Max Planck Institute for
Social Anthropology
Working Papers

MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

Working Paper No. 141

Patrice Ladwig
Ricardo Roque
Oliver Tappe
Christoph Kohl
Cristiana Bastos

Fieldwork Between
Folders:
fragments, traces,
and the ruins of
colonial archives

Fieldwork Between Folders: fragments, traces, and the ruins of colonial archives[1]

Patrice Ladwig, Ricardo Roque, Oliver Tappe, Christoph Kohl, Cristiana Bastos[2]

Abstract

This essay conceptualises the colonial archive as a product of processes of ruination. Taking its inspiration from recent studies of archival spaces, the three case studies on Portuguese, French, and Guinea-Bissauan colonial archives explore the ruptures, discontinuities, and silences inherent in such archives. With reference to Walter Benjamin's writing of history and its recent applications in anthropology and history, the authors investigate the conditions, possibilities, and limitations of fieldwork in archives. Fragmentation, ruptures, and decay are not only understood as negative, but as productive processes. This perspective helps to shed light on the relevance of the historical materials that have survived as colonial debris and can provide traces that allow for developing unusual perspectives on the colonial past. By proposing methodologies to deal with these fragments, and by pointing to parallels in ethnographic fieldwork, the essay emphasises the processual character of data collection in the archive and the materials and documents themselves. Archives are, in this sense, less the static places of where facts lie waiting to be rescued, but places of the recurrent regrouping and transformation of facts through on-going ruination and fragment accumulation.

> "Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole."
> *Derek Walcott*

> "In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay."
> *Walter Benjamin*

1. Introduction

Archive-building and documentation-management are fundamental dimensions of Western colonial statecraft and governmentality. Throughout the long history of the Western colonial expansion, many archival institutions were created both in metropolitan and colonial territories to house and manage the great number of documents, records, and files produced over time by knowledge-hungry colonial networks in Africa, Asia, America, and Oceania. These archival terrains – whether neat and well-arranged, or disordered and entropic – have long been taken by students of colonialism as their principal working materials; the stone pit from which raw materials are recovered (cf. Roque and Wagner 2012). Imperial historians and ethno-historians have been putting colonial documents and records to important use as historical "sources" and "evidence" that allow them to retrieve lost, neglected, or hidden aspects of the past. Yet, colonial archives have also been explored in alternative directions.

In the last three decades, the political condition of colonial archives has been the object of a renewed critical interest in historical and anthropological studies. Political power and archival institutions, as the philosopher Jacques Derrida has remarked, are mutually implicated both etymologically and historically since the classical age. Archives in the age of Western colonialism are no exception.[3] As Nicholas Dirks (among others) has emphasised in the wake of Foucault, (colonial) archives became expressions of imperial desires to master the world, discursive formations that made manifest "the categories and operations of the state itself" (Dirks 2002: 58; cf. Foucault 1972: 145). In the 1980s–1990s, as the history and anthropology disciplines entered into closer dialogue and post-colonial discourse analysis gained pace, Western colonial knowledge and archives came to be approached as political sites in their own right, power-saturated locations where knowledge and power met productively to the benefit of colonial domination (cf. Said 1978; Cohn 1996; Dirks 1992; for a review Ballantyne 2001). Post-colonial criticism has sometimes led to excessive textualism and to profoundly sceptical visions of the very possibility of history as a knowledge project (cf. Spivak 1985; Chakrabarty 1992; 2007; for critiques and revisions see O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992; Young 2002; Roque and Wagner 2012). In spite of its various shortcomings, however, the emphasis on knowledge and archives has allowed for more reflexive readings of the colonial archives; it has paved the way for novel approaches and productive "engagements with colonial knowledge" (Roque and Wagner 2012).

It is this reflexive and productive engagement with archives that we would like to explore further in this collaborative work. In this paper we explore the archives of modern European colonialism as both the product and agent of processes of ruination, through a set of ethnographic reflections on the colonial and post-colonial histories of different archives. Reflecting on fieldwork experiences in archives in Portugal, France, and Guinea-Bissau, we also intend to highlight the theoretical and methodological implications of an approach that understands archives as products of ruination. In the context of archival theory, ruination is here discussed as entailing a variety of processes,

---

[3] The relations between archive and power are already visible in its etymology. Derrida (1996: 4) states that "there is no political power without archive" and traces the archive back to its Greek roots, namely '*arkheion*', the residence of the superior magistrate, of the '*archons*' – the ones who command (Derrida 1996: 2). On the historical roots of colonial archives in Enlightenment libraries see Featherstone (2006: 593). The *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* – published in 1898 and developed by three Dutch archivists – was perhaps the first systematic 'modern' approach to archiving, followed by Sir Hilary Jenkin's *A Manual of Archive Administration* in 1922. For a provocative history of these manuals and archiving as a process of the systematisation and consolidation of archives see Ridener (2009).

ranging from modes of knowledge fragmentation, exclusion and silencing by means of archival classifications, to more blunt facts of physical destruction of documents and buildings. By focusing on the ethnography of archives, in doing 'fieldwork between folders', we do not intend to brush away the ruined character of historical archives as exceptions, or mistakes, or as dead and useless remnants of defunct worlds; instead, we intend to see ruination as a productive entry point into a richer understanding of past and present scientific cultures, indigenous migrations and identities, or state administration, for example.

In the first part of the paper, we frame our discussions of specific fieldwork in archives within an overview of recent theories that explore the archive as a space of ethnographic practice. The second part focuses on notions such as fragmentation, debris, and incompleteness. We here conceptualise the colonial archive as a product of 'ruination'. This notion occupies a key position in the essay and will therefore be discussed more extensively in part 3, in relation to Walter Benjamin's work and that of anthropologists and historians building on his legacy. The following three ethnographic parts (4. 'Circulating Archives'; 5. 'Sites and Traces'; 6. 'Perils and Potentials') will elaborate on specific examples of processes of ruination to which colonial archives have been subject.

2. The Archive as an Ethnographic Space

Some researchers have subsumed the recent interest in the archive under the heading "archival turn" (Stoler 2009; Geiger, Moore and Savage 2010: 4; cf. Zeitlyn 2012). If we have another 'turn' here or not is another matter, but what this new orientation principally implies, in the words of Ann Stoler, is a "move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject" (Stoler 2010: 44). In contrast with post-colonial discourse analysis, ethnographers of colonial archives oppose totalising, monolithic, and textualist approaches and rather prefer an emphasis on the fragmented, ineffectual, and tensional aspects of colonialism and its forms of knowledge (Thomas 1994; Bayly 1996; Cooper and Stoler 1997).[4] Archives, in this sense, can also expose the limitations and failures of the colonial project; record-keeping was often 'thin', erratic, and episodic and the colonial production of knowledge was marked by fluidity and complexity. Parallel to discussions about ethnographic practices, researchers now emphasise the processual character of data collection and of the archival material itself. Archives are, in this sense, less the static places where facts lie waiting to be rescued, but rather the places where 'facts' are recurrently regrouped and transformed (Ebeling and Guenzel 2009: 18).

Furthermore, in these approaches the archive becomes not simply a place where information is stored, fixed, and extracted, but a space that has itself a specific history and agency. The "ethnography of the archive", as Nicholas Dirks observes, means "going well beyond seeing it as an assemblage of texts, a depository of and for history" (Dirks 2002: 58; cf. Dirks 1993). Colonial archives, as Stoler writes, thus emerge "not as sites of knowledge retrieval but of knowledge production" (Stoler 2002: 90). In these approaches, rather than being mere *objects* and depositories for historiographical retrieval, archives come to count as active *subjects* of history in their own right. Thus, on the one hand, attention is called to empirically grounded 'biographies' and 'ethnographies' of specific documents and records, and on the other, to ethnographies of archival fragments and archival tensions – to ethnographies of what these fragments and tensions produce

---

[4] This also turns into a topic of empirical research on the instability and contingency of the archive, which both Foucault (1972) and Derrida (1996) have evoked in their more abstract reflections.

and make visible as well as to what they hide and conceal. Interestingly, this focus on the heterogeneity and multiplicity of voices in the archive has parallels in recent discussions on ethnographic practices and can be linked up, for example, with discourses on multi-sited fieldwork (see part 5).

