, narratives and stories which the Scherz couple built, often with the help of a network of friends and colleagues, over several decades. We trace the history of the overall Scherz archive in order to evaluate the ‘place and space’ of its ‘ethnographic objects’. This particular collection can be regarded as both an exception and one of the ‘loose ends’ of the BAB’s archive collections since ‘ethnographic objects’ do not form part of the BAB’s (historical) archive and library acquisition policies.

Apart from the introduction, the Working Paper documents each object with regard to available historical context and ‘acquisition’ information. It becomes obvious that the overall Scherz archives provide little information on the provenance of the objects. Places, dates, terms of ‘acquisition’ and details about source communities or involved persons remain often obscure. We provide various (photographic) references in order to suggest further research leads. Although we can only rely on clues as to the objects’ personal ‘place and space’ within the wider documentation activities of Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz, they obviously treasured these objects and collections and made sense of them from their point of view and status within the confines of the colonial and apartheid world in which they lived. Whilst it is apparent that they considered the objects documented here as ‘unusual’, ‘exceptional’ or simply ‘beautiful’, there is no doubt that many of them would be considered as important cultural heritage artefacts in Namibia itself.

---

1 We use the term ‘ethnographic object’ in inverted commas in order to indicate, as Johannes Fabian has argued, that the term is inextricably tied up with the identification of the Other and, in the colonial context, with ‘tribes’ and boundaries and units of colonial rule. See J. Fabian, “On recognizing things: the ‘Ethnic Artefact’ and the ‘Ethnographic Object’”. In *L’Homme*, April–June 2004, 170, pp.47–60.

Despite being merely a documentation tool, this Working Paper hopefully provides Namibian institutions and communities with information to draw on and enter into conversation with the BAB as well as its current owner as to the future of the collection. We welcome contributions and discussions about accessibility, recontextualization and redistribution of colonial collections in general, and with regard to this collection in particular. With reference to this collection of objects, we have started such a conversation two years ago and thank Daniela Schlettwein Gsell (Basel) and various researchers, in particular Martha Akawa, Gertrud Boden, Winnie Kanyimba, Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Romie Nghitevelekwa, Antje Otto and Sigrid Schmidt for critical comments, questions, evaluations and suggestions. We are grateful to Richard Kunz of the Museum der Kulturen (Basel) and Samuel Bachmann of the Bernisches Historisches Museum for the advice received as how to manage the collection, to Jasmin Rindlisbacher for her editorial support and, as always, to our engaging and supportive BAB archive colleagues.

### **Biographical Note<sup>2</sup>**

Anneliese Scherz (née Fuss-Hippel, 1900–1985), born in Exin (in former Prussia, today: Kcynia, Poland), trained as a professional photographer in Berlin during the early 1920s and maintained her own photo studio until she joined her husband in Namibia in 1938. She became known in the wider settler society for her portrait photography. At the same time, she was engaged as photographer by various high-levelled research expeditions in order to document African social and cultural landscapes and lifestyles of people being forced to live in the so-called ‘Native Reserves’ designated to Africans by the racist South Africa apartheid administration of Namibia at the time. Scherz participated in the so-called Edwin Loeb expedition of anthropologists from the University of California to northern Namibia in 1948, in various rock art expeditions in central Namibia between 1947 and 1951 with the researchers Abbé Breuil and Mary Boyle, and in the so-called 3<sup>rd</sup> Kalahari expedition by the Harvard-based family of Lorna and Lawrence Marshall in 1953. She later joined her husband in a large-scale rock art documentation project under the auspices of the University of Cologne.

Ernst Rudolf Scherz (1906–1981), born in Klietow near Frankfurt (Oder) in Germany, was an analytical chemist who had emigrated to Namibia in late 1933 and became involved in the thriving Karakul industry, being the manager of the Karakul Board of SWA in Windhoek

---

2 The various finding aids and Working Papers on the BAB Scherz collections provide more detailed biographical and much more context information for some of the topics discussed here. See esp. Dag Henrichsen (comp.), *Registratur PA.4. Teilnachlass Ernst Rudolf und Anneliese Scherz im Personenarchiv der Basler Afrika Bibliographien*. Basel 1990; Heidi Brunner (comp.), *Registratur PA.4 Z. Ernst Rudolf und Anneliese Scherz. Die Akte „Boyle, Trianon, Abbé“*. *Felsbildforschung in Namibia und die Korrespondenz mit dem Abbé Breuil und Mary Boyle, 1947–1976*. Basel, 2016; Lisa Roulet, *Die Fotografin Anneliese Scherz und die „Marshall Expedition“ von 1953 in die Nyae Nyae Region/Kalahari. Anmerkungen zum Bildarchiv*. Basel, BAB Working Paper 2017:2; Isabelle Haffter, *Felsbildforschung in Namibia. Schrift- und Bilddokumente im Archiv von Anneliese und Ernst Rudolf Scherz, 1930–1980*. Basel, BAB Working Paper 2018:2.

between 1947 and 1963. Since the late 1930s he was regarded as Namibia's foremost rock art researcher. In the context of an extensive rock art documentation project by the University of Cologne, commencing in the early 1960s, he and his wife spent increasingly more time in West-Germany, relocating in the late 1970s to Hildesheim where both died shortly afterwards.

During their long residency in Windhoek, Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz travelled Namibia and much of southern Africa extensively and nurtured networks with local, regional and international researchers, in particular with anthropologists, archaeologists, geologists and linguists. Their vast personal archives of travel notes, correspondence, manuscripts and images reflect wide-ranging interests and engagements and are mainly housed at the BAB. Various previously published finding aids and Working Papers provide detailed descriptions of some of their (sub-) collections.<sup>3</sup> Their rock art documentation material can also be found at the Heinrich Barth Institute of the University of Cologne.

### **The 'Ethnographic Object Collection' of Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz**

We assume that the Scherz couple obtained most of the ethnographic objects themselves and during their extensive travels in and beyond Namibia between the mid-/late 1930s and the mid-/late 1970s, and kept them in their home in Windhoek. The collection and much of their archives were only transferred to West-Germany after the death of Ernst Rudolf Scherz in 1981 and after Anneliese Scherz had sorted and cleared out their Windhoek home in 1983.<sup>4</sup> During that time she had started to bequest parts of the photographic and paper archives to Carl Schlettwein in Basel, the founder of the BAB. After her death in 1985, all remaining collections including the 'ethnographic objects' were transferred to family members in southern Germany. Only in the mid-1990s did the larger photographic collection and additional paper documents enter the BAB archives whilst the family entrusted the 'ethnographica' to Daniela Schlettwein Gsell, a friend of Anneliese Scherz. She, in turn, deposited the objects with the BAB with the express request to showcase them (see Figure 1) in the early 2000s. They were only recently documented by Lisa Roulet and are currently conserved in a climate-controlled storage room.

---

3 Ibid.

4 As explained by Antje Otto, long-term curator of the 'ethnographic collections' at the National Museum of Namibia and a friend of Anneliese Scherz, in an interview with Dag Henrichsen, Susanne Hubler and Lisa Roulet, Windhoek, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.



Figure 1: The showcases with the ‘ethnographica’ housed at the BAB. Photo by Lisa Roulet

As with most ‘ethnographic collections’ originating from colonial times, their provenance but also their translocation histories remain in many ways obscure.<sup>5</sup> At a first glance, the artefacts obtained by the Scherz couple seem to have functioned as *memorabilia*, perhaps with reference to a particular journey, assignment or encounter. We gain a glimpse into their wide-ranging interests through Lorna Marshall, the Harvard-based anthropologist, who hired Anneliese Scherz as an expedition photographer in 1953 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kalahari expedition to north-eastern Namibia. Marshall noted in her diary:

Dr. and Mrs. Scherz are delightful people, full of enthusiasm for photographing and collecting. The only adverse aspect of such enthusiasm is that they burst at things and require us to follow after them. [...] At this point Dr. Scherz came in having collected a baobab fruit water bottle from /Ti!kay’s old skerm. I said we would take it back. There are many things left in the old skerm. !U’s bag, gift from the first trip, is hanging full of things—several ostrich egg shells. I explained we did not collect Bushman objects. Then Dr. Scherz showed us his lizards, which he sends alive to Europe. He is a great collector. He wants tins and pieces of screen for them, and boxes for beetles, and magazines for grass seeds, etc. etc.<sup>6</sup>

Evidently, the Scherz couple ‘collected everything’ and as such also, by whatever means, cultural artefacts. Their own research projects and those of the expeditions with which they en-

5 See, for example, the detailed ‘object’ histories in G. Grimme: *Provenienzforschung im Projekt ‘Schwieriges Erbe’*. *Zum Umgang mit kolonialzeitlichen Objekten in ethnologischen Museen*. Linden-Museum, Stuttgart, 2018. [https://www.lindenmuseum.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/SchwierigesErbe\\_Provenienzforschung\\_Abschlussbericht.pdf](https://www.lindenmuseum.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/SchwierigesErbe_Provenienzforschung_Abschlussbericht.pdf)

6 ‘Peabody Museum ID # 2003.36.4, Diaries and Logs of Lorna and Laurence Marshall, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Item: Diary Entry’, 434;436, 07.06.1953.

gaged but also those of their academic colleagues and friends took often place in the ‘Reserves’ where the colony’s African population was forced to live and maintain subsistence economies during the apartheid era. The Scherz couple often travelled to these areas and at times spent extended periods there. Many artefacts they collected could have originated from there. At the same time, the couple was well-connected within the wider German settler society. Ernst Rudolf Scherz was an active member of various organisations and official bodies which fostered settler museums, scientific societies and commissions for the preservation of monuments and heritage sites throughout the colony. These general frameworks of activities are relevant in order to contextualise their so-called ‘ethnographic object collection’.

Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz mention at times particular ‘acquisition’ transactions in their travel reports and we cite from these in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this Working Paper with regard to particular artefacts. Here, we provide examples from one of their reports and reference a 1957 tour to the modern-day Kavango region in northeastern Namibia. Also taking part in this tour were Oswin Köhler, at the time the so-called State Ethnologist of the colonial administration and a close friend of the Scherz couple, his family, his research assistant Levi Nganjone<sup>7</sup> as well as another photographer, Lieselotte Prozesky-Schulze, from West-Germany.<sup>8</sup> In the relevant travel report “Trip to the Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957”, E.R. Scherz mentions, for example, the following:

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July, travelling from Mupini to Bunja (Bunya) in western Kavango: “[A]long the way Chokwe offered us their wood carvings”.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, travelling from Tondero to Rundu, “we took photographs and bought interesting odds and ends”.

On 8<sup>th</sup> July, in Kapako: “Early in the morning we visited a homestead of the Chokwe and bought from their woodwork, mainly the beautifully carved stools. These stools with masks on the sides and numerous fine carvings are done by these people with only a small axe which they forge themselves. Even the most delicate details are carved with this tool.”<sup>9</sup>

On 10<sup>th</sup> July, the travel party stayed at a government camp apparently near Tamsu at the Omatako river to the south of the Okavango river:

---

7 On Levi Nganjone see Dag Henrichsen, Naomi Jacobson, K. Marshall (eds), *Israel Goldblatt. Building Bridges. Namibian Nationalists Clemens Kapuuo, Hosea Kutako, Brendan Simbwaye, Samuel Witbooi*. Basel, 2010, pp.22f.

8 For more on this see the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this Working Paper.

9 Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB) Personenarchiv (PA): BAB, PA.4, I.3.9. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz: 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1957: “am Weg boten uns Chokwe ihre Holzschnitzereien [an]” (p. 5); 7<sup>th</sup> July: “[Wir] machten Photos und kauften interessanten Kleinkram” (p. 9); 8<sup>th</sup> July: “Frueh besuchten wir ein Gehoeft der Chokwe und kaufen von ihren Holzarbeiten hauptsaechlich die schoen geschnitzten Hocker. Diese Hocker mit Masken an den Seiten und eine Fuelle noch feinerer Holzarbeiten machen diese Leute ausschliesslich mit einem kleinen Beil, das sie sich selbst schmieden. Selbst die feinsten Einzelheiten werden mit diesem Werkzeug gearbeitet.” (p. 10). The archives of the photographer Lieselotte Prozesky Schulze, who participated in the travel, includes images of, for example, the stools mentioned by E.R. Scherz see: PA. 155 III.1.3. For notes about these stools and for the image see: BAB, BPA.155.001.033/037.

In the evening a Diricu played for us masterfully on the tongue piano. On a board, which is placed on a head-sized pumpkin bowl for better resonance, iron tongues of different length and weight are attached in such a way that they can be plucked. This talented musician played with all ten fingers on his instrument, which we incorporated into Koehler's [Oswin Köhler's] collection after we had recorded the tuning of each individual note on tape.<sup>10</sup>

Despite their intense interests in documenting African life and histories, Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz seem, in general, to not have documented the histories of individual ethnographic objects. This allows us to talk of memorabilia when assessing the place and role(s) of the artefacts in their wider research endeavours. Being made into memorabilia implied the detachment from contexts of origin and usage as the artefacts moved from previous creators and owners to the Scherz domicile in the colony's capital, Windhoek.



Figure 2: Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz in their living room in 1976, photographer unknown.

10 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9. p. 12. From the report "Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957" by E.R. Scherz, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1957: "Am Abend spielte uns ein Diricu meisterhaft auf dem Zungenklavier. Auf einem Brett, das zur besseren Resonanz auf einer kopfgrossen Kuerbisschale steht, sind Eisenzungen verschiedener Laenge und Schwere so befestigt, dass man sie zupfen kann. Mit allen zehn Fingern spielte dieser begabte Musiker auf seinem Instrument, das wir, nachdem wir die Stimmung jedes einzelnen Tones auf Band festgelegt hatten, Koehlers Sammlung einverleibten." The Köhler collection is housed at the Oswin-Köhler-Archiv, Insitut für Afrikanistik, University of Frankfurt a.M., Germany. [https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/62950201/Oswin\\_K%C3%B6hler\\_Archive\\_\\_OKA](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/62950201/Oswin_K%C3%B6hler_Archive__OKA)

As memorabilia, the ‘objects’ potentially evoked (new) stories—perhaps stories of particular encounters or even acquisition transactions, and as such they probably generated new and emotive meanings for Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz, all of which got lost in the course of time.<sup>11</sup> Photographs of the private interior spaces in their Windhoek house shown here indicate that the artefacts, beyond their status as memorabilia, also functioned as *objects of décor*.



Figure 3: The Scherz’s living room



Figure 4: The Scherz’s living room with a wig on display

<sup>11</sup> Ernst Rudolf Scherz was well-known in settler circles for his stories, many of which he later wrote down. See Ernst Rudolf Scherz, *Südwesten Geschichten am Lagerfeuer erzählt*. Basel, 2005.

These images seem to reflect a careful display of specific ‘objects’, some of which can be identified in the ‘ethnographic collection’ now housed in Basel.<sup>12</sup> A close friend of the Scherz couple, Dr Sigrid Schmidt, remembered their homes in Windhoek and Hildesheim as follows:

The Scherz’s did not ‘exhibit’ objects [at home], all and everything formed an inherent part of their lives. Biedermeier furniture [from the 19<sup>th</sup> century], original paintings, ‘Ovambo junk’—all of which made up their living rooms. African necklaces hung at the windows, there was the tanned skin of a crocodile whose meat had once been served to them by Dr Maria Fisch [in the Kavango region]. In their Hildesheim home I remember objects which they had found on the flea markets or amongst household trash in the streets of West-Germany.<sup>13</sup>

With reference to all of this, the objects probably reverberated with various settler vocabularies and claims of difference and as such were also made into and regarded as ‘ethnographic objects’ of African material cultures. It should be remembered that the museums in Windhoek and Swakopmund were built at the same time and with the expressive purpose of ‘collecting ethnographica’ and documenting and showcasing ‘traditional native lifestyles’ for a ‘white’ apartheid society.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, Ernst Rudolf Scherz now and then acquired artefacts for or donated/sold objects to the Swakopmund Museum.<sup>15</sup> He often also acted as tour guide to the so-called Safaris of the SWA Arts Association or the SWA Scientific Society to the African ‘Reserves’ and ‘Homelands’ during which participants, all Europeans, ‘encountered African life’. During one of these safaris to the Kavango region and Köhler’s research camp in 1975, Scherz noted that the travel party (of 100 people) returned “heavily loaded with things which our guests had bought from the Okavango tribes, baskets and masks, stools and drums, souvenirs from a few unforgettable days.”<sup>16</sup> Scherz also gave regular public presentations for various audiences in Namibia on rock art and other historical topics, often accompanied by slide presentations. Many of his slides in the Scherz image archive label African people according to ethnic designations only.<sup>17</sup> A few of Anneliese Scherz’s African portrait photographs entered the Swakopmund museum whilst in the 1970s some of her portraits were used for an official stamp

---

12 See the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this Working Paper.

13 Sigrid Schmidt, pers. communication with Dag Henrichsen, 22<sup>nd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020: “Scherzens hatten nichts ‘ausgestellt’, es war alles, alles Teil von ihrem Leben. Wie gesagt, Biedermeiermöbel, Original-Gemälde, ‘Ovambomüll’—es war harmonisch Scherz’sches Wohnzimmer. Afrikanische Ketten hingen an den Fenstern, wo war die gegerbte Haut von dem Krokodil, das sie bei Dr Maria Fisch gegessen hatten? ... ich erinnere mich ..., dass sie [andere Objekte] in Westdeutschland auf dem Flohmarkt oder Sperrmüll entdeckt hatten.” Compare this description with the one by E.R. Scherz when the couple settled into a small flat in Cologne in 1977, in E.R. Scherz, *Südwestafrika. Jahresberichte 1962–1979 Namibia*. Basel, 2005, p. 127.

14 See, for example, Antje Otto, *From Landesmuseum to National Museum of Namibia. 100 years (1907–2007). A chronology of an African Museum*. Windhoek, 2007.

15 As suggested by Antje Otto in an interview with Dag Henrichsen, Susane Hubler and Lisa Roulet, Windhoek 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

16 E.R. Scherz (2005), op.cit, p. 115: “viel stärker belastet mit den Dingen, die unsere Gäste von den Okavangostämmen eingekauft hatten, Körbe und Masken, Hocker und Trommeln, Andenken an einige unvergessliche Tage”.

17 At times, places are added to particular images. Personal names, however, are virtually absent.

series on ‘traditional’ African life in the colony.<sup>18</sup> Again, personal details of any sort are usually absent from these images. All in all, the Scherz couple actively facilitated and engaged in these ventures of appropriating, re-creating, translocating and re-contextualising African artefacts and African knowledge.

