

# THE “BALKANS” IN THE REPOSITORY . QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE COLLECTION IN THE MUSEUM OF EUROPEAN CULTURES

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Photo credit: Küppers' journeys by car and on impassable roads were sometimes extremely arduous, fig. in: Reisetagebuch Heimtraut Küppers (1939). N (62 F) 2/2023 / Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#)

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From half-finished beehives to delicate embroidery, the Museum of European Cultures in Berlin (Museum Europäischer Kulturen, MEK) houses a large number of objects from Southeastern Europe. Although they are without doubt still fascinating today, the question remains: Why should we be interested in them? What can material culture contribute to a "post-colonial" view of Southeastern Europe?

From splintered wooden ladles, half-finished beehives, simple baking trays and distaffs to colorful pottery, elaborately decorated textiles and old icons, the Museum of European Cultures in Berlin (MEK) keeps a large number of objects from the entire Balkans region. A large number of them can be traced back to the collecting activities of the journalist and photographer Gustav-Adolf Küppers. From 1935 to 1939 he traveled to all the Balkan states with the exception of Albania and Greece, laying the foundation for what is still one of the largest collections of everyday objects and photographs from Southeastern Europe in the German-speaking regions. In 1999, approximately 3,600 ethnographic objects and 1,600 photographs were handed over to the then newly founded MEK.<sup>1</sup>



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Wooden ladle, acquired near Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database](#)





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Beehive (unfinished), acquired near Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database](#))



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Baking tray, acquired near Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database](#) ↗)



Maik Schutt / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

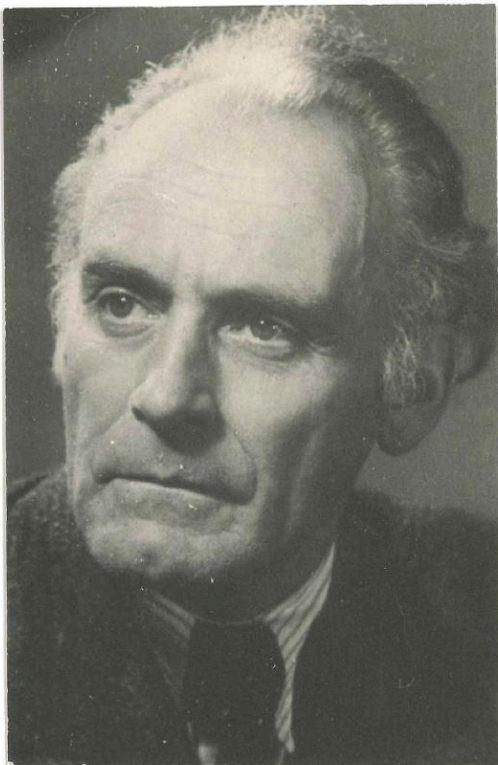
Male jacket, acquired in Bosnia (no location given), 1935 ([to this object in the database](#) ↗)

## “Post-colonial” South Eastern Europe?!

Despite all the fascination that the objects, with their partially visible signs of use, still trigger today, the question remains: Why should we be interested in them? Are they not just everyday objects that can be found in abundance in local historical and ethnographic museum collections? What can they contribute to a "post-colonial" view of Southeastern Europe? Is this term even suitable for understanding folkloric and ethnographic collection practices? Here, we are not concerned with holy relics or art objects from the colonies, but with discarded items that are no longer in use in European society.<sup>2</sup>

Like ethnology, ethnography was also permeated by a rescue paradigm that was characteristic of the European discourse on modernity at the end of the 19th century.<sup>3</sup> This was shaped not least by a somewhat dualistic view of the world: a world consisting, on the one hand, of dynamic and cosmopolitan 'centers' and, on the other hand, of static rural 'peripheries' whose cultural products were doomed to extinction in the long term.<sup>4</sup>

With reference to postcolonial theory, more and more works have emerged in recent years that have dealt with the production of these ideas and their implications for the history of knowledge within Europe. The "East" of the continent, in particular, has been seen as a kind of "other interior" that often serves as a counterpoint to the idea of "the West".<sup>5</sup> While the Balkans were initially an important reference point for the analysis of these discourses of alterity, the region barely plays a role in more recent works.<sup>6</sup> My comments are therefore, in a certain sense, a return to this debate. They also focus on the concept of museum knowledge production that has thus far been under-examined. Finally, these comments are also a plea for expansion beyond a purely textual-discursive approach and for a stronger inclusion of material culture.