It is to this mode of ethnographic reappraisal of colonial archives that we are committed here. Our three case studies stem from diverse fieldwork experiences with the 'ruined condition' of colonial archives, implying relations to what are arguably very different sites, people, and objects. They aim at exploring the fractures and discontinuities, but also the processes of repletion, political power, and epistemic productivity entailed in histories of documentation of a colonial nature. We here see documents neither as 'open windows' (like positivists believe) nor as walls, like many post-colonial sceptics seem to propagate (cf. Ginzburg 1999). Instead, we see them as tensional and productive materials that, after careful perusal, can open new perspectives in the study of colonial and post-colonial societies (see Roque and Wagner 2012). Instead of seeing the archive as a totalising state apparatus that corresponds to an organised strategy of accumulation, we evoke a counter image: that of the archive as a seamless project of fragment-accumulation. Our focus is on the fragments and broken traces, on the inherent silences, exclusions, and lacunae that erupt from many archival sources – and on how these may be approached as productive events.[5]

By experimentally employing the concepts of 'ruin', 'ruination' and 'imperial debris' that have recently entered anthropological theory via reinterpretations of Walter Benjamin's work (Navaro-Yashin 2009; Stoler 2008; Gordillo 2011), we want to explore the productive side of the silences, contingencies, and discontinuities that mark archives as storage places of colonialism's fragments. In thus considering silences, fragmentation, and disorder we are not advocating a negativist approach to colonial archives, nor do we want to practice an anthropology or history exclusively focusing on absence (see Bille, Hastrup and Sorensen 2010). Archives might be in perfect condition, searchable, and well-administered. Nevertheless, the materials contained in all of them, in one way or another, already have been subject to 'ruination' through selection, classification, or in the worst case decay and destruction. What we, as researchers, are now left with is the debris of colonialism, even if in good condition and perfectly accessible by computer in a modernly equipped archive. In this Benjaminian perspective on history, we argue, it is therefore not the historian anthropologist's task to reconstruct a 'complete whole' of the archive (a historian's utopia). The task is rather to conceptualise it as a "sliver rather than an incomplete whole" (Hamilton et. al. 2002 10). This stance also has important parallels in recent critical evaluations of the idea of holism in ethnographic and anthropological work (Otto and Bubandt 2010; Zeitlyn 2009).[6] In our view, the constant transformation of archives and documents supports a perspective that does not start with a 'historical whole', but puts emphasis on the processual aspects of

---

[5] Georges Didi-Hubermas (2007) affirms that we should explore these silences, gaps, and ruptures in archival work, because they also reveal the often hidden system of selection and exclusion. Suppression and repression of certain archival materials also produce gaps and silences (Combe 2001; Derrida 1996: 28). Trouillot (1995: 51–52) states that "silences are inherent in the creation of sources, the first moment of historical production. Unequal control over historical production obtains also in the second moment of historical production, the making of archives and documents". Moreover, silences at times only become visible to the historian, when other sources hint to a certain more complete image of the historic event. Wolfgang Ernst (2002: 35) therefore asks if silence is simply a signifier of neglect and arbitrariness, or a kind of strategy for active concealment.

[6] The volume by Otto and Bubandt (2010) is an important contribution to a critical, but also productive view of holistic approaches in anthropology: "The critique [of holism] has deconstructed the totalizing aspects of holistic perspectives, but has thereby generated the debris with which anthropology is now experimenting" (ibid. 10). On a modest level, we intend to transfer some of these insights into historical research on archives. See the idea of debris as discussed throughout this essay.

archiving. In a recent analysis of the political lives of archival documents, Trundle and Kaplonski (2011: 408) state that documents "are in a continual process of becoming. They come to be refilled, misfiled or transformed into new technological formats, or they can be distributed or elevated to iconic status. Equally they can be withdrawn, censored or materially reduced […] often imbued with new meaning and uses over time".[7] In our view, it is to these transformations as *productive* events that we have to turn our attention.

3. Ruination, Fragments, and Debris in Colonial Studies

Why can one conceptualise the archive as a collection of fragments and traces of the past? What might we gain from thinking with, and about, archives as a form of colonial ruin? The starting point in a reflection on history, fragments, and ruins is Walter Benjamin's messianic and materialist historical writing. Benjamin starts from the obvious assumption that what we consider historical facts and knowledge about the past is indeed just constituted by fragments and traces left by that very same past (Benjamin 1968: 255f.). According to Willi Bolle (2000: 419), Benjamin's "writing of history is a non-linear discourse, composed by fragments that are read-out from the continuum of history and have to be ordered to a constellation, which illuminates the historical overall process." Benjamin proposed to understand the historical process as ruination, and indeed culture as always being constituted by fragments and ruins (Benjamin 1998: 235). The historical data in the archive are the fragmentary traces and debris of colonialism. This, however, does not imply that these fragments are completely disconnected. For traces can link fragments to one another and thus display a certain connectedness in diachronic perspective (Ricoeur 1990: 123).[8]

  Benjamin's work has been influential in several recent attempts to introduce the notions of ruination and ruin into anthropological analysis, to which we would like to refer. Yael Navaro-Yashin (2007) proposed the notion of ruination to refer to the material remains or artefacts of past destruction and violation that continue to shape people's visions, subjectivities, and affects in the present. In her view, "knowledge production is subject to ruination, to the piling of debris behind us"; "this approach to knowledge", she writes, "is not one that asserts transcendental philosophy of truth, but rather one that portrays knowledge as fragmentary, like the shards, debris or rubble left behind after a cataclysm or catastrophe." (Navaro-Yashin 2007: 7). In this perspective, colonial archives are also subject to ruination: Although the age of 'classical colonialism' is now over, the remains and artefacts of colonial domination are still with us. They continue to effectively shape present-day affects about colonialism, including the production of scholarly knowledge. In a similar manner, Gaston Gordillo (2011) has used the ruin and Walter Benjamin's idea of history as key concepts for analysing the remains and traces of the failed industrialisation and modernisation in Argentina's Chaco. "Reflecting on the fragility and contingency of human products", Gordillo (2011: 142) also sees negativity as generativity: "a creative-destructive critical force that has affirmative elements" (Gordillo 2011: 164). Again, the fragmentary and debris-like nature of colonialism's archival legacy can be seen, in the sense of Gordillo, as a productive entry point, which does not define fragmentation and contingency as lack of something, but as a process of

---

[7] See also Stoler, who states that "Ethnography in and of the colonial archives attends to processes of production, relations of power in which archives are created, sequestered, and rearranged" (Stoler 2009: 32–33).
[8] The notion of trace is in more detail dealt with in part 5 of this paper in the context of the traces of ethnic minorities in dispersed colonial archives.

signification. Ann Stoler, finally, proposes a complementary (and at points also alternative) reading of ruination, which touches directly on colonial and post-colonial studies: "To speak of colonial ruination is to trace the fragile and durable substance and signs, the visible and visceral senses in which the effects of empire are reactivated and remain." (Stoler 2008: 196) Stoler does in this work not explicitly connect archival theory to her thoughts on imperial ruins. However, we believe this linkage can be fruitfully made, especially with reference to her work *Along the Archival Grain* (2009) to which some of the case studies will refer.

Stoler, Navaro-Yashin and Gordillo have produced novel readings of ruination. Nevertheless, we would like to further contextualise ruination by bringing it closer to Benjamin's idea of allegory. For the purposes of a reassessment of colonial archives, we think it is fruitful to briefly embed the concept of ruin more thoroughly into Benjamin's understanding of history and thereby explain the development of his historical methods. Perhaps even more central to Benjamin's articulations of the fragmentary nature of knowledge than 'ruin' is the concept of *allegory*. Originally applying this to the literature of the German Baroque, Benjamin developed this into a method for analysing literature and art, reflecting the developments in these disciplines in this period (Benjamin 1998). It is not the whole work as an organic piece of art that has to be analysed; instead, the allegorist works with the fragments (*Bruchstücke*) and puts them back together, thereby creating sense by a method of *montage*, characteristic for the art of the avant-garde in Benjamin's time. With this technique of montage, the peculiar, the crassness, and the disparate come together as threads in the figure of the allegory (Lindner 2000: 55).[9] Benjamin (1999b: 310) also compared his working method in history and cultural analysis to that of the 'ragpicker', who collects things that are usually thrown away. Transferred to the method of writing history, this 'rubbish' would then provide unusual angles on the past, comparable to his experimental *Arcades Project* in which he tried to reconstruct certain features of bourgeois consumer culture in 19th century Paris (Benjamin 1999a).[10]

It is this project of transformation of archival fragments from their disordered, fragmentary state into insightful pieces of historical and ethnographic significance that we would like to enact in the following ethnographies of archival work. Fragmentary and dispersed as they appear to be, therefore, the following case-studies' reflections are a way towards the realisation of a common engagement with colonialism's archival ruins as a means to understand the past and present of people and things that once were under the spell of colonialism. In this sense, exploring archives as ruins is centrally concerned with tracing the ways through which colonial documents and archives may or may not produce important effects today. In these many re-appropriations, one can also include ways of retrieving colonial archival documents out of a chaotic state. Colonial archives often tried to administratively order 'indigenous cultures', but reading these documents "along the archival grain" (Stoler 2009) can also reveal how insecurity, affect, and political concerns entered this allegedly logical order. In order to reconstitute events and cultures of the past, it might in some cases be necessary to explore the implicit chaotic nature of these classification processes through a technique of montage. Accordingly, the three different confrontations with archives as imperial

---

[9] For an anthropological exploration of the technique of montage see the works of Michael Taussig (e.g. 1984, 1991) who takes his inspiration from Benjamin and applies it as an ethnographic and historical method. He emphasises the "creative power of disorder" (Taussig 1984: 109) and from very early on critiqued anthropological accounts that mainly dealt with the establishment of order through ritual.

[10] For another interesting exploration of the ruins of modernity that links Benjamin's *Arcades* with archaeology and anthropology see Dawdy (2010). I thank Viorel Anastasoaie for pointing to this article.

ruins presented here concern not just the capacity of our ethnographic histories to illuminate the colonial past of both Indigenous and Europeans, but also their potential to inform and shape present understandings and ethnographic practices (cf. Lather 2001: 477).