Towards the end of their lives, the Scherz couple took the artefacts along to West-Germany, as such testifying to their continuous role as personal memorabilia. As far as we know, none of the ‘objects’ were donated to the museums or to Namibian friends in the wake of their relocation, in contrast to some photographs, papers and manuscripts.<sup>19</sup> Neither did Anneliese Scherz donate ‘objects’ to the BAB during her lifetime but rather started to transfer particular photographic collections to the BAB. In hindsight, it was fortunate that the artefacts were not entrusted to an ethnographic museum after Anneliese Scherz’s death and that Daniela Schlettwein Gsell entrusted the collection to the BAB as the main archives of all other Scherz collections.<sup>20</sup> As such, most of the Scherz collections, entangled as they are, continue to remain physically together and allow for a better understanding of the stages and processes of de- and re-contextualisation to which these collections were subjected to over the course of time. This is particularly relevant for the ‘ethnographic collection’ as this collection became a loose end of the wider Scherz archives in Basel, with little consideration of its relevance despite having been showcased in vitrines at the BAB for some time. This Working Paper is an attempt to rectify this and to shed light on yet another Scherz collection from and on Namibia.

### **‘Object’ Provenance and Photography**

The following documentation of the individual artefacts in the ‘ethnographic collection’ relies to some extent on the photographic archive of Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz. Her photography and image archive, in particular, can be regarded as a visual diary, especially as she rarely kept written records of her activities, unlike her husband.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, she kept larger numbers of (uncut) negative strips from her photographic ventures, even those which could be regarded as failed images. As such her photographic image archive provides a few and

---

18 On the circulation of Anneliese Scherz’s African portrait photography see esp. Lisa Roulet, “Khuan//a—The Framing/Making of an Iconic Portrait”. Unpublished MA-thesis, Department of History, University of Basel, 2020.

19 Interview with Antje Otto, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, op.cit. As far as we know, Ernst Rudolf Scherz donated some official correspondence to the Namibia Scientific Society (Windhoek) and various thematic correspondence to Namibian colleagues. For the latter see Katrin Müller, *Felsbildforschung und Forschungsnetzwerke in Namibia Anmerkungen zur Korrespondenz von Anneliese und Ernst Rudolf Scherz, 1960–1975*. Basel, BAB Working Paper 2017: 3.

20 Sigrid Schmidt remembered in 2020 that the Scherz family heirs did destroy various objects and discharged of all sorts of material when clearing the Hildesheim apartment in 1986. Pers. Communication with Dag Henriksen, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020.

21 The concept of Anneliese Scherz’s photographic archive as *visual diary* was developed for the BAB exhibition ‘*White Lady—Black Lady*’. *Rock art research and photography. Exhibition with photographs of Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz during the expeditions with Abbé Henri Breuil and Mary Boyle in Namibia, 1947–1950*. Basel June/July 2016, Windhoek, February 2017.

yet important insights into her collecting activities, both with reference to her camera and with reference to her and her husband's interests of 'taking objects home'. Indeed, both activities—searching for the photographic moment and/or documenting lifestyles and people photographically, as well as searching for material artefacts—relate to interests of capturing, appropriating and possessing, we would argue. For Anneliese Scherz, the camera was the means to capture particular moments and encounters with people<sup>22</sup> and bring home vast numbers of film roles which were processed into negative strips and individual photo prints and also, at times, arranged in photo albums. These visuals, together with any 'objects' collected simultaneously, were thus turned into personal memory collections; in a few instances, the arranged objects in their living rooms were, again, photographed.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 5: The Scherz's living room with a portrait of E.R. Scherz by Fritz Krampe.

22 Apart from Lisa Roulet's MA thesis (op.cit.) see also the assessment of parts of the Scherz image archive by Lorena Rizzo, *Photography and History in Colonial Southern Africa Shades of Empire*. Johannesburg, 2019, esp. Ch. 3: "Augenblicke", pp.110–157.

23 On 'ethnographic objects' in private settler spaces see also Christoph Rippe, "A Contamination of Provenance? The relevance of extended materialities to provenance research and restitution processes. Examples from the Linden-Museum Stuttgart". <https://blog.uni-koeln.de/gssc-humboldt/a-contamination-of-provenance-the-relevance-of-extended-materialities-to-provenance-research-and-restitution-processes-examples-from-the-linden-museum-stuttgart/>. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

In a rare written reflection, Anneliese Scherz stated, with reference to what she called her “be-loved African portrait photography”:

I took these pictures for my own pleasure, just as I imagined them. Nevertheless, they are anything but easy to make. The native, who can be so wonderfully relaxed and natural [sic.] in dealing with his peers, is another in the opposite direction [sic] of the white man. The task here is to make him forget that he is facing a different race.<sup>24</sup>

Anneliese Scherz’s photography, in particular, points to photographic encounters beyond the conventional settler camera gaze, and yet reproduces the racialising and colonial frame at large.<sup>25</sup> As the quotation makes clear, she regarded her African portrait photography in many ways as a personal encounter in a colonial—and gendered—context and as such did not attempt to exhibit much of her photographic work. The ‘ethnographic object collection’ seems to have complemented these personal encounters and acquired, it seems, an emotive space and meaning irrespective of any ‘ethnographic’ knowledge production.

On the other hand, ethnographers at the time did document ‘material cultures’ photographically and the Scherz couple, too, at times documented, for example, the utilisation of a particular object before ‘acquiring’ it. However, in contrast to professional ethnographers, more detailed written descriptions of such transactions and utilisations are usually absent in the Scherz archive. Thus, questions of why and how they negotiated these transactions, and to which ends, need to be raised but also why they at times did and, yet, mostly did not document such encounters?

One could argue that their haphazard photographic and object ‘acquisitions’ confirm the importance of memorabilia in their quest for ‘African cultural productions’. Memorabilia, thriving on ‘curiosity’,<sup>26</sup> imply the creation of a specific if not ‘special world’ for oneself. With reference to the Scherz couple, memorabilia allowed for the construction of a ‘special world’ within the settler society, as such also allowing the construction of social distinction, if not prestige, within the colonial elite. Ultimately, these memorabilia re-signified and re-enforced the couple’s professional status as photographers of African life, people and rock art within the confines of the settler society. All along, the African creators and owners of artefacts were erased and meanings of the encounters and of the artefacts themselves reframed.

For the purpose of this Working Paper we have decided not to reproduce those photographs in the Scherz archive which depict ‘people and objects’ as related to the artefacts housed today

---

24 BAB, PA.4. X II.1, Brief an das *Photo Magazin*, 08.05.1950. p. 2. Original in German: “Diese Bilder machte ich nur mir zu Freude, so wie ich sie mir dachte. Trotzdem sind sie alles andere als leicht zu machen. Der Eingeborene, der im Umgang mit Seinesgleichen so wunderbar ungezwungen und natuerlich [sic] sein kann, ist ein anderer in Gegenward [sic] des Weissen. Ihn vergessen zu lassen, dass ein Andersrassiger vor ihm steht, ist hier die Aufgabe.”

25 See the recent studies by Ulrike Kiessling, “‘Aber Portraits mussten gemacht werden...’. Brüche, Differenzen, Historizität. Fotografien der Anneliese Scherz im Kontext. Eine Intervention”. Unpublished MA-thesis, University of Basel, 2018; Lorena Rizzo (op.cit.); Lisa Roulet (op.cit.).

26 See J. Fabian, op.cit., p. 48.

at the BAB. We are aware of the fact that the photographic documentation features a much wider and complex process of colonial appropriation and re-contextualisation. Or, as Kokou Azamede reminds us: “Photographs from the colonial period are more than just illustrations”.<sup>27</sup>

Objectifications, the creation of difference, the erasure of people and contexts, the appropriation and reframing of meaning and re-creation of ‘African knowledge’ were essential foundations which underpinned the colonial world at large. We decided not to reproduce any related visual ‘illustrations’ and only publish those images which depict objects but not objectified people. Instead, we provide those readers interested in particular historical images relating to the artefacts with references from the BAB archives and suggest contacting us directly.

On the other hand, we did decide to cite extensively from the contemporary writings of the Scherz couple, arguably another archive of ‘illustrative’ colonial objectification. At this stage of writing we have not yet found a way to resolve this contradiction of selectively (re-) producing (colonial) objectifications.

### **Tentative Findings, Questions and Gaps**

In the following section we list a few findings, questions, and suggestions as to the provenance of some of the artefacts transpiring from the documentation of the individual ‘objects’:

1. The larger number of artefacts clearly originate from Namibia. However, artefacts from northern and north-eastern Namibia could also have originated from southern Angola, Zambia or Botswana as communities lived on both sides of the international borders.
2. A few artefacts can be traced to the participation of Anneliese Scherz in the so-called 3<sup>rd</sup> Marshall Kalahari expedition of 1953. She was hired as a photographer and stayed with the expedition members for a whole month, from June to July 1953. Ernst Rudolf Scherz accompanied her for the first few days. Whilst she kept a diary, there are no entries relating to any ‘object’ collecting. However, her photo archive provides clues as to the origins of some of artefacts, as indicated below.
3. Some artefacts apparently have been acquired in the Kavango area of north-eastern Namibia from the late 1950s onwards when the Scherz couple occasionally visited their friend, the Cologne-based linguist Oswin Köhler and his family at their research camp Dikundu south of Andara.<sup>28</sup>
4. Some of the artefacts which can be related to the wider Ovambo-region in northern Namibia/southern Angola could be associated with Anneliese Scherz’s participation as

27 Azamede, Kokou, “How to use Colonial Photography in Sub-Saharan Africa for Educational and Academic Purposes. The Case of Togo”. In: Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels (eds.): *Global Photographies*. Bielefeld 2018. p. 60 (57–68).

