

Vorlage für die Sitzung des Senats am 18. Juni 2024

**Rückgabe eines samoanischen Bootsstevens aus der Sammlung des
Übersee-Museums Bremen aus ethischen Gründen**

A. Problem

Der Bildungs- und Kulturminister von Samoa hat am 8. April 2024 im Namen der samoanischen Regierung ein Rückgabeersuchen an den Bürgermeister und Präsidenten des Senats der Freien Hansestadt Bremen gerichtet (Anlage 1).

Das Rückgabeersuchen betrifft einen Vorderstevan (vorderer Abschluss des Schiffsrumpfes, nach oben gezogene Verlängerung des Kiels eines Schiffes oder Bootes) mit folgender Provenienzzgeschichte:

Am 23. Oktober 1888 beschossen Teile der Mannschaft des deutschen Kriegsschiffs SMS „Adler“ unter Führung des Seeoffiziers Wilhelm Souchon ein samoanisches Kriegskanu (Taumualua) und nahmen es in Besitz. Die samoanische Besatzung konnte fliehen. Einen Tag später zerteilten die Deutschen das Kanu und Wilhelm Souchon erhielt den Steven, welchen er 1932 dem Museum schenkte (Inventarnummer D04870).

Im Einklang mit dem 2019 von der Staatsministerin des Bundes für Kultur und Medien, der Staatsministerin im Auswärtigen Amt für internationale Kulturpolitik, den Kulturminister*innen der Länder und den kommunalen Spitzenverbänden verabschiedeten Eckpunkte-Papier zum Umgang mit Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten wird im Übersee-Museum auch die Erwerbung von Objekten bei militärischen Zwischenfällen als ethisch unrechtmäßig angesehen.

Die Freie Hansestadt Bremen (Stadtgemeinde) ist Trägerin des Übersee-Museums, Stiftung des öffentlichen Rechts. Sammlungsgegenstände, die vor Gründung der Stiftung öffentlichen Rechts im Jahr 1999 ins Museum kamen, hat das Übersee-Museum lediglich im Besitz. Die Entscheidung über die Aufgabe des Eigentums oder über aus Eigentum resultierenden Forderungen muss daher der Senat für die Freie Hansestadt Bremen (Stadtgemeinde) treffen.

B. Lösung

Das Übersee-Museum hat gemeinsam mit dem Senator für Kultur bereits im Vorfeld des Rückgabeersuchens die Angelegenheit im Rahmen der zugänglichen Erkenntnisquellen und auf Grundlage ethischer Standards so umfassend wie möglich erforscht und aufbereitet. Als Anlage beigefügt ist der auch dem Stiftungsrat des Übersee-Museums vorgelegte Provenienzforschungsbericht (Anlage 2).

Der Anspruch des vermutlichen Eigentümers ist zwar lange verjährt, aus den in den Darlegungen in der Anlage enthaltenen Gründen wäre es aber unangebracht, die Einrede der Verjährung zu erheben und dem Ursprungsstaat die Rückgabe zu verwehren. Der Verbleib im Übersee-Museum erscheint aus rechtsethischen Gründen unangemessen.

Entscheidungsgrundlagen zur Rückgabe bietet die vom Deutschen Museumsbund herausgegebene Publikation „Leitfaden zum Umgang mit Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten“ (2021).

Zudem erfolgte mit dem gemeinsamen Eckpunktepapier folgende Verständigung: „Die Aufarbeitung der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte als Teil unserer gemeinsamen gesellschaftlichen Erinnerungskultur gehört zum demokratischen Grundkonsens in Deutschland [...]. Kulturgüter aus kolonialen Kontexten zu identifizieren, deren Aneignung in rechtlich und/oder ethisch heute nicht mehr vertretbarer Weise erfolgte, und deren Rückführung zu ermöglichen, entspricht einer ethisch-moralischen Verpflichtung und ist eine wichtige politische Aufgabe unserer Zeit.“

Die Inbesitznahme des Kanus ereignete sich noch bevor (West-) Samoa 1899 zur deutschen Kolonie wurde. Allerdings ist dieser militärische Zwischenfall einem kolonialen Kontext zuzuordnen, da bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt die imperialen Mächte USA, Großbritannien und Deutsches Reich um die Vorherrschaft über die Inselgruppe rangen.

Der Stiftungsrat des Übersee-Museums wurde in seiner Sitzung am 10. Juni 2024 mit der Angelegenheit befasst. Der Stiftungsrat hat sich der in der Unterlage dargestellten juristischen und ethischen Bewertung angeschlossen und eine Rückgabe des samoanischen Bootssteven für angemessen erachtet. Der Stiftungsrat hat den Vorstand gebeten, das De-Akzessionierungsverfahren einzuleiten.

C. Alternativen

Die Einrede der Verjährung ist rechtlich möglich und verhindert eine sonst eventuell mögliche Durchsetzung der Rückgabeforderung auf dem Rechtsweg. Aufgrund der in der Vorlage aufgeführten (rechts-)ethischen Erwägungen wird diese Alternative nicht empfohlen.

D. Finanzielle und personalwirtschaftliche Auswirkungen / Genderprüfung / Klimacheck

Die Maßnahme hat **keine finanziellen Auswirkungen**. Das Objekt hat als Museumsgut für die Freie Hansestadt Bremen keinen Verkaufswert, da eine Veräußerung ausgeschlossen ist. Auch darüber hinaus hat das Objekt zwar einen ideellen und kulturhistorischen, jedoch keinen relevanten finanziellen Wert.

Die Kosten der Rückführung werden im Rahmen des Projektes „Ozeanien digital“ durch das Auswärtige Amt getragen.

Die Maßnahme hat **keine personalwirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen**.

Genderprüfung

Kolonialismus und seine Folgen betrifft alle Geschlechter gleichermaßen, auch wenn die Auswirkungen des Kolonialismus für sie häufig unterschiedlich waren. Als Teil unserer

gemeinsamen gesellschaftlichen Erinnerungskultur gehört die Aufarbeitung der kolonialen Vergangenheit zum demokratischen Grundkonsens in Deutschland und ist über die Politik hinaus eine Aufgabe für alle Bereiche der Gesellschaft, auch für Kultur, Bildung, Wissenschaft und Zivilgesellschaft. Die Rückgabe des Objekts an Samoa trägt zur Aufarbeitung der kolonialen Vergangenheit bei und ist eine gesamtgesellschaftliche Aufgabe.

Klimacheck

Die Beschlüsse in der Senatsvorlage haben, auf Basis des Klimachecks, voraussichtlich keine Auswirkungen auf den Klimaschutz.

E. Beteiligung/ Abstimmung

Die Vorlage ist mit der Senatskanzlei abgestimmt.

F. Öffentlichkeitsarbeit / Veröffentlichung nach dem Informationsfreiheitsgesetz

Eine Veröffentlichung über das zentrale elektronische Informationsregister erfolgt nach Beschlussfassung des Senats.

Ggf. wird in Abstimmung mit dem Auswärtigen Amt und weiteren Beteiligten eine Pressemitteilung über die Pressestelle des Senats veröffentlicht.

G. Beschluss

1. Der Senat nimmt die Unterlage „Rückgabe eines samoanischen Bootsstevens aus der Sammlung des Übersee-Museums Bremen aus ethischen Gründen“ zur Kenntnis und schließt sich der darin enthaltenen Bewertung an.
2. Der Senat beschließt, auf die ggf. rechtlich mögliche Einrede der Verjährung zu verzichten und den in der Anlage näher bezeichneten samoanischen Bootsstegen im Zuge eines De-Akzessionierungsverfahrens aus dem Sammlungsbestand des Übersee-Museums an den Independent State of Samoa (Malo Sa'oloto Tuto'atasi o Sāmoa), vertreten durch den Bildungs- und Kulturminister von Samoa, herauszugeben.