4. Circulating Archives. Museums, skulls, and colonial records [11]

The mobility of people and things has been a conventional topic of historians concerned with the economic and social dimensions of the European expansion. Since the early modern period, the traffic of artefacts, food, plants, spices, luxury goods, or even people as slaves between Europe and the 'New Worlds' achieved a global scale and has since had a dramatic and wide-ranging impact on the reconfiguration of world-economies, metropolitan societies, indigenous communities, and cultural understandings (cf. Hopkins 2002; Bayly 2004). This material life of European colonialism did not concern standard economic 'commodities' alone; it also included things considered to be scientific objects. From the advent of modern science and natural history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many material objects obtained from colonial settings were collected, traded, and put to travel to cabinets and museums as 'scientific things', with a view to enhance understandings about human cultural, social, and biological unity and diversity. In this context, the traffic in human body parts was an important part of this process of mobility. Circulating skulls, blood, and bones was at once a significant aspect of the material life of modern imperial expansionism and a key material expression of one of Europe's most ill-famed scientific concepts – *race* – and of its associated forms of human sciences – from phrenology to craniology, or physical and biological anthropology in general (cf. Roque forthcoming).

Human skulls figured prominently in these global flows since the late eighteenth century. One main reason for their strong presence in the global economies of colonialism was that human skulls were considered to be important embodiments of race characters. Skulls were desirable objects for (physical) anthropologists around the world, who considered skulls to provide key evidence of human racial or biological diversity. Until the mid-twentieth century, when this racial science paradigm was formally rejected and eventually became obsolete, thousands of human skeletal remains were moved to scientific museums in Europe and elsewhere. This phenomenon has had lasting effects. To this day, Western anthropological museums store thousands of human skulls, bones, soft tissue, and casts of body parts, many of them belonging to indigenous populations from outside the West. As such, skull collections are, today, visible ruins of colonialism, the debris of a bygone racial science and its mobility regimes – and so are their associated archival worlds.

This process of the circulation of skulls as scientific things was also a process of trade and circulation of skull archives. In effect, the political economy that moved objects from the colonies to museum institutions in Europe was also an economy of knowledge that, along with material things, put archives and texts into circulation. This vision is perhaps particularly valid with regard to objects that came to acquire value and significance as scientific things in museums – human skulls, for example. Although the historicity of museum material objects is conventionally addressed by historians and anthropologists, much lesser attention has been devoted to the fact that

documents, inscriptions, and archives that appear in association with objects in museums can also be analysed as things in transit. For, in museums, objects like skulls are not to be found alone. They have been collected, stored, preserved, and cared for in connection with their singular paper archives. Museums do not simply hold colonial collections of bones. They hold bones together with their singular archives. Not all museum material, however, is equally endowed with historical information and associated archives. The point is, nevertheless, that it should be. Human remains collections in museums are ideally conceived of assemblages of skulls and their archival traces. In considering skulls as colonial collections, then, how can we account for their existence as composite formations of material things and documentation? If we accept the mobility of skulls and archives as a central characteristic of colonial collecting, how can we then account for the archives of things as things that are in circulation, too? Furthermore, in attempting a history of these colonial collections, and thus an engagement with their inherent ruination, what sort of historical understandings do these archives make possible?

The Notion of Circulating Archives
In museums, many archival traces on the identity and history of objects have been left behind by successive generations of workers – former and present-day archivists, certainly; but also former colonial agents and scientists. Therefore, rather than being sites of silent things and hidden memory, museums of human skulls present themselves as sites inhabited by a proliferation of stories told by former museum anthropologists, travellers and adventurers, missionaries and settlers, soldiers and colonial administrators, or other actors involved in the collecting of human remains.

Museum workers have been referring to these archives as the 'histories' of collections of skulls. Thus skulls and 'histories' come into emergence in the museum as assemblages of bones and archives, of 'things' and documentation.[12] Skulls can thus be endowed with singular archives and even have personal life histories. These archival traces can appear to the visitor in a variety of languages, a multiplicity of materialities, and a plurality of inscriptions. They can assume varied material forms and literary expressions. They can appear in paper form, physically detached from the skulls: as individual registers in published or unpublished catalogues; as individual paper cards stored in wooden file boxes. They can also appear in paper form, but now physically attached to the remains – such as in paper labels bound to the object with a small string or rope, or even in paper labels glued to the very skull. Finally, they can appear on the bone itself, as in handwritten numbers, notes, categories, and catalogue references inscribed on the skull with China-ink. Yet, it also happens that these colonial collections of skulls have a very different existence due to the fact that one rarely finds skulls that are fully documented. In contrast, what we often have are colonial collections in museums that exist in relation to little or even no associated information, in association with broken and fragmentary or blank and silent archives.

The complex historical, political, and epistemic interplay between colonial collections of skulls and their archives cannot be fully explored here. I would like simply to suggest that, conceived of as assemblages of objects-and-archives, colonial collections constitute circulating entities entailed

---

[12] Interestingly, this concept of assemblage also has parallels to the technique of montage introduced via Benjamin in the introduction. In the arts, montage also refers to the putting together of various elements in order to create a new whole, which is then labelled assemblage. For the use of assemblage in philosophy see Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 504f.), who define it as a contingent ensemble of practices and objects, which can be differentiated from each other.

in colonial expansionism and scientific museum work. Archival traces of colonial museum objects are not static. They change. As such, one can treat these archives of museum things as 'circulating entities' (Roque 2010, 2011). This notion differs from some standard definitions of archives in two ways. On the one hand, it calls attention to the material nature of archives, in contrast with a notion of the archive as a de-materialised and supra-discursive totality (cf. Foucault 1972). On the other hand, it emphasises the archive as a fluid and mobile entity in a state of becoming, an entity which emerges in practice and can be located in many places. Circulating archives can thus be seen in the traditional sense as a 'collection of records'. However, the word archive does not refer to a precise physical location in which these records are kept. These archives of scientific collections are not immobile documentation systems with a permanent location. They constitute formations of texts and stories that are in flux across time and space – but also in flux epistemically and culturally, subject to varied meanings and interpretations. As such, they emerge within the collective networks of circulating objects, from the field to the museum.

In effect, the 'global political economy' of anthropological objects I mentioned above also traded narratives and information; it circulated texts from hand to hand. This was a dynamic economy of archives in circulation whose networks extended beyond the museum and gave rise to a productive economy of knowledge. In many cases, in fact, descriptions of objects resulted from practices and occasions that preceded the arrival of collections in the museum. Thus, a view of objects' documentation as static systems in a museum fails to understand the workings of these knowledge processes. Moreover, circulating archives might be seen as a creative and transformative collective process of knowledge that takes place inside the networks of museums. Archives and what they contain can change over time; they can be (re)made by the different actors that participate in the collection and storage of skulls as scientific museum objects. As a consequence, historians aiming at reconstructing the histories and trajectories of human remains (and other types of museum objects) in contemporary museums have to confront this sort of circulating and ruined archives of the colonial past. This is not an easy task, if one wants, for instance, to reconstruct the provenance of a certain skull or set of skulls.

Collections with Broken Archives

In the course of research on the history of museum collections, one often faces the challenge of re-connecting histories and words to skulls and objects that remain little or wrongly informed in current museums – notwithstanding previous attempts of sending them to museums well-documented. Let us consider one such case, one in which human skulls led for many decades a problematic existence in science museums because of their missing archives and broken histories. Roque has extensively described the complexities of this historical case (Roque 2007, 2010); here, we will only briefly present the points that bear closely on our argument.

In 1882, a set of thirty-five human skulls from the Eastern half of the island of Timor – a remote and isolated colony of the Portuguese empire in Southeast Asia – was received and incorporated at Coimbra University Museum as an anthropological collection, and there it continues to be kept today. In the 1880s, during the process of collecting, shipping, and re-shipping the materials from Dili (Timor), to Macau, to Lisbon, and finally to Coimbra, this collection of (supposedly) Timorese crania ended up detached from its original documentation. Because of the loss of the original paper archives, the provenance of the collection became open to uncertainty. Serious consequences occurred for the racial science that was to be produced on this collection by Coimbra-based

physical anthropologists in the 1880s–1890s. Then, a Portuguese craniologist, Barros e Cunha, used the collection to claim that the Timorese should be classed as belonging to the 'Papuan race'. But in the 1920s–1930s, this conclusion was strongly contested. At this point other Portuguese colonial historians and physical anthropologists rejected Cunha's scientific work because the collection of skulls that was used as empirical material lacked reliable historical certification of provenance. In short, because the skulls had no associated archival documentation, their Timorese origin could not be proven. It followed a heated controversy about the authenticity of the crania, in the course of which the past of the collection was scrutinised and the objects' original paper archives were eagerly searched for, however without success. In the end, physical anthropologists and colonial officers alike were unable to decide on whether or not the skulls were from "real Timorese"; consequently, the collection at Coimbra broke into a multiple and uncertain historical identity, preventing race classifications associated with them from being accepted as accurate. The desire to achieve completeness in the archive and work with it resulted in a failure. The image of the imperial archive as "the fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern" (Richard cited in Stoler 2002: 97) was not accomplished. Instead, the realisation that this could just be a debris-collection, a set of falsely provenanced material, seems to have productively impacted on scientific debates, to the point of putting an end to a particular race classification.