28 See, for example, BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9., Report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957”, and E.R. Scherz, *Jahresberichte*, op.cit., S. 89–90, 109–110, 113–115.

photographer in the so-called Loeb expedition of the University of California in 1948. Scherz stayed in Otjikango from 7. July to 1. August.

5. At least one arm ring relates to the Kwazulu/Natal area in South Africa, an region which the Scherz couple visited at least twice in the 1950s.

6. Given the fact that the Scherz's in a way 'collected everything' and moved house from one continent to the other, we can assume that the existing collection comprises, perhaps, only a part of a previously much wider collection.<sup>29</sup>

7. The Scherz archives does not provide any personal names or more detailed 'acquisition' information with regard to previous owners or creators/artists. This is typical of so-called 'ethnographic collections' which provide some and often doubtful information about the 'objects', some information about the 'collectors' and nothing about or even from their previous owners. In general, this is also typical for colonial photography archives. Whilst a few photographs in the Scherz archive might depict a previous owner or artist with an/the identical music instrument, bracelet or necklace, their histories remain completely obscure. As such, the artefacts and the (related) images remain broken fragments ('Bruchstücke') in the true sense of the word, and as such reverberate with rupture, erasure, loss of meaning and attachment.

8. Obviously, source communities would be able to narrate complementing, different, and/or new histories and narratives with regard to individual artefacts or even a larger collection, and any related images. They would be able to add different and new layers of meaning and attachment, and express other concerns than the ones raised here.<sup>30</sup> We would be eager to engage in such conversations.

9. A concern of particular relevance in our conversations with regard to the collection analysed here relates to the people depicted in the images who at times seem to have been the creators, owners and/or users and/or sellers of the objects. We for our part decided not to publish these images in order to not re-enforce the colonial notions of 'illustrations'. We hope that this Working Paper is a first step in a direction to foster and trace new conversations, people and families. We look forward to these conversations!

---

29 Sigrid Schmidt explained that she remembers a 'shrunken head' in the Scherz houses of Windhoek and Hildesheim, and also, that this particular object was discharged of by the Scherz family heirs after Anneliese Scherz's death. Pers. communication with Dag Henrichsen, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020.

30 A good example for the endeavour to rewrite 'ethnographic collections' is the recently published volume by Jeremy Silvester, *Stand Together = ||ha||xae = Ma|aos = G||a ||kae = Têê |xai = Dea |xae*. Windhoek (Museums Association of Namibia (MAN)), 2020.

## **Documentation**

On the following pages, the objects of the Scherz ethnographic collection are individually listed and very briefly described. Comments in the writings of Ernst Rudolf and Anneliese Scherz and other writers/travellers are quoted in such cases when the quote(s) enhances contexts. We point out that we do not analyse or comment the quotations as such and emphasise again that they reflect colonial language and labels, actions and assessments which we do not subscribe to. Any images depicting or relating to the objects at the time from various historical sources are listed here but are not reproduced, as explained in the introduction of this Working Paper.

## Bracelets



Figure 6: Arm bracelets, made of fruit (“lucky beans”, *Abrus precatorius* subsp. *Africanus*)



Figure 7: Arm bracelets, made of metal<sup>31</sup>

31 Compare these metal bracelets with one bracelet shown in: Jeremy Silvester, *Stand Together* = ||*ha*||*xae* = *Ma|aos* = *G||a* ||*kae* = *Têê* |*xai* = *Dea* |*xae*. Windhoek (Museums Association of Namibia (MAN)), 2020, p. 38.



Figure 8: Arm bracelets, made of straw

### Historical Comments:

Ernst Rudolf and Anneliese Scherz refer in various manuscripts and publications to jewellery they acquired for museums or for themselves:

*With reference to Namibia:*

**1957:** From a travel report “Trip to the *Okavango* 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz:

In the morning [of the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1957] we travel to a bushman camp [apparently a government camp near Tamsu] deep in the forest, talked with the many inhabitants who could not understand a word of our language, took photos from these adorable models and bought various household items and jewellery for us and the museums.<sup>32</sup>

**1940s/1950s:** In an undated report on a travel in “Ovamboland” from the 1940s or 1950s, the author (possibly A. Scherz) wrote:

The women of the chiefs also wear an apron made from giraffe stomach. On a hanging leather strap[,] they wear beautifully carved, thick ivory buttons, wide copper rings around the ankles, iron bracelets, artfully forged, and necklaces from pearls.<sup>33</sup>

32 BAB, PA.4, I.3.9. p. 11. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, 10. Juli 1957: “Vormittags fuhren wir zu einem Buschmannkamp, tief im Wald, schwatzten mit den vielen Bewohnern, die kein Wort unserer Sprache verstanden, machten Photos von diesen hinreissenden Modellen und kauften manchen Hausrat und Schmuck fuer uns und die Museen.” The travel party consisted, as far as we know, of the so-called state ethnologist of the colonial administration, Oswin Köhler and his wife and daughter, Köhler’s assistant Levi Nganjone, and, besides E.R. and A. Scherz, their guest from West-Germany, the photographer Lieselotte Prozesky-Schulte. See also the reference No. BAB, PA.155.

33 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.12. p. 5: Undated, untitled report on a travel/stay in BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.12. p. 5: Undated, untitled report on a travel/stay in “Ovamboland”, probably written by A. Scherz: “Die Frauen der Häuptlinge tra-

**1981:** E.R. and A. Scherz, together with Gabriel Taapopi and Antje Otto, published numerous historical photographs in the book *Hair-Styles, Head-Dress and Ornaments in South West Africa/Namibia and Southern Angola*, and included comments such as the following: “Copper and grass bangles were formerly very popular and are still worn today.”<sup>34</sup>

*With reference to South Africa:*

**1955:** The Scherz couple bought necklaces and bracelets twice in Durban, South Africa. On the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1955 they visited the “native market” in central Durban:

The native market is more interesting. [...] The salespeople—Zulus—sit in their stalls and work on their products [...] necklaces, bracelets, pots, mats. All much cheaper than the same products in town, and more amusing, too. Here the buyers are actually only natives who buy their jewellery for their tribal dances. Europeans hardly come. [...] We buy a lot of necklaces and bracelets.

On 17<sup>th</sup> December: “Native market: We buy bracelets and necklaces”<sup>35</sup>

**1958:** E.R. Scherz notes with respect to the “native market” in Durban: “Here the Zulus buy their dance jewellery in special stalls. We did the same and hope to please some European hearts with this rich purchase.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Historical Images:**

The Scherz image collection contains various pictures showing people wearing bracelets. While some of the images might be regarded as portrait photography, others clearly focus on the jewellery, e.g. by showing only arms or feet of people wearing bracelets. One picture<sup>37</sup> shows the hands and arms of an unknown woman wearing bracelets, some of which resemble those in our collection.

---

gen ausserdem einen Schurz aus Giraffenmagen. An einem herabhaengenden Lederriemen tragen sie schoen geschnitzte, dicke Elfenbeinknoepfe, breite Kupferringe um die Knoechel, eiserne Armbaender, kunstvoll geschmiedet, und Halsketten aus Perlen.”

34 Scherz, Anneliese; Scherz, Ernst Rudolf; Taapopi, G.; Otto, Antje: *Frisuren, Kopfbedeckungen und Schmuck in Südwestafrika/Namibia und Südafrika = Hair-Styles, Head-Dress and Ornaments in South West Africa/Namibia and Southern Angola = Haarstyle, hooftooisels en ornamente in Suidwes-Afrika/Namibië en Suidlike Angola*. Windhoek 1981. p. 22.

35 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.8. p. 8. From the diary of E.R. Scherz: “Mit der Bloemfontein nach Beira und Zurueck”, 24. Nov–31. Dec 1955: “Der Eingeborenenmarkt ist viel interessanter. [...] Die Verkaeuer—Zulus—sitzen in ihren Keafterchen und arbeiten an ihrer Ware. [...] Ketten, Armbaender, Toepfe, Matten. Alles zu einem Bruchteil des Preises dieser Sachen in der Stadt und amuesanter dazu. Kaeufer sind hier eigentlich nur Eingeborene, die hier ihren Schmuck fuer ihre Stammestaenze kaufen. Europaer kommen wohl kaum her. [...] Wir kaufen eine Menge Ketten und Armbaender.” On 17<sup>th</sup> December (p. 16): “Eingeborenenmarkt: Wir kaufen Armbaender und Ketten”.

36 BAB, PA.4 I. A.3.10. p. 12. From the diary of E.R. Scherz: “Reise in die suedafrikanische Union 1958”, 20<sup>th</sup> October: “Hier kaufen die Zulus ihren Tanzschmuck in besonderen Buden. Wir taten es ihnen nach und hoffen, mit dem reichen Einkauf manches Europaeerherz zu erfreuen.”