Anlagen:

1. Kopie des Rückgabeersuchens des Bildungs- und Kulturministers von Samoa an den Bürgermeister und Präsidenten des Senats der Freien Hansestadt Bremen vom 5. April 2024
2. Provenienzforschungsbericht



MĀLŌ O SAMOA

OFISA O LE MINISITA

**Ā'OGA MA AGANU'U, IUNIVESITĒ AOA O SĀMOA MA LE PŪLEGA O FA'AILOGA MA TUSI PASI
TAUALOA O SĀMOA**

8 April 2024

Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Andreas Bovenschulte
Präsident des Senats der Freien Hansestadt Bremen
Am Markt 21
28195 Bremen
Germany

Dear Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Andreas Bovenschulte,

I pray that this email finds you well. Samoa's material culture is considered important to the representation and maintenance of the national pride for all Samoans. Thank you for collaborating with the National University of Samoa (NUS) these past two years on projects related to Samoan heritage through material objects stored and preserved at the Übersee Museum in Germany. We are also extremely grateful for your generosity in training one of our students at NUS as an intern at Übersee for a little over a year.

In your possession is the sawn-off end to the tip of the forward head of a war canoe *taumualua* also known in your collection as the "prow." In Samoa's history, the *taumualua* was not only a war canoe but also a transportation used for various reasons. According to our historians, the prow was taken by a German Admiral Souchon during the 1888 Samoan Civil War and was later donated in 1932 to the Übersee Museum as a part of its ethnographic collection

According to our researchers at NUS, the prow's history spans a little over a century during the civil war of 1888 between one of Samoa's leading paramount chiefs Tamasese and the alliance of Malietoa and Mata'afa's war party. During the war, the Germans supported Tamasese's war party that occupied Mulinu'u Point or government headquarters. Mulinu'u today is the site of the Parliament of Samoa.

On the evening of 23 October 1888 around 5 pm, over 30 men from the Malietoa-Mata'afa war party were in a *tauluamua* heading toward Mulinu'u Point. According to affidavits published in the newspapers at the time, the men in the *tauluamua* were travelling to retrieve a canon that was lying in the reef in the area occupied by Tamasese's troops and their ally German sailors. The armed Germans policing the area fired upon the *taumualua* and retrieved the canon. According to Souchon's diary entry, the "boat was painstakingly sawn up and chopped up . . . and taken as firewood." The prow was preserved and taken by Souchon and after over forty years in his possession, he donated this object to the Übersee Museum.

This letter serves as a formal request by the Government of Samoa to please consider the repatriation of the prow back to Samoa (catalogue number D4870). We are requesting the prow as a significant piece of Samoan history that will help us learn about Samoa's political, social and cultural past. We will continue to use your expertise to help preserve and care for this most important object.

Please direct any inquiries to me at the phone number listed above or by email to the address I have already provided. Thank you for your assistance in this most urgent matter, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Seuula Ioane Tua'au', written in a cursive style.

Seuula Ioane Tua'au
MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

**Provenance Research on a Prow Taken by Germans from a
Taumualua War Canoe in 1888**



Übersee-Museum Bremen
Foundation under Public Law
Bahnhofsplatz 13
D 28195 Bremen
Germany

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Preface

The Übersee-Museum Bremen has started a digital cooperation project around its collections from Oceania. This will lead to the launch of a digital platform called *The Blue Continent – Platform for Dialogue, Perspectives, and Insights of the Pacific* in 2024. The content of the platform has been developed in close collaboration with the *Centre for Samoan Studies of the National University of Samoa* and other Pacific Islanders.

During the research on the Samoa collections the team came across a „bowsprit“. Its provenance seemed potentially problematic. As the museum's provenance researcher, Bettina von Briskorn, happened to be involved with a research on Admiral Souchon, the donor of the prow, in a project funded by the *German Lost Art Foundation*, she was able to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of this piece in 1888 as reported by Souchon himself. The Übersee-Museum's close contact with the *National University of Samoa* in turn provided the opportunity to commission Dr Brian T. Alofaituli to shed light on the Samoan perspective on the events that took place in that year. These two provenance reports are presented here.

Provenance Report on the Samoan Prow D 4870

Summary

In 1932, the Bremen Museum, then called “Städtisches Museum für Natur-, Völker- und Handelskunde” received the tip of a prow from a Samoan war canoe as a gift from Admiral Wilhelm Souchon (1864-1946). The admiral himself had received this part of a boat during his service on the warship SMS “Adler” as a young naval officer. The prow in question comes from a canoe of the type “Taumualua” which was captured under Souchon's command on 23 October 1888, sawn up and distributed the next day. At the time there was a civil war in Samoa. The two warring parties were supported by the imperial powers of the U.S.A., Great Britain or the German Empire, in accordance with their interests. The crew of the canoe, seized by the German marines, belonged to the Mataafa war party. Mataafa was not recognised by the Germans, but by the U.S.A. and Great Britain, as the rightful political leader of the Samoans. As far as we know, there were no serious injuries or even deaths in this military incident. The circumstances of the prow's seizure make it seem appropriate to return it to Samoa for ethical reasons. It was not until 1899 that the western islands of Samoa became a German colony.

The starting point

In August 1932, Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, who lived at Horner Heerstraße 23 in Bremen, donated a collection of ethnographic artefacts to the “Städtisches Museum für Natur-, Völker- und Handelskunde” (Municipal Museum of Natural History, Ethnology and Trade) – today's Übersee-Museum. A handwritten list of the collection compiled by himself comprises of 17 different catalogue numbers, some of which include several pieces each. The first item on this list is the “tip of the bowsprit of a Samoan war canoe holding about 70 men, taken from the insurgents by SMS Adler 23 Oct. 1888 shells as a hanging”.¹

The historical sources, in this case logbooks, life reports and newspaper articles have survived² and allow a more precise reconstruction of the historical events that led to Souchon appropriating this part of the boat. It also offers the opportunity to present both the German and Samoan perspectives on this event.

¹ Archive Übersee-Museum (ÜM) 333, list Souchon. The item has been inventoried as Object D 4870.

² Wilhelm Souchon's estate can be viewed at the “Bundesarchiv” which means the Federal Archives (BArch) N 156/1 to 36 and is also available as a digital copy of microfilms and originals at <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/d5ce3a88-8101-4559-b896-756184f34c6d/> (last accessed 11.04.2024). The library of the Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg/University of the “Bundeswehr” (Federal Army) holds three handwritten diaries under the shelf marks MIL 058 2AD YC0007-1 to 4, covering the period 1887-1889, 1892-1893 and 1900-1902. These can also be found in the Federal Archives. The library also holds a souvenir album in form of a collage of postcards, greeting cards, business cards, menus and other papers.

Who was Admiral Souchon?