Thus in this story, ontological uncertainty as regards human remains occurred because (to some important, though not exclusive, extent) the colonial archives of collections were absent and had broken records. Archives, like skulls in circulation, are usually a contingent product of a geographically dispersed network of metropolitan and colonial agents (sometimes including indigenous people, too). It is within this network – in the field and in the museum, and especially in the space between the field and the museum – that the tasks of collecting, shipping, informing, and documenting the objects occur. Archival work on skulls and museum objects is not just the province of professional museum curators and archivists. It is itself a circulating activity, work distributed through the many agents that compose the networks of collecting and trading human skulls. Many people can participate in the creation of knowledge and archives for this type of scientific objects. Along this process, interferences, noises, losses, and changes occurred; and then museum objects could result in epistemic cacophony. In travelling to museums, for example, object labels can get lost or be misplaced (cf. Bouquet and Branco 1988); certain original information can go missing, for example, because someone dismisses it as unimportant. So even when a collection is considered 'complete' considering its classification and labelling, something might have gone missing as "each classification system opens up new avenues in to the material, yet it also closes off others" (Featherstone 2006: 593). Here, it again becomes obvious that at the moment of the birth of such historical information we are already confronted with a process of fragmentation.

The colonial archives of scientific collections, like collections of human skulls, are born from the complexities and dynamism of their circulatory nature. The same complexities and dynamism, however, can lead to their emergence – and to their disappearance. It is thus a historian's task not simply to fill the gaps in these archives but to investigate how, why, and with what consequences these gaps are historically produced; how silences and misinformation are engendered, words printed or erased, meanings imposed and recast, and what manifold effects are generated by the variable condition of attachments between archives on object collections. Hence, it is in travelling with and within the cacophonic ruins of skull archives – ruins of colonial violence and racism as

object-archives' assemblages might be – that we might be able to reposition human remains collections in the post-colonial present.

5. Sites and Traces: piecing together fragmented pasts from colonial Indochina[13]

Archival research is a key method of ethno-historical projects dealing with colonial times. It contributes to the challenging task of reconstructing the past worlds of indigenous societies. Ethnographic research, in fact, is often multi-methodological and often implies dealing with different multiple field sites – including archives. Interviews, participant observation, and other aspects of field research in a village and/or other – sometimes many – localities; extensive oral history research among and with elders of the host society; historical research in local archives and in archives 'at home' such as colonial or missionary archives are among the methods commonly adopted by ethnographers. However, the latter are particularly important for ethnographers willing to gain access to a people's past cosmologies, sociocultural structures, and transformations. Migration routes in specific periods of the past, for instance, are tenuous objects of research, since they cannot be easily grasped via direct observation. For this, one requires traces from the past; one has to put fragments of colonial debris together. One requires oral history but also, and importantly, written records, archival documents provided, for instance, by former 'para-' or 'incidental' field ethnographers such as travellers, missionaries, officials, or local elites during the colonial period (Marcus 2011; Michaud 2007). Gathered and stored in archival institutions, these ethnographic 'data' – even if ambivalent and biased – are at hand to the anthropologist who dares to enter the archival 'field site' (see Dirks 2002; Stoler 2009). Evans-Pritchard (1961) once said that anthropology is nothing without history. Indeed, this method not only provides glimpses of past livelihoods (often only used as anecdotic resources for anthropological monographs) but also insights into sociocultural path dependencies with an explanatory function in the analysis of present social and cultural configurations. Also for ethnohistorians, doing fieldwork in the archives, as Ann Stoler remarked, calls for a "sense of archival texture and its granularity" (Stoler 2010: 272) as precondition for the critical judgment of and negotiation with the 'sources'. Thus different archival sites entail different power relations and variants of knowledge production. A missionary archive, for instance, might be fundamentally different from a colonial-administrative archive concerned with the underlying agendas of the state.

The following discussion of sites and traces is located in the colonial realm of French Indochina, more exactly in the uplands of the contemporary Lao-Vietnamese border region. This region is part of the mainland Southeast Asian upland region – coined 'Zomia' by the geographer Willem van Schendel (2002; see also Scott 2009) – with its ethnically heterogeneous mosaic of various upland peoples (see Michaud 2000, 2006). Highly mobile, with an ephemeral material culture, and living at the fringes of the 'state', these groups have left their more or less scarce traces in the French archives or in published works (see e.g. Pavie 1901). Of particular relevance are the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence – the 'colonial' branch of the central Archives Nationales in Paris, the Archives des Missions Étrangeres (in Paris), and the archive of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO Paris) (see Hildesheimer 1997; Rabut 1997; Clémentin-Ojha

---

and Manguin 2006). The Archives Nationales were established in 1790 to centralise all private and public archives seized by the revolutionaries. In 1966, the documents from the ministries in charge of the colonies were gathered in the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, including the – incomplete – archives transferred from the colonies at the time of their independence (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia: 1953/54). French colonial interests and bureaucratic zeal manifest themselves in the structure of this archive and its different fonds. In contrast, the EFEO archives focuses on the cultural dimension of the French *mission civilisatrice*. The Archives des Missions Étrangeres store the correspondence and biographies of Catholic missionaries, who were active abroad, sometimes spending decades in remote areas, and thus constitute a valuable source of local information (Michaud 2007). Other Europeans, such as travellers, administrators, or military officials, produced further knowledge about the colonies via different genres, from travel reports to everyday correspondence within the colonial bureaucratic apparatus. The voices of the past thus speak through various intermediaries, located in different archival sites. The writing of history here emerges from the putting together of fragments and colonial, archival debris from various places.

As Ricoeur (1990: 116) observed, the trace is the epistemological presupposition of the archive and – as shown in the following sections – it acts as a link between different spatio-temporal sites. Traces can function as devices for reassembling fragments of 'native' pasts, dispersed through distinct field sites. How to establish and examine the connections between data from ethnographic field sites, on the one hand, and historical/archival field sites, on the other, is of particular concern for us. How can different sites, which differ not only in space but also in time, be analytically linked and later synthesised into a 'coherent' narrative? How to bring together the various kinds of sources, data, and perspectives, which are to be found in each of these different sites?

The ethnographer's collaborators of the past have left traces in the archives as well as sometimes even traces of other informants' traces – for example in cases where local intermediaries collected information from a variety of informants. Therefore, a closer look at the concept of trace as function and precondition of the archival site may illuminate the epistemological and methodological entanglements of sites and traces. Yet, before venturing into archival traces as possible links between anthropological and historical field sites, let us consider the multi-sited nature of anthropology and ethno-historical research. When George Marcus (1995) wrote his review article about multi-sited research, the monographic study of bounded village societies was still the mainstream in anthropological methods. Interest in globalisation and transnationalism then led to new approaches that focused either on the global movements of peoples, things, and ideas, or on studies of differently localised fields of a given society (ibid.; Coleman and von Hellermann 2011; Falzon 2009). According to George Marcus:

> "Multi-sited ethnographies define their objects of study through several different modes or techniques. These techniques might be understood as practices of construction through (preplanned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given an initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it." (Marcus 1995: 106)

We would like to take Marcus's proposal further and consider multi-sited ethnography about migrant populations as taking place not only at actual contemporary locations, but in history and within archival field sites. The analytical task of linking different sites and times poses a major methodological challenge for the fieldworker. We thus attempt at bringing together different sites

that are "disjunctive in space or time" (Coleman and von Hellermann 2011: 3; for the anthropology of time see also Munn 1992; Fabian 1983). The proposal is to follow peoples, things, and ideas across the different sites of the French colonial archives wherein 'the Zomians' pop up every now and then. These different archival sites constitute a fragmented, but nevertheless interconnected system of knowledge that makes manifest a variety of (colonial) encounters with the Other. Therefore, multi-sited archival field work in the archives calls for an "ethnography of the system" (Marcus 1995: 99), that is: an analysis of the overarching worldview that pervades and saturates European archives, especially concerning colonial administrative, military, or missionary agendas and their respective plans and practices. As stated above, such a 'system' must be perceived as a tensional and fractured world, fuelled by contingencies, contradictions, and anxieties. In the case of Zomia, it should also be regarded as an integral part of 'local' situations (Falzon 2009: 2) since the alternating colonial practices and knowledge affected Zomian lives in one way or another (see Scott 2009; Salemink 2003). Depending on the interests of the specific institution, which shape the respective archival knowledge production, the Hmong, for example, might emerge differently in different archival contexts.

The archival 'fieldworkers' are confronted with a number of difficulties. First, they need to take seriously into account the historical condition of their research object as represented in accounts taken from the archives. Secondly, one needs to consider the peoples' in/visibility in the archives. The appearance of a category like 'Zomians' can be highly fragmented and thus as a research object their "contours, sites, and relationships are not known beforehand" (Marcus 1995: 102).[14] In this vein, it is important to consider that the categories and ethnonyms change over time – for example through various colonial attempts of ethnic classification – and thus they cannot be taken at face value as descriptions of one and the same 'reality'. In that sense, "the archive is born from disorder" (Farge 1989: 36) and is already fragmented and subject to ruination at its moment of birth. Moreover, archives are registers of colonial interests and anxieties. Accordingly, it is difficult to resist to trace upland Lao people mainly through, for example, their association with opium cultivation or through certain (colonial) cultural stereotypes, such as the lingering image of the swidden cultivating Hmong as "greatest destroyers of forest" (Cupet 2000: 35).