37 BAB, S104\_32, with the original legend: “Bergdama”, “343, 1974–8”.

## Car



Figure 9: Vehicle, made of wood and string

### Historical Comments:

**1961:** With reference to a travel to the Kalahari area (in 1961), E.R. Scherz published an essay “Paradies der Buschmannkinder” [“Paradise of the Bushman children”] and writes about children of “Kung-Buschleute” [!Kung San] at an unidentified pan in eastern Namibia and who played with self-carved wooden cars:

We were very surprised when one day the lads carved cars from soft roots. A hand-long piece forms the chassis and two wheels sit on two thin car axes. The first wheels which a bushman ever made. They gave me one as a present and it now stands as a memory token in my cupboard. It is strange that they do not pull the car with a tendon string as our children do. They would not have seen a car having been pulled. They stick a cane in an angular way into the body of the car and push it in front of them.<sup>38</sup>

### Historical Images:

See Figure 3 with the car on top of the book cupboard in the Scherz’s Windhoek living room. Another picture depicts two boys playing with a wooden car, similar to the one in the ‘ethnographic collection’.<sup>39</sup>

38 BAB, PA.4 III.A 1.4, p.3. Untitled manuscript dated 20.7.1961: “Sehr erstaunt sind wir, als die Jungens eines Tages aus weichen Wurzeln Autos schnitzten. Ein handlanges Stueck ist der Wagen und an zwei duennen Achsen sitzen Scheibenraeder. Die ersten Rader wohl, die je ein Buschmann machte. Sie schenkten mir eins und es steht als Erinnerung in meinem Schrank. Seltsam ist, dass sie das Auto nicht an einem Sehnenfaden ziehen, wie unsere Kinder das tun. Sie haben doch nie einen gezogenen Wagen gesehen. Sie stecken eine Gerte schraeg von hinten in den Autokoerper und schieben den Wagen vor sich her.” The manuscript was published by E.R. Scherz as “Paradies der Buschmannkinder” in *Der Kreis* (Windhoek), 1962, 5/6, pp. 150–2.

39 BAB, S093\_125 & \_192, with the original legends: “Mukuschu-Kinder, 1971”.

## Mortar



Figure 10: Mortar, made of wood

### Historical Comments:

**1953 [?]:** A. Scherz wrote in her travel report “To the Bushmen in the Kau-Kau field” in north-eastern Namibia:

At the waterhole Karakuwisa [...] we meet the first people after a long journey [...] They are Okawangos, relatives of the Ovambos. Beautifully woven baskets and carved corn mortars have to be photographed of course, but especially the hairstyles of the women. They roll their frizzy hair into laces that run parallel from the parting to the hairline, where they unite to form a thick ring. The head seems to be covered with a fine braid.<sup>40</sup>

**1940s/1950s:** In an undated report on a travel in “Ovamboland” from the 1940s or 1950s, the author (possibly A. Scherz) wrote:

In one corner of the kraal, the young girls stand and pound the grain with long, powerful sticks, which are weighted down by a wooden block on top. The grain is in wooden mortars, which are embedded in a smooth clay threshing floor.<sup>41</sup>

### Historical Images:

In the Scherz photo collection are many images with different mortars; often various scenes of everyday life are recorded and as such also the usage of mortars.

40 BAB, PA.4 IA 3.13. p. 2. Undated manuscript “Zu den Buschleuten im Kau-Kau-Feld”: “An der Wasserstelle Karakuwisa [...] treffen wir die ersten Menschen nach langer Fahrt [...] Es sind Okawangos, Verwandte der Ovambos. Schoen geflochtene Koebe und geschnittzte Kornmoeser muessen natuerlich fotografiert werden, besonders aber die Haartrachten der Frauen. Sie rollen ihr Kraeuselhaar zu Schnueren, die parallel vom Scheitel zum Haaransatz gehen, wo sie sich zu einem dicken Ringwulst vereinigen. So scheint der Kopf wie mit einem feinen Geflecht ueberzogen.”

41 BAB, PA.4 IA.3.12. p. 5. Undated, untitled report on a travel/stay in “Ovamboland”, probably written by A. Scherz: “In einer Ecke des Kraales stehen die jungen Maedchen und stampfen das Korn mit langen kraeftigen Stangen, die oben ein Holzklotz beschwert. Das Korn ist in Holzmoesern, die in eine glatte Lehmtenne eingelassen sind.”

## Spearhead



Figure 11: Spearhead, made of metal

### Historical Comments:

Whilst we could not trace any comments in the Scherz archives with reference to a metal spearhead, the following quotations from the travel report “Trip to the *Okavango* 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz refer to the general acquisition interests of the Scherz couple:

Travelling from Mupini to Bunja (Bunya) in western Kavango on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Scherz writes: “[A]long the way Chokwe offered us their wood carvings”. On the 7<sup>th</sup> July and travelling from Tondero to Rundu, “we took photographs and bought interesting odds and ends”.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> July in Kapako:

Early in the morning we visited a homestead of the Chokwe and bought from their wood work, mainly the beautifully carved stools. These stools with masks on the sides and numerous fine carvings are done by these people with only a small axe which they forge themselves. Even the most delicate details are carved with this tool.<sup>42</sup>

### Historical Images:

Photos of the Scherz’s living room in Windhoek show the display of a spear in their home. One image shows Anneliese and Ernst Rudolf Scherz sitting on the sofa and the wall behind them shows images and straw objects. On the left side of the picture, one can see a spear which might be the one in the ‘ethnographic collection’.<sup>43</sup>

42 BAB, PA.4, I.3.9. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz: 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1957: “am Weg boten uns Chokwe ihre Holzschnitzereien [an]” (p. 5); 7<sup>th</sup> July: “[Wir] machten Photos und kauften interessanten Kleinkram” (p. 9); 8<sup>th</sup> July: “Frueh besuchten wir ein Gehoeft der Chokwe und kaufen von ihren Holzarbeiten hauptsaechlich die schoen geschnitzten Hocker. Diese Hocker mit Masken an den Seiten und eine Fuelle noch feinerer Holzarbeiten machen diese Leute ausschliesslich mit einem kleinen Beil, das sie sich selbst schmieden. Selbst die feinsten Einzelheiten werden mit diesem Werkzeug gearbeitet” (p.10).

43 See Figure 2 on p. 6 of this paper.

## Ostrich Eggs



Figure 12: Two ostrich eggs. San people used ostrich eggs as drinking vessels and water tanks whilst the egg shells were used to make jewellery.

### Historical Comments:

**1953[?]:** A. Scherz wrote in her travel report “To the Bushmen in the Kau-Kau field” in north-eastern Namibia:

Ostrich egg shells, which are only opened at one end, serve as water bottles. In nets, which they knot from leather strips, they are carried to the water, which is a few hundred meters away from their hut. The eggs are filled using turtle shells, the opening is closed with a grass plug and the eggs are placed back into the net. The female then drags up to twenty eggs back to her hut.<sup>44</sup>

### Historical Images:

Ostrich eggs feature in numerous photographs by Anneliese Scherz. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marshall-Kalahari expedition she took several series of pictures centring around the use of ostrich eggs by San people. These include, amongst others, scenes of San people carrying their eggs to a water hole with nets, filling them with water and then carrying them back again as well as various pictures of children drinking from the eggs.

<sup>44</sup> BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.13, p. 8–9. Undated manuscript “Zu den Buschleuten im Kau-Kau-Feld”: “Strausseneierschalen, die immer nur an einem Ende geoeffnet werden, dienen ihnen als Wasserflaschen. In Netzen, die sie aus Lederstreifen knuepfen, werden sie zum Wasser getragen, das ein paar hundert Meter entfernt von ihrer Werft liegt. Mit Schildkroetenschalen werden die Eier gefueellt, die Oeffnung mit einem Graspfropfen verschlossen und die Eier wieder im Netz untergebracht. Bis zu zwanzig Eier schleppt dann das Weib zu ihrer Huette zurueck.”

## Apron



Figure 13: Apron, made of leather skin with beads and cartridge cases

### **Historical Comments:**

Similar skins are illustrated in a photography book by Alice Mertens (1915–2001), a Namibian-born photographer, and are also currently exhibited in the Owela Museum in Windhoek in the so-called “San section”.<sup>45</sup> In both cases it is stated that the objects are aprons decorated with glass beads and cartridge cases.

### **Historical Images:**

The Scherz image archives contains many photographs which depict people in so-called traditional dresses.

---

45 See: Alice Mertens, *Kavango. South West Africa*. Cape Town, 1974, image 57a/b/c; Alice Mertens, *South West Africa and Its Indigenous Peoples*. London 1966, image 57. Owela Museum, Windhoek, caption: Beaded back apron worn by Khwe women during dance-performances, obtained 1970 (Collection: National Museum of Namibia).

**Figurines**



Figures 14, 15 and 16: Figurines, made of corncob with decorations made of textile and beads. Figure 14 has the shelfmark BAB.S96\_262.

The anthropologist and archivist of the Oswin Köhler Archives (Frankfurt), Gertrud Boden, points out that such figurines are made from either maize or millet cobs whilst the hairstyles and eyes are made from honey wax.<sup>46</sup>

### **Historical Comments:**

A caption on a slide in the Scherz image archive depicting similar figurines reads “Buschmann Püppchen” (“Bushmen dolls”).