Portrait of Gustav-Adolf Küppers (1950). P 1, No. 1906 / Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, [Free access - no reuse](#)



Gustav-Adolf Küppers with his first wife Eva in front of the hut he built himself on the "Sonnenberg" (1915). P 1, No. 1906 / Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, [Free access - no reuse](#)

## Gustav Adolf Küppers. From settler to collector

When he began collecting for the Berlin Museum of Ethnology [Berliner Museum für Völkerkunde] in the mid-1930s, Gustav-Adolf Küppers, born in Krefeld in 1894, could already look back on an eventful life.<sup>7</sup> After a brief study of German, theology and agriculture in

Göttingen, he committed himself to this combination in practice, and in 1915 (as a war invalid with only one leg) began to cultivate a piece of land in the Lüneburg Heide. He called it the "Sonnenberg" and from then on used this as an unofficial suffix to his name. Even before the war, Küppers had been active in the circles of the [Wandervogel](#)

### Wandervogel

The "Wandervogel" (literally, "bird of passage") movement began in 1896 in Steglitz, Berlin as a movement for schoolchildren and students. With its exploration of alternative life-styles it marked the beginning of the youth movement. However, divisions appeared early on, and after the First World War the movement underwent a re-organisation: many associations became part of the nationalistic "Bündische Jugend" German youth movement at that point. From 1933 onwards, these and other Wandervogel groups were incorporated into the Hitler Youth.

youth group movement and had many acquaintances in the [life-reform](#)

### Lebensreform

also: life-reform

'Lebensreform' refers to a multitude of different social reformist movements that began in the middle of the 19th century. They adopted different forms of housing, child-rearing, nutrition, sexuality and questioned other aspects of daily life and communal living. They shared a rejection of industrialization and urbanization and a criticism of the increasing alienation from man's "natural state" that these trends brought about. The significance of the reform movement, whose protagonists sometimes also held nationalistic views, is still a contentious subject among historians.

and youth movements. He was also a prolific writer throughout his life, in part due to financial difficulties, which meant he was forced to keep himself afloat by writing articles. In addition, Küppers was very keen to gain recognition in the heterogeneous milieu of the reform movements, which brought him into contact with anti-modernist, nationalist and even anti-Semitic situations at an early stage of his life and with which he remained associated until well after the Second World War, when he had gained a certain degree of fame as a breeder of the Jerusalem artichoke.<sup>8</sup>

Although Küppers was never a member of the NSDAP and was at times ambivalent about the National Socialist one-party state, his early texts show a clear identification with its nationalistic and racist foundations. The essays on the Balkans that he published from the mid-1930s were also characterized by racist rhetoric that went far beyond an "adaptation" to the prevailing jargon which was, perhaps, sometimes necessary.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that in the later GDR his collecting trips were interpreted as "written and spoken Nazi propaganda."<sup>10</sup> The fact that, in addition to his collecting activities, Küppers took fingerprints of the local population for the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Eugenics and that his trips were sponsored by the Propaganda Ministry, also makes his later claim that he stood in

clear opposition to the regime much less credible.



Küppers also recorded local songs with the help of a phonograph, fig. in: Gustav-Adolf Küppers Sonnenberg, *Einbeiner am Steuer. Eine Balkanfahrt*, Hannover 1937, p. 20. Hanomag, [Free access - no reuse](#)



Küppers' travel companion, his daughter Heimtraut, and her friend taking fingerprints, fig. in: Gustav-Adolf Küppers Sonnenberg, *Einbeiner am Steuer. Eine Balkanfahrt*, Hannover 1937, p. 34. Hanomag, [Free access - no reuse](#)

## In the Balkans

It is not possible to determine from the available sources exactly when Küppers' plans for a collecting trip to the Balkans took shape.<sup>11</sup> However, it can be assumed that his socialization among the alternative youth movements of the 1920s played a significant role. Above all, his decidedly anti-modern and culturally pessimistic attitudes, as well as a spiritual urge to penetrate to the original "core" of life, away from urbanization and social commodification, probably contributed to a highly idealized view of the supposedly primitive "edges" of the continent.<sup>12</sup> The intention that he subsequently recorded, to "capture the dying world of old, down-to-earth folk culture threatened by the cultural clash" during his travels seems to be typical of the Balkan discourse that the historian Maria Todorova called "Balkanism": the depiction of the Balkans as a place of the primitive and uncivilized, on the threshold between the Orient and the Occident.