Wilhelm Theodor Anton Souchon was born in Leipzig on 2 June 1864. His father Wilhelm Ferdinand, a portrait painter by profession, died when Souchon was twelve years old. His mother Klara, née Naumann, married the Privy Councillor Genast after his father's death. Souchon's education first took him to the Kiel Naval School and later to the Naval Academy.³ After his training, he served as a young man on the Australian station in Oceania from 1887-1889. In his memoirs, Souchon writes:

“My 2 ½ year stay in the South Seas can justifiably bear the name ‘Samoa’, as it was filled with our struggle for possession of this marvellous group of islands, the pearl of the South Seas. Written with a blush of anger at the deceit and greed of the Anglo-Saxons, with blood and tears, it is nevertheless a chapter of my longing for the fairyland / [...] I was part to the crew of the small cruiser 'Adler', launched in 1883, with a displacement of 884 tonnes and a crew of 127, until this ship foundered in the harbour of Apia on 16 March 1889.”⁴

Wilhelm Souchon's service in Oceania coincided with the Samoa Crisis, in which the imperialist powers of the USA, Great Britain and the German Empire struggled for supremacy in Samoa. Souchon experienced the German defeat at Vaialele⁵. He also escaped death on 16 March 1889 when a cyclone destroyed the warships and merchant ships in Apia harbour – including the SMS Adler – as he was assigned to the shore watch. It was not until ten years after this event that Savaii and Upolu, the western islands of Samoa, were to become German colonial territory and the other part of the archipelago was taken over by the Americans. The British received Tonga and parts of the Solomon Islands as compensation.⁶

The admiral's life was repeatedly linked to events of historical significance. He was involved in the incidents that led to the Ottoman Empire entering the First World War on the side of the Central Powers (German Empire and Austria-Hungary) in the summer of 1914. This is also the reason why he was so well known and regarded by his contemporaries. When the revolution broke out in Germany, at the end of the war in 1918, and war-weary sailors mutinied in Kiel, forming workers' and soldiers' councils, Admiral Souchon was governor at this naval base. His task was to bring the situation under control – but he didn't succeed.⁷ Wilhelm Souchon spent the last years of his life in Bremen, which is certainly also due to the fact that his second wife, Violet, née Lahusen, was from a well-known Bremen family of businessmen.⁸ The press in the Hanseatic city, but also other newspapers in the German Reich, regularly reported on

³ Matti E. Mäkelä: Souchon der Goebenadmiral greift in die Weltgeschichte ein, Brunswick 1936, 26 f.

⁴ BArch (see FN 2) N156/7 'From my life'. Autobiography of Wilhelm Souchon (handwritten), 21. November 1933, 170-171.

⁵ The German perspective on the battle is provided by: Franz Reinecke: Samoa, Berlin 1902 (Süsserotts Kolonialbibliothek Bd. III/IV), 55-59.

⁶ Cf. Horst Gründer: Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien, Paderborn et al. 2023 (8th edition), 99-104 and 103-105.

⁷ Cf. Sonja Kinzler / Doris Tillmann (eds.): Die Stunde der Matrosen: Kiel und die deutsche Revolution 1918, Darmstadt 2018, 128 and Christian Lübcke: Zehn Tage im November. Eine Rekonstruktion des Kieler Matrosenaufstands, in: *ibid.*, 97-103; see also David Fromkin: A Peace to End All Peace. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East, 62-76.

⁸ „Staatsarchiv Bremen“, which is the State Archive (StAB) 4,82/1 2099 Einwohnermeldekartei Wilhelm Souchon and wife.

his life on occasions such as his birthdays or service anniversaries.⁹ Wilhelm Souchon died in Bremen on 13 January 1946.¹⁰

What happened on 23 October 1888 and the following days? – Souchon's statements in a historical context

What exactly happened in October 1888 when the prow was 'taken away' from the 'insurgents'? To get closer to a possible answer to this question, we can refer to Wilhelm Souchon's diary.¹¹

In 1888, a civil war raged in Samoa between the Tamasese and the Mataafa party. The imperialist powers, the USA, the German Empire and Great Britain were represented by consuls in Apia, which was a neutral zone of an international community. Warships of the great powers were moored in the harbour and by supporting one of the civil war parties, they tried to protect their own interests and gain influence. Germans owned significant coconut plantations in Samoa, which supplied the coveted commodity copra, the dried flesh of the coconut, from which oil is extracted. The Germans had sided with Tamasese, while the British and Americans decided to support Mataafa.¹²

At around 8 p.m. on 23 October 1888, the German crew of the gunboat SMS 'Adler' was about to accept an invitation to board the 'Lizard', a warship of the British Royal Navy¹³, when it was noticed that the guard at the German consulate was burning torches, thus sending a signal. Shortly afterwards, gunfire was heard on the bridge next to the consulate. Under the leadership of naval officer Wilhelm Souchon, two dinghies were taken ashore. According to Souchon in his diary, the marines were supposed to prevent a Samoan war canoe belonging to Mataafa's party from making booty. They succeeded in cutting off the canoe and eventually captured it. The crew of the canoe had jumped into the water when they were called, and the Germans fired at the swimming Samoans in the darkness. Souchon states that he had not actually intended to fire. The canoe was towed away and taken on board of the SMS Adler. In his diary Wilhelm Souchon wrote that it had come from Manono. In his notes he describes the boat as very well made and beautiful. A cannon is said to have been on

⁹ Souchon's work is the subject of the following newspaper articles, among others: Admiral Souchon 65 Jahre, in: *Weser-Zeitung* No. 323, 2 June 1929; Hollweg: Admiral Souchon 65 Jahre, in: *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 2525, 4 June 1929; Wilhelm Sauer: Das Logbuch des Admirals, in: *Weser-Zeitung* (Beilagen) No. 512-516, 14-18 October 1933; Admiral Souchon. On his 70th birthday, in: *Berliner Tageblatt* No. 256, 2 June 1934; A.N.: Deutscher Durchbruch nach den Dardanellen. On the 75th birthday of Admiral (ret.) Souchon, in: *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* No. 148, 31 May 1939; Ehrentag unseres 'Goeben'-Admirals, in: *Bremer Zeitung*. Official party newspaper of the National Socialists of Bremen, 1 June 1939; Sr [Wilhelm Sauer]: Aus dem Logbuch des 'Goeben'-Admirals'. Admiral Souchon 75 Jahre, in: *Bremer Nachrichten mit Weser-Zeitung* No. 149, 2 June 1939; 60 Jahre Soldat, in: *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* No. 102, 12 April 1941. See also Staatsarchiv Bremen (StAB) 9, S 3-4642 Admiral Wilhelm Souchon. I would like to thank Leo Heyer, who completed a student internship at the Übersee-Museum, for compiling and editing the various articles on Souchon

¹⁰ StAB 4.82/1 2099 (see FN 5).

¹¹ Diary MIL 058 2AD YC0007-02 (see FN 2).

¹² Cf. Gründer (see FN 6).

¹³ The Samoan Hurricane of 1889. From the Journal of the late Rear Admiral John M. Hawley, U.S. Navy. Submitted by his daughter, Beatrice Anderson Stengel, in: *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 65, December 1939, No. 442, 1756-1774, online: <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1939/december/samoan-hurricane-1889> (last accessed 12.04.2024).

a platform of the canoe. The Germans also found some traces of blood in the boat. According to the naval officer, the canoe could hold 60-70 men.

On 24 October the boat was sawn apart, the pieces of interest were distributed and the rest was turned into firewood. As part of this operation, Wilhelm Souchon came into possession of the prow. The cannon was sunk. The incident caused quite a stir in the international community of Apia and among the Americans and British. The two superpowers protested, reinforced their consulates and manned them with guards. Mataafa, on the other hand, remained calm. Souchon expresses admiration that the Samoan leader did not retaliate.

Appendix

- A. Photographs of the object
- B. Wilhelm Souchon's diary entries from 23., 24. and 27. October 1888
- C. Transcriptions of the diary extracts
- D. Souchon's list
- E. Transcription of the list
- F. Transcription of Souchon's postcard
- G. Entry of the Collection in the accession book of 1904

A. Photographs of the Object





B. Diary Entries by Wilhelm Souchon from 23rd, 24th and 27th of October 1888 (Library of the Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg, Shelfmark: MIL 58 2 AD)

B. M. Dr. Adler Ross. Reich. Freitag.

Vorstellung für die am Land befindliche Russ. Pflanzung, Pflanz. u. Pflanz. etc.