In general, this type of archival visibility is a function of colonial imageries and inter-cultural encounters. As such, the archival fieldworker must bear in mind the historical interactions between the local highlanders and the wider colonial world, of which colonial archives preserve fragmentary traces. It is a task of archival ethnographers to try to make sense of these cultural encounters, "mapping a space or field of social action" (Marcus 2011: 21) in collaboration with the works of colonial para-ethnographers (ibid.: 19) – such as missionaries, administrators, or even native informants whose voices sometimes emerge in the form of local reports, court protocols, and petitions. Here, Benjaminian 'rag-picking' in the more or less preserved ruins of the colonial administrative system might be an appropriate method – of course not without carefully taking 'field-notes' and keeping track of the precise locations of the documents in the archive.

Archival research takes place at specific points in past times. Different points in time often mean different archival configurations and thus different sites. This difference of multi-sitedness operates in time and entails new 'other' sites. However, we are not advocating the idea of sequential or successive life worlds. Rather, the idea of temporal multi-sitedness is a heuristic device to

---

[14] However, see Candea (2009) for a discussion on boundedness that deserves to be explored further in the context of apparently bounded/closed archives.

recognise sociocultural transformations and continuities in the present vis-à-vis historical flashbacks, however contingent and selective they might be. It is in this context that the concept of trace might promise a solution for the hazards of piecemeal and anachronism. Archival documents are significant in the present because they are traces of the past. They may be considered as clues (Ginzburg 1989) left behind by former observers, such as accounts of missionaries based on oral accounts of native informants – again traces of traces – or heated correspondences between different colonial agents who faced so-called 'uprisings' and other threats for colonial order (Gay 1982). These archival traces imply a certain dialectic of presence and absence for, on the one hand, they are "[…] visible here and now, as a vestige, a mark. On the other hand, there is a trace (or track) because 'earlier' a human being or an animal passed this way" (Ricoeur 1990: 119). While the aspect 'passage' stresses the dynamics of a trace, the aspect 'mark' indicates stasis (ibid.: 120).

This may be exemplified with reference to the case of the Hmong (see Culas and Michaud 1997). This migratory people, who inhabited an upland colonial periphery, left traces of their mobility, both in the physical landscape and in the minds and words of colonial agents. Traces of their actions and movements can thus be read in the colonial archives, provided that they were identified and documented. These traces are not linearly recorded; they appear at random, are often vague and therefore document the fragmented nature of colonial knowledge systems. The written testimony precedes and constitutes the archive; yet it does not remain alone therein. Other documents (such as small notes or bureaucratic paper works) are sometimes also witnesses in spite of themselves (Bloch 1964) – that is, not mere indiscriminate vestiges of the past but clues in the sense of Ginzburg (1989), as evidence to decipher. As Ricoeur (2004: 170), again, puts it: "If we can speak of observation in history, it is because the trace is to historical knowledge what direct or instrumental observation is to the natural sciences" – or, we may add, participant observation is to anthropology.

The archive, moreover, is not only the institution and physical place of the "documentary trace" (Ricoeur 2004: 167). It is also a social site where place, practice, and text interrelate (De Certeau 1988). In this sense, the archive can configure a social space where past people – either colonialists or 'natives' – interact with present researchers. The historical anthropologists' research questions turn traces into documents, which connect, across temporal boundaries, 'past' and 'present' traces, 'past' and 'present' collaborators, and their fragments. Thus, the exploration of these archival spaces allows for the overlapping of different temporalities: the lived time of researchers; the past of colonial and native informants; and even the transcendent cosmological or calendrical time. This dialectic – tackled in historical hermeneutics by Reinhart Koselleck (2004) – can be solved, according to Ricoeur (1990), through the concept of the trace as key element of narrated or historical time. The trace cuts spatio-temporal boundaries, thus enabling the archival worker to interact, at least indirectly, with past worlds by putting fragments together. In case the traces are very thin, this comes close to Benjamin's idea of the "assembled composition" in the work of the historian (cf. Lindner 2000: 52).

Since our objects of research populate both villages and archives, even move around in both sites, it may be the ultimate step to share our perception of their traces with them in the present while moving to and from them in time as part of the ethnohistorical hermeneutic process. In the words of Ricoeur (1990: 123): "These connectors add the idea of a mutual overlapping or even of a mutual exchange that makes the fault line upon which history is established a line of sutures." Yet even if the (ethno)historical knowledge remains "indirect, presumptive, conjectural" (Ginzburg

1989: 106; see Bloch 1964), all documental traces are valuable sources of knowledge in dialogue with present configurations – maybe not as historical facticities, but, rather, as possibilities (Koselleck 2004).

6. Perils and Potentials: colonial archives and libraries in postcolonial Guinea-Bissau[15]

Despite the recent turn to archives as a space of production (Stoler 2009: 32–33), most works dealing with archival research and the anthropology of the archive seem to be little concerned with the physical state of the archive itself, with the policies of access to colonial documents, and with their availability and preservation. Archives seem simply to be 'there'. This is not surprising because many researchers indeed tend to focus on archives in the former colonising countries when they speak about "colonial archives". But what are the concrete histories of these archives? What has happened, and happens today, with archives set in the former colonies? What is the sort of attention paid to, and what uses and abuses have files in archives been attracting after decolonisation? Is the very existence of archives threatened – either by deliberate destruction, anti-colonial iconoclasm, or simply neglect and oblivion? And what is the significance of that which survives these destructions as debris and fragments?

One should not forget that even on the founding moments of the 'modern archive', the creation of archives went along with the destruction of (other) archives. Thus in the wake of the French revolution, for instance, the new government "initiated the wholesale destruction of records as part of its revolutionary program" (Dirks 2002: 61–62). The creation of one archive might imply that other historical knowledge contained in the archive is fragmented or even ruined. However, one should also keep in mind that although documents were left behind by colonisers, this might not necessarily have meant that they became obsolete ruins from one day to another. Consider colonial birth and death registers, for instance, or land registrations that might have had a value in a post-colonial setting.

In the following, the example of Guinea-Bissau will illuminate the post-colonial condition of colonial archives and libraries as well as the itineraries of colonial documents and books in contemporary times. The subsequent paragraph will focus on the history of the archives themselves in order to explore their physical condition, and from that point elaborate on the wider implications for the fragmentation and ruination of the archive.

Guinea Bissau's Historical Archives from Colonialism to Independence
As in other colonies, the expansion of the colonial state in Guinea-Bissau – Portuguese Guinea at the time – was accompanied by the acquisition of different kinds of data that were believed to contribute to colonial domination. In Portuguese Guinea, a national library and archives were apparently founded only after a decree in 1931, which aimed generally at the establishment of national libraries and archives overseas (Djaló 2004: 99). Part of these sources served apparently as a basis for the Centre of Studies on Portuguese Guinea, founded in 1946 on occasion of the celebration of the country's 500th anniversary occupation by Portugal. The Centre was dedicated to

---

all kinds of colonial research and it lasted until independence in the year 1973. The Centre housed the only public library in Guinea-Bissau, and also encompassed an ethnographic museum and a historical archives section (cf. Lopes et al. 1999: 474; Djaló 2004 98). Its location in the colonial period tellingly was the city centre in Bissau, next to the governor's palace and opposite to the influential employers' association. As Derrida (1996: 2) outlined, the term archive has a close etymological link to power and governance. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the small but architectonically impressive building of the Centre expressed physical and symbolic proximity to colonial power in Bissau. Supposedly, the library and archives were consulted by only a small minority of people: about 99% of the colony's population – almost exclusively Africans – were illiterate. At the same time, government offices in the colonial capital (Bissau), provincial administrations throughout the country, and other institutions (such as the Catholic Church) ran their own archives. Only politically important documents and correspondence between the Portuguese government and top colonial authorities in Bissau continued to be stored in Lisbon.

Independence was achieved after more than a decade of military struggle. The victorious leftist nationalist movement declared independence in 1973, which was recognised by Portugal one year after its Fascist government had been ousted in a military coup in April 1974. The consequences of this change for the library and archives were grave. Because the newly established Ministry of Foreign Affairs was expected to move into the building of the former Centre of Studies on Portuguese Guinea (next to the former colonial governor's seat, then presidential palace, that was destroyed during the Military Conflict of 1998–1999), the building was brusquely emptied of its archival, librarian, and museum inventories, shortly after independence. Rich collections of thousands of books, documents, and rare artefacts were subsequently deposited in unsafe and inadequate storehouses. As a consequence, the former Centre's holdings were significantly reduced (Lopes et al. 1999: 474). Only some time later the National Institute for Scientific Research (INIC) was founded, designed to develop and house a library, archives, and a museum, among others. However, the decline of archival sources and books was not to be stopped. Therefore, INIC was dissolved and in 1984 it was replaced by the National Institute for Studies and Research (INEP) (Djaló 2004: 100). Then, with Swedish and Canadian help, an entirely new complex was constructed at the outskirts of Bissau, including buildings for a national library, a national museum, and an administrative building that was to house the nation's historical archives. Currently, this library does not only serve to preserve literature related to Guinea-Bissau, but has also been used as a public library by students – the only public library in the country until quite recently. Although attempts were made to systematically collect documents, these efforts were apparently very limited. According to contemporary catalogues, these archival surveys covered only the period between the late nineteenth century and 1973/74 – but the Portuguese colonial contact with Guinea dated back to well before the late nineteenth century (INEP 1988, 1990). Although a law of 1988 obliged all publishers to submit copies to the national library, most publications and documents (and note that the quantity of publications released in Guinea Bissau is extremely low) continue to 'escape' the library's and archives' control (Lopes et al.1999: 474; Djaló 2004: 101).