In addition to the collector's ideological dispositions, there may also have been more mundane reasons for his travel initiatives: as a father of seven children, Küppers was always plagued by financial worries.<sup>13</sup> Finally, a certain yearning for the unknown probably also played a role. In his first proposal he referred to the "shot of adventure in the blood" that was necessary for

the trip, and this was to be experienced, in any event: the first trips, in particular, were a real challenge, involving travel over impassable terrain, overnight stays in tents and under the open sky, a chronic shortage of money and no local knowledge whatsoever. In a letter to the museum, his travel companion Hannes Rosenberg, who was with him on the first trip in 1935, wrote that Küppers needed "extraordinary energy" to manage the trip. Küpper's daughter Heimtraut, who accompanied her father on his last journey in 1939 together with her brother and a friend, also describes the sometimes very risky journeys over rainy mountain ridges and the nights that the four of them had to spend in the car "in the most bizarre contortions" due to a lack of money.<sup>14</sup>

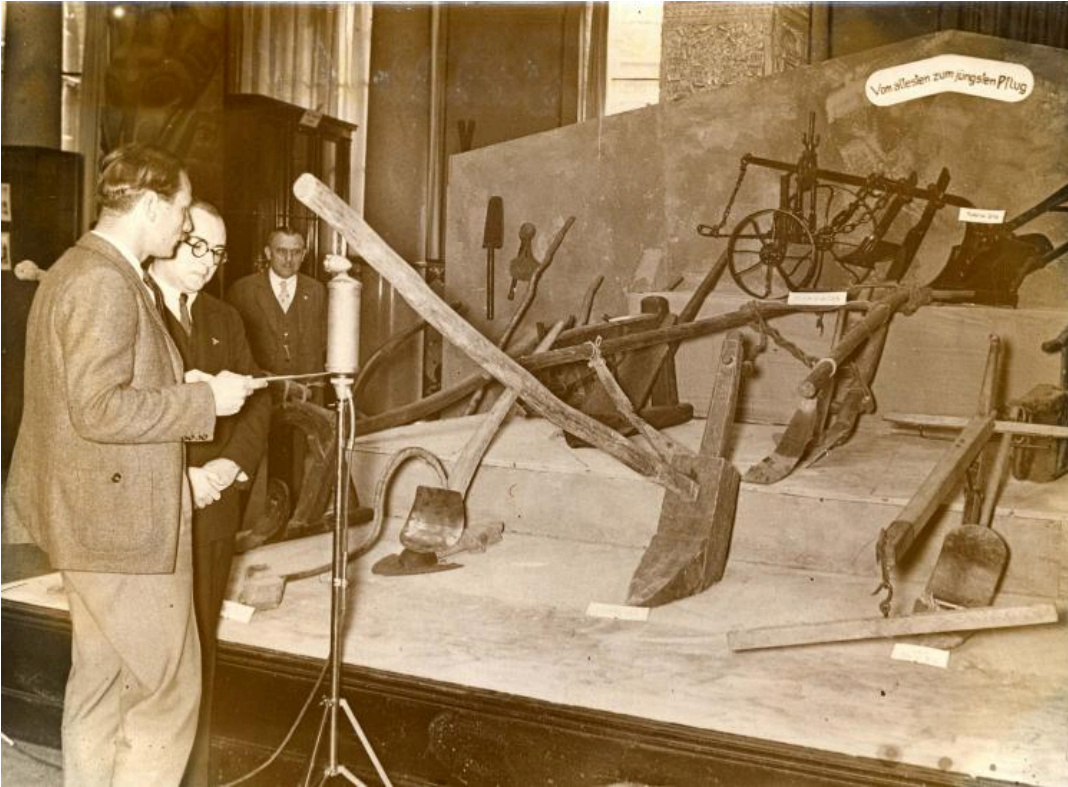


Bulgaria department in the depot of the Museum of European Cultures. Christian Krug / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [Free access - no reuse](#)