23 7⁴⁵ p.m. als wir im Begriff standen, eines Führers zu
 suchen um Land der Liza zu folgen, brach Caesar von der Lan-
 ze Lottman's Fockelstein ab, bald darauf folgte mir (19) Pflanz-
 Pflanzstein von der Banka neben dem Laufloch. Ich fuhr mit ein-
 iger Kutter u. Jolla 8'5' am Land mit dem Auftrag ein paar russische
 Pflanzstein, welche unbekannt ist & befindet in Melinua zum Zweck des
 Land. man hat zu Lande nachzu, abzugeben. Ich erwiderte das Land
 nur in der Nähe des Lauflochs, es ist für von Pflanzstein aber in
 Pflanz, das auf unser Pflanzstein für, das Land in der Nähe für
 Laufloch gestrichelt ist und nun unter dem Land nach Melinua gehen.
 Caesar war mit der Liza zu Lande davon abgewandt. Ich rick-
 te u. da Pflanzstein u. geringe Pflanz, das Pflanz zu gehen, und nun von
 der Pflanz des Melinua gestrichelt und kommen, indem ich das Land
 nur von Land der Liza benutzte, fünfzig gehen nach Mel-
 inua (Decker's Pflanz), um dem Land der Liza zu folgen. Bei
 dem Land etwa 30 m Pflanzstein, rufen sie mich an, ich rief sie,
 man hat die Pflanzstein über Land Pflanzstein. Ich sollte vor-
 für die Pflanz der Pflanzstein fertig machen lassen und befehlen

October

Asia

1888

nicht zu führen ohne meinen Befehl; als ich das Boot verließ, hatten
jeder eines der beiden noch einen reisigen Mann (Olderdiem)
die Leute nun hatten sich einzeln in die verschiedenen Hütten
der kleinen Fischerhütten ohne irgend welche Art von Erfolg. In der Folge
wurde begonnen, ließ ich 20 Leute von dem Boot abgehen, die Leute
wurden darauf das Boot in die Höhe und brachte es 8 40 p. m. am Boot. Das
Boot, taumalua von Manono geföhrt, erhielt nicht die Befehle
mehr, weshalb ich mich gelegentlich eines Besuchs von Manono in die Haf-
fen stellte, man wird das Boot und die zu befehlen. Von dort
habe ich ohne Zweifel zu formen geföhrt, die großen reisigen Mann, davon
einer mich zu begleiten würde, die beiden und die Reisigen außer dem
langen Boot und die Leute, in der Mitte eine Plattform, darauf ein
kleines Boot geföhrt wurde. Das Boot konnte gut 60-70 Mann föhren.
Im Boot befanden sich fünf von den Reisigen, ein Boot, auf dem
beiden, ein Boot mit den Reisigen und ein Boot mit den Reisigen
24 Ein andern Boot wurde das Boot nicht zu formen und
zu klein (es fällt nicht von den Reisigen formen zu formen
ein Boot zu formen) und will das Boot nicht zu formen,
das Boot nicht zu formen, die Reisigen zu formen und die
Reisigen. Die großen Reisigen nicht unter der Asia Seite der

N. M. Dr. Adler Swos. Kongst. fritze.

• ublijen Harib auf mid fackte zur folg. , dorp Kurvorkam
• 2 jungbinder grofthier und 2 jor ruff Linsf. Cate mit kleinen
den bapften und befestigten. Matakafas 6 Mup. zung mensche
27 mündt, da er sich nicht riefte. Di. Duffen bejloffen di. Saunon-
• Times abzugeben; fenten ab-ruef und Koniffan sei dann in Singala
• fanglaren. - Mr. George fial nom fvingauordtkuppen und bruy
fij den Oberpfeckel. Auf der Stufe der Luft, di. Cesar und
• uf abwaspfelnd fenten, fenthan mir di. folaidarung, dorp mir
• San 10^{te}. m. bis 7^{te}. m. der Luft. moran, Albetrossheid nur auf
• einige Tage abwecht, Leute müssen in der Luft. verbleiben. gung.

C. Transcription¹⁴

Diary entries by Wilhelm Souchon from 23rd, 24th and 27th of October 1888 (Library of the Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg, shelf mark: MIL 58 2 AD YC 0007-02)

„[In the header:] S.M.Kr.[euzer] Adler Korv.[etten] Kapt. Fritze

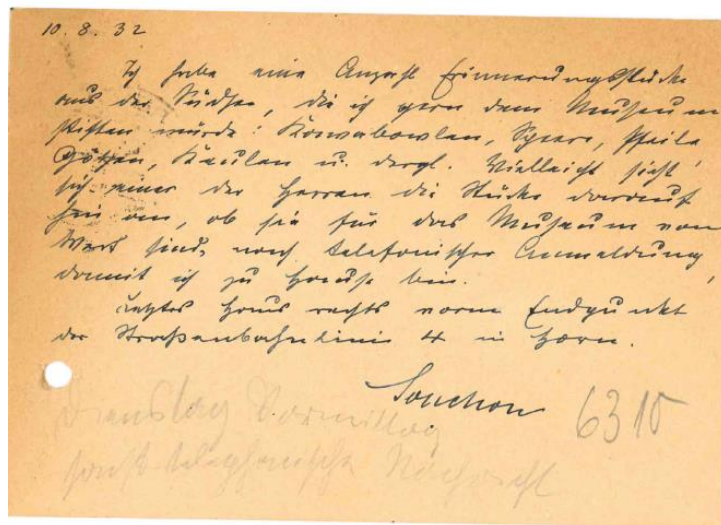
23 [October] 7'45 p.m. as we were about to accept an invitation to music on board the **Lizard Caesar** lit torches on the consulate watch, soon after we heard (19) rapid fire on the bridge next to the consulate. I went ashore with an armed cutter and dinghy 8'5 with the order to intercept a Samoan war canoe, which was trying to land in **Mulinuu** with (the) 50 men for the purpose of taking booty. I suspected the canoe to be near the consulate and was informed by **Biermann** that the boat had turned back in response to our signalling, had passed the consulate and was now sailing ashore to **Matautu**. **Caesar** had left there with the guard on land. As the tide was high and the sea low, I took the risk of going across to the reef, which I managed to do before the mouth of the **Mulivai** and, noticing the canoe as we travelled, arrived at **Matautu** (Becker's house) early enough to divert the canoe's path. When the canoe was about 30 metres away, they called me, I shouted 'ii' [?], whereupon the occupants of the canoe jumped overboard. Previously I had the crew's guns made ready and ordered them not to fire without my orders; however, when I rammed the boat, the crew, led by a four-year-chief mate (**Olderdisser**), fired on their own initiative at individual swimming Kanakas, of course in total darkness without any prospect of success. Once the firing had started, I had twenty shots fired by the people who saw them. I then took the canoe in tow and brought it on board at 8.40 pm. The canoe **taum[u]alua** belonging to **Manono**, which was perhaps the same one, I had seen on an occasional visit to **Manono** in July, was one of the largest and most beautifully built. It was made of very solid wood, put together without nails, with large ornate sterns, one of which was given to me, frames and 16 transverse[?]thwarts in addition to the long bench and braces, and a platform in the centre to which an old cannon[?] was lashed. The boat could hold a good 60-70 men. In the boat there were also the pageien [paddles], an axe and various cartridge cases, as well as traces of blood on the braces and individual dents [presumably the rowing benches, otherwise struts].