However, incomplete registration of publications and the resulting gaps in the inventory has been only a minor issue in comparison to what followed in the late 1990s. A major blow on Guinea Bissau's library and archives was the civil war that shook primarily Bissau in 1998 and 1999. Shortly after the war broke out, the Senegalese army decided to install its headquarters in the big complex of the historical archives. Consequently, the library and archives were not only looted and

partially destroyed by soldiers but also became a military target, which ultimately resulted in the bombing of the library and archives. About 60 per cent of documents and publications were thus lost, the audio-visual archives were completely destroyed, and many museum objects disappeared. Although recuperations of the building and the inventory began as early as in 2000, the conditions for the preservation of documents remain difficult. The whole building complex was restored, but the library's roof was only patched up and only a small part of the library's and archives' holdings had been treated by 2007. During my research in 2006–2007, the electronic catalogue was still in the making – a work further complicated by the recurrent lack of electricity.

An Odyssey: research conditions and the ethnography of an archive
This is the state of the archives and library from a bird's-eye-view. But what does research on colonial documents look like under these conditions? What can we learn from this regarding the ethnography of the archive? Complications usually start with attempts to find certain documents. Some colonial publications that used to be part of the colonial Centre of Studies continue to be bundled up, stored, and not catalogued – basically unprotected from dust, roof holes, snakes, geckos, and mice – they are imbued with signs of ruination.[16] They remain in the basement or on the first floor of the library and cannot be accessed. Series are incomplete, pages are lacking, and due to the lack of electricity the meagre electronic catalogue can rarely be used. It is common under current conditions that books and documents are stolen. The further fragmentation of the archive and disappearance of documents was also increased due to the lack of copy machines. In other words: documents disappeared and given the lack of technical reproduction facilities, one is unable to easily extract information and keep reproduced documents safe in another location.

Although the nearby law faculty had developed a small database of colonial legislation, in the library the volumes of the colonial law gazette were incomplete. Librarians therefore advised the visitor to go to the ministry of justice. In colonial times, the building used to house the registry and many other offices. When one entered the building, after asking about the location of the office where the law gazettes were supposed to be stored, one met with messy and empty cupboards and shelves. Civil servants stated that due to the lack of space all colonial law gazettes (together with many other colonial judicial publications) had been taken up to the loft. Therefore, any interested person was shown by an employee to the loft upstairs, where the law gazettes were kept and where they were exposed to heat and sunlight through small holes in the tiled roof. Piles of bound law gazettes were squeezed together with all sorts of colonial publications, whilst the vast rest of the loft was dominated by dozens (if not hundreds) of piles of brownish paper stacks, apparently case files and registry documents. Here, Benjamin's vision of history as debris was more than an abstract idea, it was rather reality. Like in Navaro-Yashin's (2009) description of Greek Cypriots living in the ruins of houses of the expelled Turkish, the archive gave testimony to the destructions it had gone through, but was in a sense still 'inhabited' in order to house the fragments and traces that were left from the archive of the past.

While doing research at the INEP's historical archives together with another colleague, we discovered two photo albums that contained various kinds of relatively small photographs

---

[16] The materiality of the documents (paper, stamps, ink, styles of writing, etc.) do not only give us important signs of bureaucratic practices, but can also be taken as indicators of ruination. Thanks to Dittmar Schorkowitz who brought up this topic during our workshop and demonstrated this in the context of his work on Russian and Central Asian archives (cf. Schorkowitz 1988). For a further exploration of documents as ethnographic artefacts, see the volume by Riles (2006).

depicting people, urban and rural scenes, buildings, colonial state representations, and the Studies Centre as well as maps and some drawings. They dated probably from the celebrations of the five-hundredth anniversary of the 'discovery' of Portuguese Guinea in 1946. Although some images had subtitles with further explanations, most pictures were only provided with numbers. The corresponding listings were not to be found and the link between the images and the documents had been broken, leaving them to speak for themselves as visual fragments.[17] Carlos, the late archivist, who acted as a gatekeeper, explained that those small images in the albums used to have larger counterparts that were used for the Studies Centre's exhibitions, and the albums served merely for quick overviews. Therefore, these albums may be the last remnants of Guinea-Bissau's formerly extensive photographic archive destroyed in the military conflict of 1998–1999.[18]

Another revealing field story about the loss of colonial archives is related to my research on carnival celebrations in the 1950s and 1960s. In this context, I intended to analyse the daily journal "O Araúto", which was published in Bissau until the end of the colonial period. The national library therefore held not one single issue of this journal. Disappointed, I turned to the Catholic Mission (the institution that had edited the daily journal in the colonial period), hoping that they would still possess a complete series of this publication, only to be disappointed again. An elder representative of the Franciscan mission in Bissau pointed out that all volumes had been handed over to the single-party in the year of independence because the Franciscans had feared repressions had they refused. Regrettably, at the headquarters of the former single-party, only twenty single issues of the journal were to be found on shelves in complete disarray. The "Bolemense", an official government publication of the 1950s and 1960s, suffered a similar fate. About eighty or ninety issues may have been published, but the national library possessed only some twenty issues.

During my research on so-called 'traditional' leadership in the region of Bafatá, I was hoping that the regional seat would provide me with colonial documents that would shed light on the relationship between 'traditional' leaders, the population, and the colonial administration. However, a conversation with the president of the region did not lead anywhere. He showed me a few offices in the old colonial building and declared that they had used to house old colonial documents. In order to better preserve archival resources in the regional administration, it had been decided to move all documents to the newly erected archives in Bissau in the early 1990s (cf. Lopes et al. 1999: 474; INEP 1988, 1990). But there, as we both knew, they had fallen prey to the ravages of the military conflict. In the same context, I went looking for colonial city maps that could indicate settlement patterns. Some town and city maps had been published in colonial and post-colonial publications, but I was interested in a number of specific maps (including maps of the former capital) that had never been made public. Again, I consulted the national library and archives – without any success. The librarians recommended a visit to the land registry's offices – which, likewise, had been severely damaged during the civil war of 1998–1999.

These vignettes illustrate that the search for colonial archival and library documents in post-colonial societies can resemble a true odyssey. In this case, too, documental research, as explored above in another context, has much in common with ethnographic research and its multi-sited nature. The researcher has to move around and look for his research 'objects' and data in a number of distinct places and settings, and often his questions remain unanswered (cf. Dirks 2002: 48, 52).

---

[17] See also the special issue of *History and Anthropology* edited by Marcus Banks and Richard Vokes (2010) on photographic archives and their specific histories.
[18] On the iconography of these images cf. Gable 1998, 2002; Carvalho 2004.

The episodes presented above also raise questions about the contemporary relevance of archives and libraries in societies largely marked by oral history and less by (written) historiography. In Guinea-Bissau, history is often transmitted, discussed, contested, questioned, and except for very few intellectuals, the documents that contain it are, for the moment at least, of interest to almost no one except the odd foreign researcher. This attitude is also reflected in the actions of public administrations. In rather depreciatory and sarcastic terms, Ulrich Schiefer (2002: 192–199) once described Guinea-Bissau's administration as "paperless offices". Congruently to the general administration, the national archive and the library also seem to have undergone changes regarding their function. The folders and books they once contained have been destroyed or moved, only some documents have survived. Here, the archive as a ruin appears as a relic of the past, still effective, but in a very different way. Stoler (2008: 203) congruently writes that "ruins can be marginalized structures that continue to inform social modes of organisation but that cease to function in ways they once did". But the tension between archival documents and library holdings, on the one hand, and oral history (or "histories"), on the other, has further implications. When the Malian historian Amadou Hampâté Bâ stated in 1960 at an UNESCO meeting that "In Africa, when an old man is dying, it's a library burning", he was alluding to what is commonly referred to as 'collective memory'. Inversely, one could bemoan a loss of 'collected memory' of a given nation-state, if archives and national libraries – including archives with a colonial origin – are subject to decay and neglect, leaving few resources behind that may be "given a voice" and brought to life (De Certeau 1988: 74). Dirks's suggestion that "the archive is the instantiation of the state's interest in history" (Dirks 2002: 63) was once true for the case I have described, but collective memory might now draw on other sources, making the colonial archive a marginalised space of the imperial project.