## The Eurasia Department at the Meuseum of Ethnology in Berlin

Küppers' objects were a convenient addition for the Berlin Museum of Ethnology. Until the 1930s, everyday objects from southeastern Europe had not been systematically collected in Berlin. The predecessor of the Museum of Ethnology, founded in 1935, was committed to "a larger ethnographic, integrated comparative study of national, European and non-European cultural phenomena" and was by no means limited to "German" objects.<sup>15</sup> However, a comprehensive collection of everyday objects from other European countries was not sought until the end of 1934, when the museum's "Eurasia" department was established under the

direction of the Africanist Hermann Baumann. When Küppers offered to go on an acquisition trip through the Balkans for the museum in early 1935, Baumann saw a good opportunity to fill the "countless gaps in our collections" that "make every new acquisition, no matter how small, necessary."<sup>16</sup>



2.14.-09122 / Museums für Völkerkunde, 1934, Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

The head of the "Eurasia" department, Hermann Baumann (2nd from left), in the Sonderausstellung „Vom Grabstock zum Pflug. Frühformen des Bodenbaues“ Museums für Völkerkunde, 1934



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ethnologisches Museum, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Magazine of the European Collection,  
1973



Ute Franz Scarciglia / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

The Museum of European Cultures was created in 1999 from the merger of the European collection of the Museum of Ethnology [Museums für Völkerkunde] and the holdings of the folklore museums in East and West Berlin [Volkskundemuseen in Ost- und Westberlin]

## Of “Archaic Remains” And the “Reconstruction of the national character”. Ethnographic schools and their influence on the Küppers collection

Although Küppers, as an ethnographic autodidact, had little interest in theoretical debates within the field, his collecting was influenced by the ethnographic trends of his time:

[evolutionism](#)

## Evolutionism

Evolutionism is a research paradigm that developed particularly in ethnology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Building on Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution, evolutionism was based on the assumption that there were different stages of human development and a "psychic unity of mankind" (Adolf Bastians) with different material forms of expression.

and [diffusionism](#)

## Diffusionism

Diffusionism was an ethnological research paradigm in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that assumed that cultural similarities arise as a result of cultural contact, for example as a result of trade, travel or migration. Cultural manifestations were regarded as "cultural complexes" (Leo Frobenius) which exchanged elements with but were also in competition with one another. The expression "Lebensraum" ("living space") played an important role here and was first used by the "diffusionist" Friedrich Ratzel.

. Despite all the ideological differences that existed between these schools of thought, they were united by a conception of cultures as self-contained units of investigation. These could be differentiated by studying certain forms.<sup>17</sup> Whether the Balkans were seen as a place of conflict between cultural circles or as a space in which archaic forms had been able to survive particularly well, an [othering](#)

## Othering

Othering describes the process by which a group of people ('us') differentiates itself from another ('them'). In the wake of postcolonial theory development, the expression was used, in particular, to analyze the construction of collective identities in contrast to other groups that were often considered inferior.

inherent in the colonial discourse of modernity was generally influential in the ethnographic view of the Balkans.<sup>18</sup>

This was also evident in Gustav-Adolf Küppers' collecting. For him, the Balkans offered a glimpse into his own past, into an "encapsulated, primitive basis of life in an almost original form" in which "prehistoric times live on in their purest form right up to the present day".<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, Küppers was always on the lookout for the "ancient" and "original" on his travels. The "terrible sneakers and rubber clogs" that young people in particular were increasingly wearing, as his daughter reported in her diary, were thus not worthy of being collected.<sup>20</sup> The objects he sent to the museum do not provide any information about the gradual urbanization and industrialization that was taking place in Southeastern Europe.<sup>21</sup> Instead, they served as evidence of the "archaic remnants" that Küppers believed he could identify in pastoral culture or in apparently dying rites. Given this focus, it is not surprising

that Küppers was showed little interest in objects with a Muslim connection. Despite the centuries-old presence of Islamic culture in Southeastern Europe, this attitude was entirely in line with the idea of the "Turkish yoke" and "Ottoman foreign rule" and ultimately stood for "foreign" forms of expression.