24 [October] The next evening the boat was painstakingly sawn up and chopped up (it held together like a leather suitcase after the ribs had been removed) and collected together as firewood, the gun barrel was piled up, the shell decorations and pagaia etc. were distributed. The whole affair stirred up the usual dust [sic] among the Apia clique and resulted in the Americans and English protesting and occupying and fortifying their respective consulates with small guards. **Mataafa's**

27 [October] moderation was admired because he did not take revenge. The Germans decided to cancel the **Samoa Times**; did so and then bought them in single copies - Mtr [sailor] **Grange** fell from the hammock box and broke his thigh. On the watch ashore, which **Caesar** and I did alternately, we had the relief of being on board from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., **albertross bathing** was allowed for a few days, people washed stuff in the consular watch.”

¹⁴ Transcription by Bettina von Briskorn. Names written in Latin script are bold.

Postcard Souchon (Archive Uebersee-Museum ÜM 177, vol. 3)



Transcription¹⁵

“10.8.32

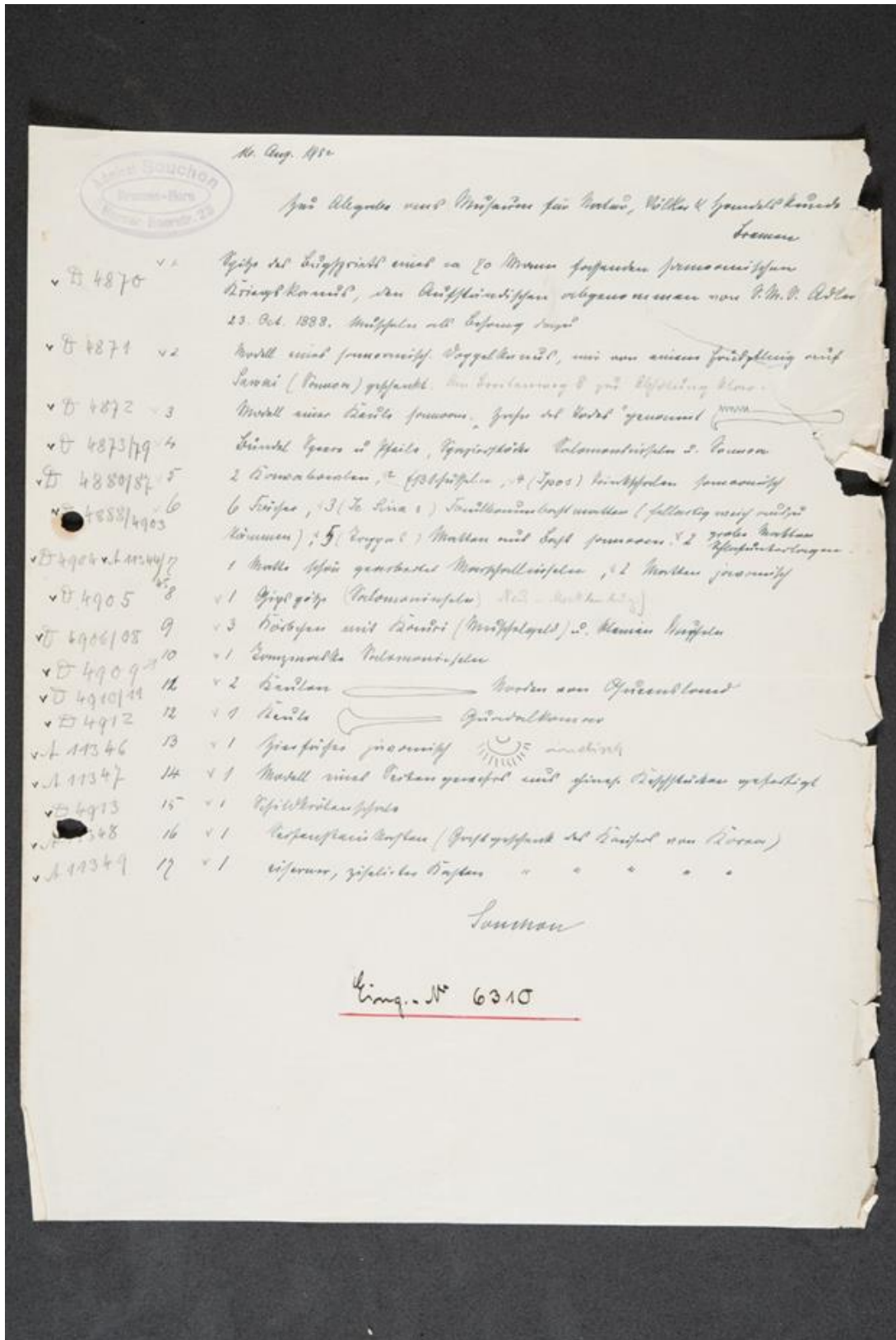
I have a number of memorabilia from the South Seas that I would like to donate to the museum: kawabowls, spears, arrows, idols, clubs, etc. Perhaps one of the gentlemen will look at the items to see if they are of value to the museum, after telephoning me so that I am at home.

Last house on the right before the end of tram line 4 in Horn.

Souchon [Notes in pencil in different handwriting:] Tuesday morning otherwise telephone message [E-No. in pencil:] 6310”

¹⁵ Transcription by Bettina von Briskorn.

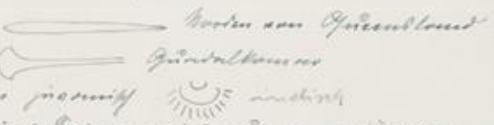
D. Souchon's List (Archive Übersee-Museum ÜM 333)



10. Aug. 1910

Spis Allegats von Mofairom für Kolan, Nötter & Gumbel Kolan
Lorenz

- ✓ B 4870 v. 1 Spis ist einseitig mit ca 20 Mauer gefaschten Prozessionsfiguren
Königskanzel, dem Beschäftigten abgekauften von P.M.B. Berlin
23. Oct. 1888. Muffeln mit Befangung
- ✓ B 4871 v. 2 Metall eines (unvollständig) Gogelkranz, mit von einem Friedhof mit
Lorenz (Lorenz) gefascht. im Verlaufe & gut Befangung
- ✓ B 4872 v. 3 Metall eines kleinen Bronzes, Spis ist best. gemacht
- ✓ B 4873/19 v. 4 Einzel Spis & Heile, Gogelkranz Kolanmuffeln & Lorenz
- ✓ B 4880/87 v. 5 2 Bronzefiguren, 2 (Spis) Muffeln gefascht
- ✓ B 4881/4903 v. 6 6 Spis, 3 (to Lorenz) Metallkranz mit Muffeln (fallig mit Muffeln
Kolan), 5 (Spis) Muffeln mit Spis gefascht & 2 große Bronzen
Kolanmuffeln
- ✓ B 4904 v. 7 1 Metall Spis gefascht Muffeln, 2 Muffeln gefascht
- ✓ B 4905 v. 8 1 Gogelkranz (Kolanmuffeln) & 2 Muffeln
- ✓ B 4906/108 v. 9 3 Muffeln mit Lorenz (Muffeln) & kleinen Muffeln
- ✓ B 4909 v. 10 1 Bronzefigur Kolanmuffeln
- ✓ B 4910/11 v. 11 2 Kolan
- ✓ B 4912 v. 12 1 Kolan
- ✓ A 11346 v. 13 1 Spis gefascht gefascht
- ✓ A 11347 v. 14 1 Metall eines Kolan gefascht mit Spis Beschäftigten gefascht
- ✓ B 4913 v. 15 1 Kolanmuffeln
- ✓ B 4914 v. 16 1 Bronzefigur (Spis gefascht mit Lorenz von Lorenz)
- ✓ A 11349 v. 17 1 Muffeln, zifolische Muffeln



Lorenz

ling. N° 6310

E. Transcription¹⁶

Souchon's List (Archive Übersee-Museum ÜM 333)

"16 Aug. 1932 [Stamp: Admiral Souchon Bremen-Horn Horner Heerstraße 23]

For delivery to the 'Städtisches Museum für Natur, Völker- und Handelskunde' Bremen

D4870¹⁷ 1. tip of the prow of a Samoan war canoe with a capacity of approx. 70 men, taken from the insurgents by SMS Adler 23 Oct. 1888 Shells as hangings to it

D4871 2. model of a Samoan double canoe. Double canoe, given to me by a chief from Sawai (Samoa). [in pencil]: At Breitenweg 8 clear for collection.