In 1974, the Swiss journalist Hans Jenny visited Oswin Köhler’s research camp (established in 1968) near Dikundu in the Okavango Region. Köhler was the former state ethnologist and, since the 1960s, professor of African linguistics in Cologne. He, in particular, documented the culture of the Kxóé San. During his visit, Jenny documented similar “dolls” in a film<sup>47</sup> and also in his illustrated article “Kavango—Verlorenes Paradies” (“Kavango—lost paradise”). A caption of one illustration reads: “In the camp of Prof. Köhler near Dikundu bushmen offered us small dolls formed from honey wax.”<sup>48</sup> The Scherz couple visited the research camp of Köhler several times.<sup>49</sup>

### **Historical Images:**

The slides show various figurines placed side by side, resembling the figurines in the collection.<sup>50</sup>

---

46 G. Boden, email to Lisa Roulet, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

47 See BAB. FPA.25\_003, min: 00:13:36.

48 Hans R. Jenny, *Kavango—Verlorenes Paradies?* In *Afrikanischer Heimatkalender* (Windhoek), pp. 175–184. The illustration on p. 179 reads: “Im Lager von Prof. Köhler bei Dikundu boten uns die Buschmänner kleine Bienenwachs geformte Puppen an.” Jenny arrived in Dikundu on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1974. For more images see also BAB, BPA.25\_111\_028/029.

49 See, for example, E.R. Scherz, *Südwestafrika. Jahresberichte 1962–1979 Namibia*. Basel, 2005, pp. 89–90, 109–110, 113–115.

50 See the slides in BAB, S09\_262 and 266. The arrangement of the figurines might possibly have taken place in the Windhoek garden of Scherz couple.

## //Gwashi



Figures 17 and 18: Music instrument, made of wood, with strings. The //gwashi in Figure 17 is decorated with carvings (ornaments and animals).

The //gwashee is a traditional San instrument carved from Mangetti wood, with four or five strings attached.<sup>51</sup>

### Historical Comments:

**1957:** E.R. Scherz mentions the instrument in his travel report “Trip to the *Okavango* 29.6.–22.7.1957”. With reference to a camp near Tamsu, he states:

In the evening the Bushmen came to dance and sing. Solo recordings of the music they play on their so-called Bushman piano were also recorded. It is a string instrument shaped like a big wooden shoe with five strings to pluck.<sup>52</sup>

**1961:** With reference to a travel to the Kalahari area (in 1961[?]), E.R. Scherz published an essay “Paradies der Buschmannkinder” (“Paradise of the Bushman children”) and writes about children of “Kung-Buschleute” (!Kung San) at an unidentified pan with water in eastern Namibia:

One sees boys and girls together very often. [...] When they play their musical instrument at the fire with the adults and hum softly to it, it goes from hand to hand between boys and girls. It is a strange instrument. A resonating body like a big wooden shoe. Five wooden rods bent upwards stretch the five strings due to their elasticity. They are inserted into the narrow side of the body. The ends of the strings are attached to the other side of the instrument. The instrument gives very quiet, delicate sounds that can only be heard close up. Strangely enough, it was considered indecent for a girl to use the middle string. It is the male string.<sup>53</sup>

### Historical Images:

There are many pictures of San people playing the //gwashee instrument taken by Anneliese Scherz at different occasions. Most of the pictures were taken during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marshall-Kalahari expedition.<sup>54</sup>

---

51 See Lorna Marshall, *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press), 1976, p. 371.

52 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9. p. 11. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz: “Abends kamen die Buschleute zu Tanz und Gesang. Auch Soloaufnahmen der Musik, die sie auf ihrem sogenannten Buschmannklavier machen, kamen aufs Band. Es ist ein Saiteninstrument wie ein grosser Holzschuh geformt mit fuenf Saiten zum Zupfen.”

53 BAB, PA.4 III.A.1.4. p. 3. Untitled manuscript dated 20.7.1961: “Jungen und Maedchen sieht man ueberhaupt oft beieinander. [...] Wenn sie am Feuer bei den Erwachsenen auf ihrem Musikinstrument spielen und dazu leise summend singen, geht es zwischen Jungen und Maedchen von Hand zu Hand. Es ist ein seltsames Instrument. Ein Resonanzkoerper wie ein grosser Holzschuh. Fuenf nach oben gebogene Holzruten spannen durch ihre Elastizitaet die fuenf Saiten. Sie sind in die eine Schmalseite des Koerpers eingefuegt. Die Enden der Saiten sind an der anderen Schmalseite befestigt. Das Instrument gibt sehr leise, delikate Toene, die man nur in der Naehoe hoert. Seltsamerweise gilt es fuer ein Maechen als indezent, die mittlere Saite zu benutzen. Es ist die Maennersaite.” See also the published article by E.R. Scherz, “Paradies der Buschmannkinder” in *Der Kreis* (Windhoek), 1962, 5/6, pp. 150–2.

54 As an example of one of these photos from the Marshall-collection taken by Anneliese Scherz, see the discussion by Lisa Roulet, “Khuan//a. The Making/Framing of an Iconic Portrait”. Unpublished MA thesis, Department of History, University of Basel, 2020, esp. Ch. 4. The discussion focuses on an image depicting a young

The //gwashi with animal carvings features on a photograph which cannot be dated.<sup>55</sup> It shows the //gwashi being played by an unknown person. The instrument features prominently in the image which otherwise only shows the hands, legs and arms of the person. The same //gwashi was displayed on top of a vitrine in the Scherz living room, next to other objects from their ‘ethnographic collection’.<sup>56</sup>

## Necklace



Figure 19: Necklace, made of skin and metal

In a recent exhibition catalogue, “Art in Namibia”, such a necklace is regarded as being worn by men, made of iron beads and cartilage of calf ears, attached to a leather strap.<sup>57</sup>

---

woman named Khuan//a who plays such a //gwashi. The thesis narrates the story of the woman and also deals with the circulation history of her image which not only circulated as a photograph but even became a model for a stamp.

55 See: BAB, S086\_023.

56 See Figure 4 of the Scherz living room.

57 Antje Otto (ed.), *Art in Namibia. Exhibition presented by the Bureau of Student Affairs*. Windhoek, State Museum, n.d.

### Historical Images:

A positive in a Scherz photo album, entitled “Kaokofeld” (c. 1960), shows a portrait of a man wearing the same necklace as the one in the collection. The caption reads: “Ovahimba men with necklace” (“Ovahimbamänner mit Halsschmuck”).<sup>58</sup>

### Necklace



Figure 20: Necklace, made of orange and white beads. We assume that the necklace originates from Durban, South Africa.

### Historical comments:

**1955:** The Scherz couple bought necklaces and bracelets twice in Durban, South Africa. On 6 December 1955 they visited the “native market” in central Durban:

The native market is more interesting. [...] The salespeople – Zulus – sit in their stalls and work on their products [...] necklaces, bracelets, pots, mats. All much cheaper than the same products in town, and more amusing, too. Here the buyers are actually only natives who buy their jewellery for their tribal dances. Europeans hardly come. [...] We buy a lot of necklaces and bracelets.

On 17 December: “Native market: We buy bracelets and necklaces.”<sup>59</sup>

58 BAB, S040, p. 99 and S040\_page116\_1.

59 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.8. p. 8. From the diary of E.R. Scherz: “Mit der Bloemfontein nach Beira und Zurueck”, 24. Nov–31.Dec 1955: “Der Eingeborenenmarkt ist viel interessanter. ... Die Verkaeuffer – Zulus – sitzen in ihren Keafterchen und arbeiten an ihrer Ware. ... Ketten, Armbaender, Toepfe, Matten. Alles zu einem Bruchteil des Preises dieser Sachen in der Stadt und amuesanter dazu. Kaeufer sind hier eigentlich nur Eingeborene, die hier ihren Schmuck fuer ihre Stammestaenze kaufen. Europaer kommen wohl kaum her. ... Wir kaufen eine Menge Ketten und Armbaender.” On 17 December (p. 16): “Eingeborenenmarkt: Wir kaufen Armbaender und Ketten.”

**1958:** E.R. Scherz notes for the “native market” in Durban: “Here the Zulus buy their dance jewellery in special stalls. We did the same and hope to please some European hearts with this rich purchase.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Historical Images:**

A slide probably taken by Anneliese Scherz shows a woman with a naked torso sitting behind a kind of stand and selling jewellery. Behind her, one can see decorated houses. The slide inscription reads: “394 Manoché”.<sup>61</sup>

### **Head Rest**



Figure 21: Head rest, made of wood

Such head rests were and are used in many parts of southern Africa.

---

60 BAB, PA.4 I. A.3.10. p. 12. From the diary of E.R Scherz: “Reise in die suedafrikanische Union 1958”, 20. October: “Hier kaufen die Zulus ihren Tanzschmuck in besonderen Buden. Wir taten es ihnen nach und hoffen, mit dem reichen Einkauf manches Europaeerherz zu erfreuen.”

61 See BAB S096\_129.

## Basket



Figure 22: Basket, probably made of grass

Baskets have been and are being widely used.

### Historical Comments:

**1948:** In 1948, Anneliese Scherz joined the so-called Loeb expedition of the University of California to northern Namibia as a photographer and stayed for three weeks. In her diary, she recounts the following:

At the farewell on Sunday in the camp, Ifflund ties a glass bead necklace around me, one like the Ovambos love with a very nice button. Koch gives me a wonderful old port, which will be served on August 11<sup>th</sup>, Ella-Marie [Loeb] a wonderful calabash, a basket and a wonderful dress basket [sic] she made for Henno [Martin] and me.<sup>62</sup>

**1940s/1950s:** In an undated report on a travel in “Ovamboland” from the 1940s or 1950s, the author (possibly A. Scherz) wrote: “Meanwhile, mother is busy weaving a basket. Her naked toes skilfully hold the material that her hands artistically are working with.”<sup>63</sup>

### Historical Images:

There are numerous photographs in which the Scherz’s captured different baskets.