However, what is also significant after these stories of destruction and fragmentation is the 'positive' character of these processes. We have to take into account here that some liberation movements saw the archive also as a part of the apparatus of colonial oppression, not worthy of preservation. Like Nietzsche (1995) outlined in *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, *monumental* and *antiquarian* history (driving people to perform big deeds and preserving collective memory) has to be distinguished from *critical history*. The latter is essentially a condemnation and destruction of the past as written by the powerful. Hence, one also has to wonder what things have survived at all, why they have survived and then explore what this may entail for further research. Alluding to Walter Benjamin's idea of the ruin and its transposition to the colonial archive, we can also point to the endurance of fragments and debris after processes of destruction:

> "Ruins are not simply fragments of an absent whole. They are perhaps (more importantly) also surplus, excessive, surprising evidence of what endures despite the odds. Ruination is not just death, loss, and absence; it is vitality, survival, and insistent presence against all expectations." (Beasley-Murray 2011: 160)

What is interesting to point out here is the fact that while destruction might be crucial to understand the history of one archive, the survival of documents in another location might also be sustained by enduring colonial legacies. In Guinea-Bissau, we might have only residues and fragments of an older collection, but the colonial archives in Lisbon, Portugal – the former imperial power – still hold important collections from this era. Many documents were shipped from the colonies to European imperial centres for administrative reasons, but also because archives in Bissau were

destroyed or decayed under the rule of the new, independent, 'post-colonial' government. This reinstates colonial power relationships, as Mike Featherstone (2006: 592) has pointed out: if they wish to explore the history of their own country, scholars from former colonies are thus forced to travel to the old colonising nations. The fragmentation and grades of ruination of the colonial archive until today reflect power relations that were to be overcome with independence, but continue to shape our research about Guinea-Bissau's past.

7. Conclusion

This paper has explored the fragmented, broken, and ruined condition of colonial archives as a field site in historical anthropology. We have suggested that colonial archives should he approached as tensional, discontinuous, and fractured research sites that may, however, teach us about past cultures and societies as much as they may inform about the political strategies of colonialism and its forms of knowledge and power. Rather than taking the colonial archives' ruination as a negative condition that hinders the production of historical ethnography, we have followed an approach that takes ruination as a productive condition of the possibility for historical knowledge. Traces and fragments that cut across spatio-temporal boundaries can be pieced together and as such be used productively by the historian and anthropologist. In many cases the historian's practice resembles the re-assemblage of debris more than it resembles a totalising work of reconstruction of complete wholes.[19] Thus drawing on Benjamin's insights, we saw ourselves as a type of historian allegorists who, in working with nothing but fragments, come to achieve an understanding of history through *montage* of disparate and diffuse archival bits and pieces. The researcher is left with but traces and fragments that, in accordance to Benjamin's method of *montage*, have to be pieced together and may, or may not, result in coherent meaning about certain events in history.

The debris, fragments, and traces reveal the fragility and discontinuity of colonial archival documents and of the colonial archive itself; yet, they are also a generative force, both politically and epistemically. Thus, in looking at distinct empirical instances of engagement with colonial archives, we have tried to emphasise the productive side of archives as forms of colonial ruination. Closer attention paid to fragmentation and montage might help us to escape from an (over)emphasis on the continuity of history and to question linear writing styles. Or, in the sense of Benjamin (1999b: 474), seeing the archive as a ruin might be a way of bringing the present back into our research and thereby understand how the debris of colonialism remains located in the present. Colonial archives open up fields of possibilities for interpreting the historical past, but also for interfering with the historical present. Thinking through the colonial archive, as Stoler (2008: 196) observed, "emphasizes less the artifacts of empire as dead matter or remnants of a defunct regime than […] their reappropriations and strategic and active positioning within the politics of the present." Thus, in analysing the ways through which current political regimes, archivists, historians, and anthropologists deal with these remaining pieces, we hope also to be in a position to explore how former archival traces continue to shape affects, ethics, politics, and knowledge forms in the present.

---

[19] A good example for analysing 'possibilities' is given by Clarke (1999), who discusses "fantasy documents" produced by organisations outlining contingency plans in the event of mass disasters. Colonial archives often also contain similar documents, that were either never used because the state of emergency did not occur, or represent projects that were never realised due to budget constraints. See also Riles (2006: 11) on this in her very interesting study of documents outside of the colonial context.

The ethnographic case studies presented here have shared this preoccupation with the ruined nature of historical traces contained in colonial archives, as well as with their productive agencies and their contemporary impacts. We have first approached fragmentation and ruins as entailed in processes of mobility and circulation of archives of colonial collections. Collections of skulls, we have seen, often move to museums in conjunction with archival materials; yet, this movement is constantly open to silences, twists, and disappearances. The colonial archives of collections are circulating entities that can often display a broken and fragmented character, the impact of which on the use of human remains in scientific theories and in museums, for example, can be significant. In keeping a focus on archives and mobility, we have then explored how circulation affects the condition of archives in relation to people, rather than things. In this instance, the ethno-historical investigation of mobile and nomad populations requires the practice of multi-sited ethnography in the archives, the retrieval and piecing together of spatio-temporally dispersed archival traces of people. Finally, we have explored the physical contingencies of colonial archival institutions. The case of Guinea-Bissau's archives herein described represents a most obvious case of (physical) ruination. The changing materialities of Bissau's archival spaces concretely show how colonial knowledge and its physical containers are subject to on-going processes of ruination and decay, with serious consequences for historical and anthropological work. Thus, the question of what actually survives ruination – and therefore endures, against all odds – becomes crucial for historians and anthropologists working on colonial archives.

A thorough scrutiny of the traces, fragments, and debris left behind enables the historian and anthropologist to reflexively approach the past and reconsider the present. Like the allegorist, the historian often works with fragments and puts them back together through *montage*. To thus consider the archive as a field site for anthropology and history implies that one follows an ethnographic approach that accepts, and builds upon, the productive nature of archives as colonial ruinations. In doing so, it is the critical consideration of the specific devices of colonial power and knowledge production – the worlds, stories, peoples, and voices made visible in the archives, but also those silenced and excluded – that should come first in the analysis. By means of such a double operation of critique and montage, the archive becomes open to new understandings. In considering the archive as ruination, one can place the historical sources in fresh juxtapositions, destroying old, and creating new, relationships – and thereby opening history up for re-examination. The historian's work of putting together these archival fragments may therefore be compared to the task described in this essay's epigraph by the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott: A broken vase will never be whole again, but the practice of meticulously reassembling and piecing together its fragments can help us to explore its lost form in a different manner.

Bibliography

Ballantyne, Tony. 2001. Archive, State, Discipline: power and knowledge in South Asian historiography. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 3(1): 87–105.

Banks, Marcus and Richard Vokes. 2010. Routes and Traces: anthropology, photography and the archive. Special Issue of *History and Anthropology* 21(4): 337–516.

Bayly, Chris A. 1996. *Empire and Information*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bayly, Chris A. 2004. *The Birth of the Modern World. 1780–1914*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Beasley-Murray, Jon. 2011. Comment on Gordillo. *Current Anthropology* 52(2): 160.

Benjamin, Walter. 1968. Theses on the Philosophy of History. In: Hannah Arendt (ed.). *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken, pp. 255–266.

Benjamin, Walter. 1998. *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*. London/New York: Verso.

Benjamin, Walter. 1999a. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1999b. An Outsider Makes His Mark. In: Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds.). *Selected Writings: 1927–1934*. Vol. 2. Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp. 305–311.

Bille, Mikkel, Tim Sorensen and Frida Hastrup 2010. *An Anthropology of Absence: materializations of transcendence and loss*. New York: Springer

Bloch, Marc. 1964. *The Historian's Craft*. New York: Vintage Books.

Bolle, Willi. 2000. Geschichte. In: Michael Oppitz and Erdmund Wizisla (eds.). *Benjamins Begriffe*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 399–440.

Candea, Mattei. 2009. Arbitrary Locations: in defence of the bounded field-site. In: Mark-Anthony Falzon (ed.). *Multi-sited Ethnography: theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 25–46.

Carvalho, Clara. 2004. O saber e o olhar colonial: política e iconografia no Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa. *Soronda* (new series) 8: 55–83.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 1992. Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: who speaks for 'Indian' pasts? *Representations* 37: 1–26.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2007. *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference*. 2nd Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Clarke, Lee. 1999. *Mission Improbable. Using fantasy documents to tame disaster*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clémentin-Ojha, Catherine and Pierre-Yves Manguin. 2006. *A Century in Asia. The history of the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1898–2006*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet/Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient.

Cohn, Bernard S. 1996. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Coleman, Simon and Pauline von Hellermann. 2011. Introduction: queries, collaborations, calibrations. In: Simon Coleman and Pauline von Hellermann (eds.). *Multi-sited Ethnography: problems and possibilities in the translocation of research methods*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–15.

Combe, Sonia. 2001. *Archives interdites. L'histoire confisquée*. Paris: La Découverte.

Cooper, Frederick and Ann L. Stoler. 1997. *Tensions of Empire. Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Culas, Christian and Jean Michaud. 1997. A Contribution to the Study of Hmong (Miao) Migrations and History. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 153(2): 211–243.

Cupet, Pierre-Paul. 2000 [1900]. *Travels in Laos and Among the Tribes of Southeast Indochina*. The Pavie Mission Indochina Papers, Vol. 6. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Dawdy, Shannon Lee. 2010. Clockpunk Anthropology and the Ruins of Modernity. *Current Anthropology* 51(6): 761–793.