D4872 3. model of a Samoan club. Called 'tooth of death'

D4873/79 4. bundle of spears and arrows, walking sticks Solomon Islands and Samoa

D4880/87 5. 2 kava bowls, 2 eating bowls, 4 (lpos) drinking bowls Samoan

D4888/4903 6. 6 fans, 3 (Je Sina s) mats made of raffia (soft to comb out like fur), 5 (Togga s) mats made of raffia samoan. 2 coarse sleeping mats

D4904

A11344/45 7. 1 mat beautifully worked, Marshall Islands, 2 mats Javanese

D4905 8. 1 plaster idol Solomon Islands [in pencil, museum employee Weißenborn:] Neu Mecklenburg [New Ireland]

D4906/08 9. 3 baskets with kauri (shell money) and small shells

D4909 10. 1 Solomon Islands dance mask

D4910/11 11. 2 clubs [club drawing] north of Queensland

D4912 12. 1 club [club drawing] Guadalcanar

A11346 13. 1 ornamental fan Javanese [drawing] [in pencil, museum staff Weißenborn:] Indian

A11347 14. 1 model of a side-rifle made from Chinese cheese pieces. Chinese cheese pieces

D4913 15. 1 turtle shell

¹⁶ Transcription by Wencke Bammann and Bettina von Briskorn; red objects are Samoan.

¹⁷ Inventory numbers given in pencil by museum employee Weißenborn.

A11348 **16.** 1 soapstone box (gift from the Emperor of Korea)

A11349 **17.** 1 iron, chiselled box (gift from the Emperor of Korea)

Souchon [Signature]

[museum employee Weißenborn added:] Entry no. 6310"

F. Entry of the Collection in the Accession Book of 1904

1932

357

Eing. No.	Spez. Kat.	Gegenstand	Von wem? Woher?	G. K. T.	Datum	Bemerkungen
6309		1 lebende Ringelnatter	Gustav Schwalb Hemelingen, Wintalstr. 18	G. 3	10/1/1904	
6310		Blaugrußfische, Sammlung, fünfzigstücker aus der Südsee	Admiral Souchon Bremen-Horn Horner Heerstr. 23	G. 3	11/1/1904	

Transcription

“6310 | Ethnographic collection mainly from the South Seas | Admiral Souchon
Bremen-Horn Horner Heerstr. 23 | G[eschenk] D[ankschreiben] 25.VIII 32| 17. VIII“

Provenance Report on the Samoan Prow D 4870

Summary

The prow (D 4870) is a part of the taumualua war canoe seized by Admiral Wilhelm Souchon in October 1888. The incident occurred during the civil war between two rival paramount chiefs, Mata'afa and Tamasese. The taumualua was heading toward the Mulinu'u area to retrieve an abandoned cannon in the reef, an area that was a "neutral" no-war zone for the three imperial powers of the USA, Great Britain, and the German Empire, and for Samoans. The taumualua belonged to Mata'afa's men in Matautu, and they were heading toward the Mulinu'u area, the camp of Tamasese's troops. During the civil war, the USA and Great Britain supported Mata'afa, whereas the Germans supported Tamasese. The German marines shot at the Samoans in the taumualua. Fortunately, no one was injured. As a result, the taumualua was seized by the German marines and chopped up for firewood, but Souchon took the tip of the prow and added it to his ethnographic collection. In 1932, Souchon donated the prow and other Samoan and Pacific objects from his collection to the Übersee-Museum Bremen.

This provenance report uses archival sources, including journals and notebooks, online libraries, and documents provided by the Übersee-Museum Bremen, to understand the context of the events that led to the seizure of the prow and its cultural significance to Samoa.

Definition of Terms and Names

Admiral Wilhelm Souchon: He served as a naval officer on the SMS *Adler* during the 1888 Samoan Civil War. On the day the prow was seized by Germany on 23 October 1888, Souchon served as patrol commander.

Civil War 1888: This is the civil war between villages, districts, and kin associated with the two leading paramount chiefs of Samoa at the time, Mata'afa Iosefo and Tamasese Titimaea. During this civil war, the Germans sent Malietoa Laupepa, kin to Mata'afa Iosefo, into exile.

HMS Gunboat *Lizard*: A warship of the British Royal Navy docked in the Apia harbor during the 1888 civil war.

Malietoa Laupepa: He is the paramount title holder of the Malietoa family. In 1887, Tamasese Titimaea defeated Malietoa Laupepa in war, and with the assistance of the Germans, Malietoa was exiled to Cameroon, Africa, and later to the Marshall Islands.

Mata'afa Iosefo: American and British troops supported Mata'afa during the 1888 civil war. He challenged Tamasese Titimaea over supremacy in Samoa after Malietoa Laupepa's exile. Mata'afa later served as the Ali'i Sili in 1900 when the Western Islands of Samoa became a German colony.

Mulinu'u: This is the seat of the Samoan Government. Tamasese's troops and their German allies occupied the Mulinu'u peninsula during the civil war 1888.

Prow: This is the sawn-off piece of a taumualua. Souchon donated the prow and other objects from his ethnographic collection to the Übersee-Museum Bremen in 1932.

Samoa Islands: In 1899, the USA, Germany, and Great Britain divided the Samoan archipelago. The western islands of Upolu, Savai'i, Manono, and Apolima went to Germany. The USA occupied Tutuila Island and the Manu'a Islands. Great Britain relinquished their ties to Samoa and occupied parts of the German spheres of influence in Africa and the Pacific.

Tamasese Titimaea: Paramount chiefly title supported by German forces; he challenged Malietoa Laupepa and Mata'afa Iosefo for the kingship of Samoa during the late nineteenth century.

Taumualua: This is a double-hauled war canoe.

A Brief History of the Samoan Islands

The Samoan Islands are culturally connected through fa'a-samoa (Samoan way of life), which consists of its traditions, customs, language, and chief system. The archipelago comprises of five inhabited islands divided among political districts. With chiefly authority spanning centuries, the matai (chief) is entrusted with the responsibilities to care for the extended family or 'aiga potopoto and are trustees of family lands, knowledgeable in family genealogies, customs, and protocols. The matai chosen by the extended family is the representative to the council of chiefs at both the village and district levels.

Although Samoans have traded and interacted with neighboring islands for centuries, the first contact between the West and Samoans was in the late eighteenth century. It was not until 1830, with the arrival of Christian missionaries, that the West impacted Samoan society with a monotheistic religion, new ideologies, and development. Despite Samoa's exposure to new religious, economic, social, and cultural changes due to Western influence, the rivalries between the two leading families of Malietoa and Tupua (Tamasese) ensued until the end of the nineteenth century. The imperial powers of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain came to the islands at different periods for economic or political positioning in the region. During the 1870s to 1890s civil wars, the United States and Great Britain sided with Malietoa and Mata'afa title holders; Germany supported the Tupua representative, Tamasese.