62 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.4. p.10. Original in German: “Beim Abschied im Kamp bindet mir Ifflund eine Glasperlenkette um, wie sie die Ovambos lieben mit einem sehr schoenen Knopf. Koch schenkt mir einen herrlichen alten Port, den es am 11. August gibt, Ella-Marie eine wunderbare Kalabasse, einen Korb und einen herrlichen Dresskorb [sic] hat sie fuer Henno und mich gemacht.”

63 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.12. p. 5: Undated, untitled report on a travel/stay in “Ovamboland”, probably written by A. Scherz: Original in German: “Mutter ist waehrenddessen beschaeftigt, einen Korb zu flechten. Geschickt halten dabei ihre nackten Zehen das Material, das ihre Haende kunstvoll verarbeiten.”

**Headpiece/Wig**



Figures 23 and 24: Headpiece/Wig

According to the anthropologist Gordon Gibson and with reference to the Kavango region in the Namibian-Angolan border region, beads and “fibers from the roots of the *moshosh* bush are twisted into strands called *yih*o to be braided into the hair of women or into wigs.”<sup>64</sup>

### Historical Comments:

**1950(?):** A. Scherz wrote in her travel report “To the Bushmen in the Kau-Kau field” in north-eastern Namibia:

At the waterhole Karakuwisa [...] we meet the first people after a long journey [...] They are Okawangos, relatives of the Ovambos. Beautifully woven baskets and carved corn mortars have to be photographed of course, but especially the hairstyles of the women. They roll their frizzy hair into laces that run parallel from the parting to the hairline, where they unite to form a thick ring. The head seems to be covered with a fine braid.<sup>65</sup>

**1957:** Another possible ‘acquisition’ context could relate to a trip in 1957, when the Scherz couple and the photographer Lieselotte Prozesky-Schulze travelled to the catholic mission station in Andara at the Okavango river.<sup>66</sup> Prozesky-Schulze portrayed a woman wearing a very elaborate and richly decorated wig.<sup>67</sup> Very similar images depicting a woman with a wig in the Scherz archive could relate to the Prozesky-Schulze images.<sup>68</sup>

**1981:** E.R. and A. Scherz, together with Gabriel Taapopi and Antje Otto, published numerous historical photographs in the book “Hair-Styles, Head-Dress and Ornaments in South West Africa/Namibia and Southern Angola”, and included the following comment:

Thihukeka hairstyle; Mbukushu. The headdress of the adult woman consisted of a number of thin plaits made of sisal fibres (*yih*o) and a thick fibre plait (*dimburunda*) fastened on the top of the head. A mixture called *munde*, made of sweet smelling [sic] grass, finely crushed pieces of wood from the *mupurara* tree (*Peltophorum africanum*) and fat, was rubbed onto the head until a doughy layer was formed. The hair was combined with sisal fibres to form long thin plaits that often hung down to the hips, and were also impregnated with fat (Van Tonder 1966). Two or three beads

64 Gordon D. Gibson et. al: *The Kavango Peoples*. Wiesbaden (Studien zur Kulturkunde Bd. 56), 1981, p. 223.

65 BAB, PA.4 I A 3.13. p. 2–3. Undated manuscript “Zu den Buschleuten im Kau-Kau-Feld”: “An der Wasserstelle Karakuwisa [...] treffen wir die ersten Menschen nach langer Fahrt [...] Es sind Okawangos, Verwandte der Ovambos. Schoen geflochtene Koerbe und geschnitzte Kornmoerser muessen natuerlich fotografiert werden, besonders aber die Haartrachten der Frauen. Sie rollen ihr Kraeuselhaar zu Schnueren, die parallel vom Scheitel zum Haaransatz gehen, wo sie sich zu einem dicken Ringwulst vereinigen. So scheint der Kopf wie mit einem feinen Geflecht ueberzogen.”

66 See: BAB, PA.4, I.3.9. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, for details on this travel.

67 See BAB, BPA.155.001.007 d (contact sheet) and BPA.155\_005\_001\_004 (positive).

68 The Scherz images were published on the cover and on p. 80 of the book by Annelise Scherz, Ernst Rudolf Scherz, Gabriel Taapopi and Antje Otto, *Frisuren, Kopfbedeckungen und Schmuck in Südwestafrika/Namibia und Südafrika = Hair-Styles, Head-Dress and Ornaments in South West Africa/Namibia and Southern Angola = Haarstyle, hooftooisels en ornamente in Suidwes-Afrika/Namibië en Suidlike Angola*. Windhoek, 1981.

were fastened to the tips of the plaits; these were formerly obtained from Mbundu traders in Angola. Apart from beads, Cowrie shells, known as *mbamba*, were also worn in the hair [...]. These shells symbolized fertility. The *dimburunda* plait was fastened to the back of the head. Copper buttons [...] were worn above the forehead by married women. They were originally obtained from Botswana and came from old military coats. These buttons were a status symbol and showed that the woman came from a well-to-do family and had children (Van Tonder 1966). Valuable *mpande* buttons made of shells, were often worn on the forehead [...]. Today these buttons are often made of synthetic materials.<sup>69</sup>

Sigrid Schmidt, a friend of the Scherz couple, remembered in 2020 that the wig in the Scherz collection was displayed in their homes in Windhoek (until the late 1970s) and also in Hildesheim (late 1970s to 1985).<sup>70</sup>

**Since the 1950s:** Maria Fisch, a medical doctor and anthropologist working at the Catholic mission station of Shambyu in the Kavango region since the mid-/late 1950s mentions wigs and provides hints to the historical context of hairstyles and the use of wigs in the colonial missionary context of northern Namibia:

The mission fought a decade-long battle against the physical uncleanliness and hairstyles of the girls and women called *vihoho*. The Kavango women loved to weave long artificial braids of sisal and bast into the natural hair and to apply bulge-like thickenings to the forehead. This hairstyle was often imaginatively decorated with pearls and had nothing to do with ethics. [...] It was impossible to employ women and girls with *vihoho* in the household, to take them into dormitories or to put them in a hospital bed. [...] At a district conference in 1939, the missionaries unanimously decided to oblige all women to cut hair before admission to baptism and all girls to cut hair before admission to dormitories. [...] The cutting of the hair became symbolic and symbolized the break with the old tradition.<sup>71</sup>

**1984:** The former curator of the Owela Museum in Windhoek, Antje Otto, remembered in 2018 that she and Maria Fisch visited “a last Gciriku woman still carrying/wearing a wig“ in 1984, similar to the one in the Scherz collection. She recalled that she was told by Fisch that “women came with headdresses into the infirmary but given the white linen this was unthinkable, so they

---

69 Ibid, p. 21–22.

70 S. Schmidt in an e-mail to Dag Henrichsen, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.

71 Maria Fisch, *Shambyu. 75 Jahre Missionsgeschichte am Kavango im Fokus politischer und sozialer Entwicklung*. Windhoek 2009. p. 59. Original in German: “Einen Jahrzehnten langen Kampf führte die Mission gegen die körperliche Unsauberkeit und die Frisuren der Mädchen und Frauen, die *vihoho* genannt wurden. Die Kavangofrauen liebten es, in das Naturhaar lange künstliche Zöpfe aus Sisal und Bast einzuflechten und auf dem Vorderkopf wulstartige Verdickungen anzubringen. Diese Frisur war oft fantasievoll mit Perlen verziert und hatte nichts mit Ethik zu tun. [...] Es war unmöglich, Frauen und Mädchen mit *vihoho* im Haushalt zu beschäftigen, sie ins Heim aufzunehmen oder in ein Hospitalbett zu legen. [...] Auf einer Distriktkonferenz beschlossen die Missionare 1939 einstimmig, alle Frauen vor der Zulassung zur Taufe und alle Mädchen vor der Aufnahme ins Heim zum Schneiden der Haare zu verpflichten. [...] Das Schneiden der Haare erhielt Symbolwert und versinnbildlichte den Bruch mit der alten Tradition.“

first had to be shaved. I said to her but then you destroy everything. ... The women thus wore increasingly wigs ... which are not made from hair but from a root of the *mukenges*.<sup>72</sup>

### Historical Images:

There are several photos of the hairstyles/wigs mentioned here. For example, the cover of the book “Hairstyles, Headgear and Jewellery” shows a woman wearing such a hairstyle.<sup>73</sup> Various photographs of the Scherz living room in Windhoek showcase the wig.