De Certeau, Michel. 1988. *The Writing of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and schizophrenia.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1996. *Archive Fever. A Freudian impression.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Didi-Huberman, Georges. 2007. Das Archiv brennt. In: Knut Ebeling and Georges Didi-Huberman (eds.). *Das Archiv brennt*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, pp. 7–36.

Dirks, Nicholas (ed.). 1992. *Colonialism and Culture*. The University of Michigan Press.

Dirks, Nicholas. 1993. Colonial Histories and Native Informants: biography of an archive. In: Carol A. Breckenbridge and Peter van der Veer (eds.). *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 279–313

Dirks, Nicholas. 2002. Annals of the Archive: ethnographic notes on the sources of history. In: Brian Keith Axel (ed.). *From the Margins: historical anthropology and its future*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 47–65.

Djaló, Iaguba. 2004. O Conflito político-militar na Guiné-Bissau e os desafios da Reconstrução e Recuperação da Memória e da Identidade Nacional. *Soronda* (new series) 8: 97–108.

Ebeling, Knut und Stephan Guenzel. 2009. *Archivologie. Theorien des Archivs in Philosophie, Medien und Künsten*. Berlin: Kadmos.

Ernst, Wolfgang. 2002. *Das Rumoren der Archive. Ordnung aus Unordnung*. Berlin: Merve.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward. 1961. *Anthropology and History: a lecture.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Of Time and the Other: how anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Falzon, Mark-Anthony (ed.). 2009. *Multi-sited Ethnography: theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Farge, Arlette. 1989. *Le Goût de l'archive*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Featherstone, Mike. 2006. Archive. *Theory Culture and Society* 23(2): 591–597.

Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Gable, Eric. 1998. Appropriate Bodies: self through the other in Manjaco and Portuguese representation, 1946–1973. *Visual Anthropology Review* 14(1): 3–18.

Gable, Eric. 2002. Bad Copies: the colonial aesthetic and the Manjaco-Portuguese encounter. In: Paul S. Landau and Deborah Kaspin (eds.). *Images and Empires. Visuality in colonial and postcolonial Africa.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 294–319.

Gay, Bernard. 1982. Approche du système colonial: histoire des contestations 'ouvertes' du Haut-Laos et du basin de la Rivière-Noire. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Paris: Université de Paris VII.

Geiger, Till, Niamh Moore and Mike Savage. 2010. *The Archive in Question.* Paper available online at http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/921/1/Moore_review_paper_march_10.pdf [accessed on January 4th 2012].

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1989. *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*. Baltimore: Hopkins University Press.

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1999. *History, Rhetoric, and Proof.* Hanover: University of New England Press.

Gordillo, Gaston. 2011. Ships Stranded in the Forest: debris of progress on a phantom river. *Current Anthropology* 52(2): 141–167.

Hamilton, Carolyn, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid. 2002. Introduction. In: Carolyn Hamilton et al. (eds.). *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, pp. 7–18.

Hildesheimer, Francoise. 1997. *Les Archives de France: Mémoire de l'histoire*. Paris: Honorée Champion.

Hopkins, Anthony G. (ed.). 2002. *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico.

INEP. 1988. *Catalogo Sumário dos Fundos de Arquivos da Administração Civil de Cacheu.* Bissau: Arquivos Históricos do Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa.

INEP. 1990. *Catalogo Sumário dos Fundos de Arquivos de Bolama.* Bissau: Arquivos Históricos do Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa.

Koselleck, Reinhart. 2004. *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lather, Patricia. 2001. Postmodernism, Post-structuralism and Post(Critical) Ethnography: of ruins, aporias and angels. In: Paul Atkinson et. al. (eds.). *Handbook of Ethnography.* London: Sage, pp. 477–492.

Lindner, Burkhardt. 2000. Allegorie. In: Michael Opitz and Erdmund Wizisla (eds.). *Benjamins Begriffe*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 50–95.

Lopes, Carlos and Peter Karibe Mendy. 1999. La chronique scientifique. Destruição da memória colectiva de um povo. A tragédia do INEP da Guiné-Bissau. *Lusotopie* 6: 473–476.

Marcus, George E. 1995. Ethnography in/of the World System: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95–117.

Marcus, George E. 2011. Multi-sited Ethnography: five or six things I know about it now. In: Simon Coleman and Pauline von Hellermann (eds.). *Multi-sited Ethnography: problems and possibilities in the translocation of research methods*. New York: Routledge, pp. 16–32.

Michaud, Jean (ed.). 2000. *Turbulent Times and Enduring Peoples: the mountain minorities of the South-East Asian Massif.* Richmond: Curzon.

Michaud, Jean. 2006. *Historical Dictionary of the Peoples of the Southeast Asian Massif.* Lanham, Toronto and Oxford: Scarecrow Press.

Michaud, Jean. 2007. *'Incidental' Ethnographers: French Catholic missions on the Tonkin-Yunnan frontier, 1880–1930.* Leiden: Brill.

Munn, Nancy D. 1992. The Cultural Anthropology of Time: a critical essay. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 93–123.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2009. Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects: ruination and the production of anthropological knowledge. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(1): 1–18.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1995. *Unfashionable Observations.* Translated by Richard T. Grey. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

O'Hanlon, Rosalind and David Washbrook. 1992. After Orientalism: culture, criticism and politics in the third world. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34(1): 141–167.

Otto, Ton and Nils Bubandt (eds.). 2010. *Experiments in Holism: theory and practice in contemporary anthropology.* Oxford: Blackwell

Pavie, Auguste. 1901. *Mission Pavie Indo-Chine, 1879–1895. Géographie et Voyages.* Paris: E. Leroux.

Rabut, Élisabeth. 1997. Le Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, premier centre delocalize des Archives Nationales. In: Société des Amis des Archives de France (ed.). *Histoires d'archives: recueil d'articles offert à Lucie Favier par ses collègues et amis*. Paris: Société des Amis des Archives de France, pp. 105–118.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1990. *Time and Narrative, Vol. III*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. 2004. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ridener, John. 2009. *From Polders to Postmodernism. A concise history of archival theory.* Minnesota: Litwin Books.

Riles, Annelise (ed.). 2006. *Documents. Artifacts of modern knowledge*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Roque, Ricardo and Kim A. Wagner. 2012. Introduction: engaging colonial knowledge. In: Ricardo Roque and Kim A. Wagner (eds.). *Engaging Colonial Knowledge: reading European archives in world history*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–32.

Roque, Ricardo. 2007. Skulls Without Words: the order of collections from Macao and Timor, 1879–82. *HoST – Journal of History of Science and Technology* 1(1): 113–154.
Availabe online at http://johost.eu/?oid=4&act=&area=5&ri=2&itid=1 [accessed 10th June 2012].

Roque, Ricardo. 2010. *Headhunting and Colonialism: anthropology and the circulation of human skulls in the Portuguese Empire, 1870–1930.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roque, Ricardo. 2011. Stories, Skulls, and Colonial Collections. *Configurations* 19(1): 1–23.

Roque, Ricardo. forthcoming. Race and the Mobility of Humans as Things. *Science, Technology and Human Values*.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism: western conceptions of the Orient.* New York: Pantheon.

Salemink, Oscar. 2003. *The Ethnography of Vietnam's Central Highlanders: a historical contextualization, 1850–1990.* London and New York: Routledge Curzon.

Schendel, Willem van. 2002. Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: jumping scale in Southeast Asia. *Environment and Planning* 20(6): 647–668.

Schiefer, Ulrich. 2002. *Von allen guten Geistern verlassen? Guinea-Bissau: Entwicklungspolitik und der Zusammenbruch afrikanischer Gesellschaften.* Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde.

Schorkowitz, Dittmar. 1988. *Die ethnohistorischen Archivdokumente zu den Kalmücken, Burjaten und Mongolen des Zentralstaatlichen Geschichtsarchives (CGIA) und des Institutsarchives für Ethnographie (AIE) in Leningrad.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: an anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1985. The Rani of Sirmur: an essay in reading the archives. *History and Theory* 24(3): 247–272.

Stoler, Ann L. 2002. Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance. *Archival Science* 2(1–2): 87–109.

Stoler, Ann L. 2008. Imperial Debris. Reflections on ruins and ruination. *Cultural Anthropology* 23(2): 191–219.

Stoler, Ann L. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense.* Princeton University Press.

Stoler, Ann L. 2010. Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: on the content in the form. In: Francis Blouin and William Rosenberg (eds.). *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 267–279.

Taussig, Michael. 1984. History as Sorcery. *Representations* 7: 87–109.

Taussig, Michael. 1991. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man. A study in terror and healing.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thomas, Nicholas. 1994. *Colonialism's Culture: anthropology, travel, and government.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995. *Silencing the Past: power and the production of history.* Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Trundle, Catherine and Chris Kaplonski. 2011. Tracing the Political Lives of Archival Documents. *History and Anthropology* 22(4): 407–414.

Young, Robert J. 2002. *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction.* London: Blackwell.

Zeitlyn, David. 2009. Understanding Anthropological Understanding: for a merological anthropology. *Anthropological Theory* 9(2): 209–231.

Zeitlyn, David. 2012. Anthropology in and of the Archives: possible futures and contingent pasts. Archives as anthropological surrogates. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41: 461–480.