The Tripartite Convention of 1899 divided the islands of Samoa between the three imperial powers. Germany controlled the Western islands of 'Upolu, Savai'i, Manono, and Apolima. The United States, which had a military presence in Tutuila as early as 1878, accepted Tutuila, Aunu'u, and later the Manu'a Islands as a territory. Great Britain relinquished its ties to Samoa and accepted German colonies elsewhere in the Pacific.

The Western Islands of Samoa gained their independence from New Zealand in 1962. The American Samoa Islands remain a US territory.

Historical context on the events on 23 October 1888 and after

In addition to the diaries of Wilhelm Souchon, online newspapers and secondary sources by historians provide detailed accounts of the events on 23 October 1888. The civil war between the troops of Tamasese and Mata'afa destroyed property and human lives. Imperial powers had backed the civil war for titular control in Samoa by these paramount chiefs. The German Empire supported Tamasese, and Mata'afa had the support of the USA and Great Britain. The USA, the German Empire, and Great Britain established consuls in Apia to protect economic and political interests. It had established neutral zones or 'ele'ele sa in town and adjacent districts.

Tamasese and his troops occupied the Mulinu'u peninsula, also known as the seat of Government or the capital of Samoa. Tamasese's camp was under close protection of the German naval forces. Today, Mulinu'u continues to have that significance, as is the location of Samoa's parliament and other government buildings. On the other side of Apia Bay, Mata'afa's troops were based in Matautu.

Between 5 pm and 6 pm on the evening of 23 October 1888, twenty-six men and a woman started from the Matafagatele area toward Matautu on a taumualua. At Matautu, the woman went ashore, and a couple of men got into the taumualua. The taumualua made its way to Matafele, near Apia, and picked up more men. Thirty-three men were on their way toward the Mulinu'u area to retrieve a small cannon that was dropped into the sea by Tamasese's troops. It is unknown how Mata'afa's troops knew about the small cannon, but according to newspaper articles, they found the cannon in the reef about a mile from Mulinu'u Point.¹ According to the men in the taumualua, no one challenged them when they were searching for the cannon, and they claimed to be "a long way from Mulinu'u Point."² Not anticipating any danger, the men sang songs on returning to Matautu. As the men passed the German Consulate building, a group of German marines stood on the Grevsmuhl's Wharf and ordered the Samoans "to bring ashore the gun they had picked up."³

¹ News from Samoa, in: New Zealand Herald, Vol. XXV, 12 November 1888, Issue 9209, online: https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH1888112.2.53?end_date=16-11-888&items_per_page=10&page=6&query=News+from+Samoa+&snippet=true&start_date=01-11-1888 (last accessed 1.5.2024).

² The Late Outrage, in Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser, Vol. 1, 2 November 1888, Issue 6, 3 Nov. 1888, online: https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/STSSA18881103.2.7?end_date=16-11-1888&items_per_page=10&query=the+late+outrage&snippet=true&start_date=01-11-1888&title=STSSA%2cSTSSG%2cSWH%2cSAMREP%2cSAMZ (last accessed 1.5.2024).

³ News from Samoa, in: New Zealand Herald, Vol. XXV, 12 November 1888, Issue 9209, online: https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH1888112.2.53?end_date=16-11-1888&items_per_page=10&page=6&query=News+from+Samoa+&snippet=true&start_date=01-11-1888 (last accessed 1.5.2024).

They stopped the boat and were proceeding to do as requested when a volley was fired on them by the German marines on the wharf. They immediately jumped out of the taumualua on the off-side, swimming along and pushing the canoe forward. When they got to a far enough distance from the German marines, they jumped into the taumualua and got to the other side of the harbour. At this point, a German man-of-war captained by Wilhelm Souchon intercepted the taumualua.

At around 7:45 pm, Souchon records in his diary, "Soon after we heard (19 shells) rapid fire on the bridge next to the Consulate. I went ashore with an armed cutter and dinghy 8'6 with the order to intercept a Samoan war canoe."⁴ When the taumualua arrived in the Matautu area, they saw the boat full of armed German sailors and heard shouting from the *Adler*. Souchon claims that he yelled at them while they were 30 metres away. At this moment, fearing for their lives, the Samoans jumped overboard and ran to shore. The German sailors immediately fired on them. The newspaper stated that seeing armed German sailors and hailing in a language foreign to them, "they naturally thought they would be fired upon as before and jumped overboard."⁵ Souchon writes in his diary that his sailors "fired on their initiative at individuals swimming Kanakas, of course in total darkness without any prospect of success."⁶ Because it was dark and as the Germans were shooting at the Samoans running at the beach side of Matautu, several shots struck houses and shops owned by foreign business owners, mainly American and British. This incident called for an immediate apology by the Germans. According to Souchon's diary, the men in the taumualua were there to loot. Supposedly, the Samoans were in a "neutral territory" as per British, German, and USA Consuls.

According to the German consul, the boat "went to Mulinu'u, which is German property, to commence hostilities."⁷ The Germans also adamantly claimed that those shots came from Samoans in the taumualua, not the Germans. According to reports at the time, the Samoans were unarmed. The USA and Great Britain Consuls condemned the Germans for firing on unarmed boats in neutral territory. Robert Louis Stevenson mentions these events in his book "A Footnote to History." He writes that the "shots had been fired upon a very trifling provocation, the spirit implied was that of designed disregard to the neutrality."⁸ In the defence of the Germans, the German ambassador in London, Count Paul Hatzfeldt, stated that the "neutrality of Apia was only 'to prevent the natives from fighting,' not the Germans."⁹

⁴ Diary entries by Wilhelm Souchon from 23, 24, 27 October 1888 (Library of the Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg, shelfmark: MIL 58 2 AD YC 0007-02).

⁵ News from Samoa, in: New Zealand Herald, Vol. XXV, 12 November 1888, Issue 9209, online: https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH18881112.2.53?end_date=16-11-1888&items_per_page=10&page=6&query=News+from+Samoa+&snippet=true&start_date=01-11-1888 (last accessed 1.5.2024).

⁶ Diary entries by Wilhelm Souchon from 23, 24, 27 October 1888 (Library of the Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg, shelfmark: MIL 58 2 AD YC 0007-02).

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⁸ Robert Louis Stevenon: A Footnote to History. Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa, New York 1895, here: 167.

⁹ Robert Louis Stevenon: A Footnote to History. Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa, New York 1895, here: 167.

At around 8:40 pm, Souchon writes that he took the canoe in tow and brought it onboard the SMS *Adler*. The next day, the Germans sawed the taumualua apart. Souchon took sections of the boat, including the prow, and the rest became firewood.

Features of the prow and its significance

The prow is a sawn-off piece of a taumualua canoe. According to scholars, the taumualua was created in the mid-19th century based on a foreign model wide enough to convey troops for war, up to seventy men. During the 19th-century Samoan civil war, the taumualua represented a merging of Western and Samoa ingenuity in warfare. The imperial powers supplied arms to Samoans to accompany their war clubs during the 19th- century civil wars.