### Smoking Pipes



Figure 25: Pipe, made of wood, metal and wire



Figure 26: Pipe, made of wood, metal and wire

72 Interview with Antje Otto by Dag Henrichsen, Susanne Hubler and Lisa Roulet, Windhoek 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

73 See: Footnote 68.



Figure 27: Water pipe

### **Historical Comments:**

#### **Waterpipe:**

**1957:** From a travel report “Trip to the Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz:

In the morning [of 14<sup>th</sup> July] we again visited the Baraquengo and bought some of their utensils and also a waterpipe which we saw for the first time in use on South-west [Namibian] soil. On the side of a “Klandhorn”, standing on its tip in the sand, a hole is drilled and into which a pipe stem is put in, later sealed off with resin. At the top of the stem a small clay head is fitted with resin and in which the tobacco is glowing. Once the horn is filled halfway with water, they suck/inhale the tobacco smoke in long strokes; the smoke runs/filters perpendicular down the stem and through the water in the horn and gushes into the mouth of the smoker.<sup>74</sup>

### **Historical Images:**

This particular pipe is probably on two pictures showing a man sitting in front of a hut (?) and smoking the pipe. On one of the photos, the State Ethnologist Oswin Köhler stands next to the man and holds a light meter close to his face.<sup>75</sup>

The Scherz archive has many pictures where people are seen smoking.

74 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9. p. 14. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1957: “Am Morgen besuchte wir noch einmal die Baraquengo und kauften einige ihrer Geraete, darunter auch eine Wasserpfeife, die wir hier zum ersten Mal auf Suedwester Boden in Gebrauch sahen. In ein Klandhorn, das mit der Spitze im Sand steht, wird seitlich von oben so ein Loch gebohrt, das sein Rohrstengel hineingesteckt werden kann, den man spaeter mit Baumharz ablichtet. Oben am Rohr ist mit Baumharz aufgesetzt ein Kleiner Tonkopf, in dem der Tabak glueht. Nachdem das Horn zur Haelfte mit Wasser gefuellt ist, saugen sie am offenen Hornende in langen Zuegen den Tabakrauch ein, der aus dem Tonkopf senkrecht nach unten das Rohr durchstroemt und durch das Wasser im Horn dem Rauche in den Mund sprudelt.”

75 See BAB, S017\_0199.

## Small Rattle



Figure 28: Small rattle, made of seeds and wood

In the exhibition catalogue for the recent San exhibition, “Stand Together”, which was designed by Museums Association of Namibia and the Namibian San Council, a similar rattle is shown and described as follows: “This type of rattle is used for healing to calm babies.”<sup>76</sup>

## Rattle



Figure 29: Rattle, made of butterfly cocoons, with small stones

---

76 Jeremy Silvester, *Stand Together* = ||ha||xae = Ma|aos = G||a ||kae = Têê |xai = Dea |xae. Windhoek (Museums Association of Namibia (MAN)), 2020, p. 28.

The rattle was used during a dance ceremony. When the dancers stomped, the rattle would make a noise.

### **Historical Comments:**

**1957:** From a travel report “Trip to the Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, and with reference to the Catholic mission station of Bunja and the adjacent government camp:

Wherever we camped, we immediately sent Levi [Nganjone] and our two interpreters to the next settlements and invited the people to music and dance. After the meal, there was soon a high, glowing fire, and soon our guests arrived, at first somewhat hesitantly and then in great numbers. A few men dragged three to four oversized wooden drums with skins tightly stretched and carefully tuned. The dancers wrapped rattles around their ankles. According to old custom, butterfly cocoons are cut open and filled with small stones, dried and tied together in long ribbons [...]. On each drum a man played a different rhythm with each hand. Without any real change of tone, six to eight rhythms changed in the most elaborate sequence, changing and returning to order, supported by the rattles on the feet of the monotonously stomping dancers.<sup>77</sup>

### **Historical Images:**

In the Marshall-Kalahari collection, there are numerous pictures showing men and women dancing with rattles. Anneliese Scherz produced entire dance series.

---

77 BAB, PA.4, I.3.9. p. 6. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1957: Original in German: “Wo auch immer wir kumpten, schickten wir gleich den Levi und unsere beiden Dolmetscher zu den nahe gelegenen Siedlungen und baten das Volk zu Musik und Tanz. Nach dem Essen loderte bald ein hohes leuchtendes Feuer und bald stellten sich etwas zoegernd zuerst und dann in grossen Scharen unsere Gaeste ein. Ein paar Maenner schleppten drei bis vier uebermannsgrosse hoelzerne Trommeln mit Haeuten straff ueberspannt und sorgfaeltig gestimmt. Die Tänzer wickelten Rasseln um ihre Knoechel. Nach alter Gewohnheit sind es Schmetterlingskokons aufgeschnitten und mit kleinen Steinen gefuellt, getrocknet und zu langen Baendern zusammengeknüpft [...] Auf jeder Trommel spielte ein Mann mit jeder Hand einen anderen Rhythmus. Ohne wirklichen Wechsel des Tones wechselten so in kunstvollster Folge sechs bis acht Rhythmen [sic], die sich umschlagen und wieder zur Ordnung zurueckkehrten, unterstuetzt von den Rasseln an den Fuessen der eintoenig stampfend Tanzenden.”

## Turtle Shell



Figure 30: Turtle shell with pearls and fur

Khoisan people used the turtle shells to store perfume inside and women wore these perfume bottles around their waist, attached to the baby's carrier. According to the recent exhibition catalogue "Stand Together", these perfume containers were worn to remove the smell of breast milk.<sup>78</sup>

### Historical Comments:

According to the photographer Lieselotte Prozesky-Schulze, who travelled in Namibia in 1957:<sup>79</sup> "Most women also own a 'powder box', for which they use a small turtle bowl filled with reddish powder. (San)"<sup>80</sup>

### Historical Images:

Turtle containers appear in many of the pictures taken during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marshall-Kalahari expedition. For example, in the portrait of a San woman breastfeeding an infant sitting on her left hip and wearing a turtle container.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See J. Silvester, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>79</sup> See the details in footnote 12.

<sup>80</sup> BAB, PA.155 III. 1.5, p. 2, manuscript entitled: "Bei den Buschleuten": "Die meisten Frauen besitzen auch "eine Puderdose", wozu ihnen eine kleine Schildkrötenschale dient, die mit rötlichem Pulver gefüllt ist. (San)"

<sup>81</sup> See the negative BAB, S064\_0055 and the positive BAB, S086\_060.

## Animal Figures



Figures 31 and 32: Animal figures, made of clay. Figure 31 has the shelfmark BAB.S96\_265.

### Historical Comments:

**1957:** From a travel report “Trip to the Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz: “In Tondero the Catholic sisters had lovingly packed us many small clay animals, which the native children knead out of river clay for pleasure.”<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9. p. 9. From the report “Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, 7<sup>th</sup> July “In Tondero hatten uns die katholischen Schwestern liebevoll eine Menge kleiner Lehmtiere eingepackt, die die Eingeborenenkinder zum Vergnuegen aus Revierlehm kneten.”

### Historical Images:

The animal figures captured on various slides with the general legend “bushmen toys 1940–1976” (“Buschmann Spielzeug 1940–1976”) resemble the figures in the collection. The animals were placed in a semicircle and positioned in different orders.<sup>83</sup>

Similar clay figures from that period are illustrated in a photography book by Alice Mertens (1915–2001), a Namibian-born photographer.<sup>84</sup>

### “Piano”



Figure 33: Thumb piano, made of wood and metal

### Historical Comments:

**1957:** From a travel report “Trip to the *Okavango* 29.6.–22.7.1957” by E.R. Scherz, with reference to a visit on 10<sup>th</sup> July to a government camp apparently near Tamsu at the Omatako river to the south of the Okavango river:

<sup>83</sup> BAB, S096\_259/261/265.

<sup>84</sup> See Alice Mertens, *Kavango. South West Africa*. Cape Town, 1974. Picture 63 with the caption “These Kavango boys admire their handiwork: oxen, dogs, a tortoise and a farmer”.

In the evening [,] a Diricu played for us masterfully on the tongue piano [sic.]. On a board, which is placed on a head-sized pumpkin bowl for better resonance, iron tongues of different length and weight are attached in such a way that they can be plucked. This talented musician played with all ten fingers on his instrument, which we incorporated into Koehler's collection after we had recorded the tuning of each individual note on tape.<sup>85</sup>

### Historical Images:

In the photographic collection there are several pictures taken by Anneliese Scherz of San people playing the thumb piano.

### Wooden Staff



Figure 34: Wooden staff. No further details are available.

85 BAB, PA.4 I.A.3.9. p. 12. From the report "Fahrt zum Okavango 29.6.–22.7.1957" by E.R. Scherz, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1957: "Am Abend spielte uns ein Diricu meisterhaft auf dem Zungenklavier. Auf einem Brett, das zur besseren Resonanz auf einer kopfgrossen Kuerbisschale steht, sind Eisenzungen verschiedener Laenge und Schwere so befestigt, dass man sie zupfen kann. Mit allen zehn Fingern spielte dieser begabte Musiker auf seinem Instrument, das wir, nachdem wir die Stimmung jedes einzelnen Tones auf Band festgelegt hatten, Koehlers Sammlung einverleibten." According to the curator of the Oswin Köhler archives at the University of Frankfurt, Gertrud Boden, there are various thumb pianos in the Köhler collection in Frankfurt and also in the Köhler collection housed at the Rautenstrauch Jost Museum in Cologne. Pers. Communication to Dag Henrichsen, e-mail 23 July 2020.

### **Object made of Stone or Bone**



Figure 35: Object made of stone or bone. No further details are available.

### **Wooden Scoop (?)**



Figure 36: Wooden scoop (?). No further details are available.

### Warthog tusks(?)



Figure 37: Warthog tusks (?). No further details are available.

### Wooden bowl



Figure 38: Wooden bowl. No further details are available.