The taumualua were single hulls lacking outriggers and had a wide plank construction. Although modeled after Western designs for use in war, the rowing techniques were uniquely paddled Samoan.¹⁰ What made the taumualua unique was the high projection at both of the bow-shaped ends.¹¹ The prow ends often had a figurehead in the form of a human figure, dog, bird, or any symbol that was a war emblem or “coat of arms” of the respective village the taumualua represented.¹²

The canoes are also decorated with white shells (*Cypraea ovula*) running along the bow and stern of the canoe and around the figurehead. The ovulum shells or cowrie shells represent Samoan pule or authority. Kramer states the symbols gave the canoe a “demonical touch,” perhaps in support of their war efforts.

The word taumualua comprises two Samoan words, “taumua” or the bow, and “lua” or two, referencing that both ends of the canoe are identically similar. The significance of these canoes was mainly for war purposes. During times of peace, the taumualua became more of a transport, and the meaning behind the figureheads were most likely symbols without religious meanings as they had during the war.¹³ The wood used to construct the taumualua was malili, ifi lele, or fatau wood, expanding a length of 60 to 70 feet and a width of 7 to 8 feet.

The prow that was sawn off the taumualua in 1888 is a human face, rough in features, with several large white ovulum shells surrounding the bottom portion of the human head. This prow is approximately 56 cm long. Admiral describes the taumualua as “beautifully built” and made of solid wood, joined together without nails, with 16 rudder thwarts, and would be able to carry 60-70 men.¹⁴

According to Admiral Souchon’s diary, the taumualua is from the island of Manono. He claims he has seen the “same one” during an occasional visit to Manono mid-year. Manono were supporters of Mata’afa, so it is possible that the taumualua came directly from Manono islands to support other troops in support of Mata’afa against Tamasese. Te’o Tuvale records in his journals that on 23 October 1888, “A German warship

¹⁰ Te Rangi Hiroa: Samoan Material Culture, Honolulu 1930, here: 371.

¹¹ Roger Neich: Samoan Figurative Carvings and Samoan Canoes in: The Journal of the Polynesian Society, 93 (1984), 191-197, here: 193.

¹² George Turner: Samoa. A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before, London 1884, here: 165.

¹³ Roger Neich: Samoan Figurative Carvings and Taumualua Canoes-A Further Note, in: The Journal of the Polynesian Society 100 (1991), No. 3, 317-328, here: 324.

¹⁴ Diary entries by Wilhelm Souchon from 23, 24, 27 October 1888 (Library of the Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg, shelfmark: MIL 58 2 AD YC 0007-02).

chased and fired on a fleet of Manono.”¹⁵Based on Tuvale’s accounts, there is a possibility that the taumualua is from Manono.

Cultural Meaning of the Prow for Samoans Today

The prow is a symbol of Samoa’s history. Unfortunately, there is insufficient information to conclude the direct descendants of the village community that created this taumualua or the tip of the prow. The prow will return to Samoa and be placed in a newly built National University of Samoa (NUS) exhibition room funded by the Übersee-Museum Bremen for all of Samoa. The prow is a symbol for Samoa to study, learn, and engage in discussions on the following themes: Christianity, Samoan civil wars, contemporary Samoa, navigation, colonialism, and development. The National University of Samoa’s primary goal is to preserve the Samoan language and culture. The return of the prow to Samoa will allow our professors and instructors from NUS and any researcher to engage in pre-colonial Samoa themes and lectures on this “transitional” phase toward modernity using the abovementioned themes. Specifically, the “religious” figureheads will revisit the discussion of post-1830 Christian Samoa. The civil wars of Samoa are also an amazing period to study regarding the use of Western technology and tactics in terms of war, governance, and authority. It will also bring about discussions of the leading families fighting for titular power and the assistance of Western imperial powers.

The taumualua is no longer being built, but it later transitioned into an oared longboat or fautasi, mainly used for transportation. Today, fautasi races are popular during the Flag Day festivities in both American Samoa and Independent Samoa. Having the prow in Samoa may result in more hybrid approaches to contemporary canoes being made and designed for future generations.

Lastly, the return of the prow is not only a connection to Samoan ancestors and the events that occurred at a particular period of Samoan history; it will allow for students, community members, tourists, and matai to have the opportunity to see the prow close-up. This will allow for deeper conversations on Samoan history.

Appendix

- A. Photographs of the prow
- B. Example of a pre-1900 taumualua
- C. Transcription of Souchon’s diary entries of 23, 24 and 27 October 1888
- D. Map of Mulinu’u

¹⁵Te’o Tuvale: An Account of Samoan History up to 1918, in: <https://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/teiTuvAcco.html>, <1.5.2024>.

A. Photographs of the Prow



B. Example of a pre-1900 taumualua (Roger Neich: Samoan Figurative Carvings and Samoan Canoes in: *Polynesian Society* 93 (1984), 191-197, here: 192.)



C. Transcription¹⁶

„[In the header:] S.M.Kr.[euzer] Adler Korv.[etten] Kapt. Fritze

23 [October] 7'45 p.m. as we were about to accept an invitation to music on board the **Lizard Caesar** lit torches on the consulate watch, soon after we heard (19) rapid fire on the bridge next to the consulate. I went ashore with an armed cutter and dinghy 8'5 with the order to intercept a Samoan war canoe, which was trying to land in **Mulinuu** with (the) 50 men for the purpose of taking booty. I suspected the canoe to be near the consulate and was informed by **Biermann** that the boat had turned back in response to our signalling, had passed the consulate and was now sailing ashore to **Matautu**. **Caesar** had left there with the guard on land. As the tide was high and the sea low, I took the risk of going across to the reef, which I managed to do before the mouth of the **Mulivai** and, noticing the canoe as we travelled, arrived at **Matautu** (Becker's house) early enough to divert the canoe's path. When the canoe was about 30 metres away, they called me, I shouted 'ii' [?], whereupon the occupants of the canoe jumped overboard. Previously I had the crew's guns made ready and ordered them not to fire without my orders; however, when I rammed the boat, the crew, led by a four-year-chief mate (**Olderdisser**), fired on their own initiative at individual swimming Kanakas, of course in total darkness without any prospect of success. Once the firing had started, I had twenty shots fired by the people who saw them. I then took the canoe in tow and brought it on board at 8.40 pm. The canoe **taum[u]alua** belonging to **Manono**, which was perhaps the same one, I had seen on an occasional visit to **Manono** in July, was one of the largest and most beautifully built. It was made of very solid wood, put together without nails, with large ornate sterns, one of which was given to me, frames and 16 transverse[?]thwarts in addition to the long bench and braces, and a platform in the centre to which an old cannon[?] was lashed. The boat could hold a good 60-70 men. In the boat there were also the pageien [paddles], an axe and various cartridge cases, as well as traces of blood on the braces and individual dents [presumably the rowing benches, otherwise struts].

24 [October] The next evening the boat was painstakingly sawn up and chopped up (it held together like a leather suitcase after the ribs had been removed) and collected together as firewood, the gun barrel was piled up, the shell decorations and pagaia etc. were distributed. The whole affair stirred up the usual dust [sic] among the Apia clique and resulted in the Americans and English protesting and occupying and fortifying their respective consulates with small guards. **Mataafa's**

27 [October] moderation was admired because he did not take revenge. The Germans decided to cancel the **Samoa Times**; did so and then bought them in single copies - Mtr [sailor] **Grange** fell from the hammock box and broke his thigh. On the watch ashore, which **Caesar** and I did alternately, we had the relief of being on board from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., **albertross bathing** was allowed for a few days, people washed stuff in the consular watch.”

¹⁶ Transcription by Bettina von Briskorn. Names written in Latin script are bold.

D. Map of Mulinu'u, Municipality of Apia in the 1880s (Gary Pringle: Heritage Assessment, Apia, Western Samoa. Master of Science Thesis at University of Sydney 1989.)