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Spindle whorl, acquired from the Karakachani shepherds in the vicinity of Kotel (Bulgaria), 1939 [to this object in the database ↗](#)

The focus on collecting such supposedly "original", "autochthonous" objects certainly overlapped with the idea of "ruins of days gone by that extend into the present". Adolf Bastians, the great Berlin "evolutionist", used this formulation to call also for the study of European cultures.<sup>22</sup> However, this perspective was not foreign to a "diffusionist" school with its focus on competing "cultural circles". The approach often chosen here via the comparative study of ornamentation was a method to which Küppers also subscribed to.<sup>23</sup> This fascination was clearly reflected in his collecting. Many objects that are still in the MEK's collections today bear witness to this.

Küppers' strong interest in agricultural equipment was also very much in line with the "diffusionist" dictum of the cultural primacy of agriculture. This also shaped his collecting, although his ideological preferences as part of the settlement movement may have been important. Küppers had come to the conclusion early on that "our culture could only be saved

from certain extinction by rooting the intelligentsia in the soil [...]" and that this was the only way to create the "foundation for the rebuilding of the nation".<sup>24</sup> Three years after his last trip, he was still arguing with great enthusiasm that this "bond to the soil" should also be documented in museums. Using a rather cynical argument, he encouraged several stakeholders to purchase Bulgarian wooden plows. Given the rationalization of the local economy forced by the German war effort, these would not be around for much longer, so this tool should be saved by German museums for posterity.<sup>25</sup>



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Series of distaffs (Bulgarian: Хурка/Hurka), acquired in Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database ↗](#))



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen,  
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Series of distaffs (Bulgarian: Хурка/Hurka), acquired in Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 [\(to this object in the database ↗\)](#)



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Series of distaffs (Bulgarian: Хурка/Hurka), acquired in Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 [\(to this object in the database ↗\)](#)



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Series of distaffs (Bulgarian: Хурка/Hurka), acquired in Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database ↗](#))



Matthias Thaden / Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum Europäischer Kulturen,  
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Series of distaffs (Bulgarian: Хурка/Hurka), acquired in Burgas (Bulgaria), 1939 ([to this object in the database ↗](#))

## The Küppers collection: A classic case of "Balkanism"?

Gustav-Adolf Küppers was convinced that the demise of "traditional" forms of expression was inevitable in the face of the dissolution of traditional forms of community. This was certainly one of the basic tenets of classical ethnographic approaches. Even in his drive to carry out a kind of "ethnographical rescue", Küppers' collecting was hardly different to other systems of acquisitions. At the same time, the Küppers collection is a prime example of the material and museum representation of Western European images of the Balkans. His perspective on the region was informed by an exoticizing view of Southeastern Europe as a refuge of genuine authenticity.

At the same time, the objects he collected are more complex and more than a simple "record" of contemporary discourse: the abundance of agricultural equipment, in particular, should be seen in within the context of the ethnographic collecting interests of the time. The role of violence, on the other hand, which was so central to classical Balkanism, is hardly reflected in Küppers' collection. He clearly did not see violence as a characteristic of the region that was worth collecting, either as an expression of the archaic that had positive connotations -- Küppers was not interested in weapons -- or as an expression of the inter-ethnic, supposedly "age-old" hatred that existed in the Balkans. This is surprising, as he encountered many traces of violent expulsions that took place after the Balkan wars, but seems not to have pursued them further.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, Küppers appears to have romanticized the region and its people, an approach that was reinforced by his early socialization in the "settler" movements of his youth and his consistently anti-modern attitude. In other words, his view was shaped by a rejection of the urban and of mass society and a simultaneous glorification of the rural, the self-sufficient and the connection to the "soil". In his preoccupation with Southeastern Europe, Küppers projected these ideological elements onto the region and thus reproduced "Balkanist" patterns of discourse; this in turn strongly influenced his collecting. Thus, Küppers acquired "regional expertise" through his collecting activities, and used this to develop pseudo-scientific theories on the spread of Germanic culture;<sup>27</sup> later this would also help him to obtain a position as Balkan advisor at the Wehrmacht High Command from 1939 to 1945.

English translation: [Gwen Clayton ↗](#)

## Footnotes

1. The MEK was created from the merger of the European collection of the Museum of Ethnology [Museum für Völkerkunde] (now the Ethnological Museum [Ethnologisches Museum]) with the holdings of the Museum of [German] Folklore from East and West Berlin [Museum für [Deutsche] Volkskunde aus Ost- und Westberlin]. [↑](#)
2. For similar views, see Helmut Groschwitz: Postkoloniale Volkskunde. Eine Annäherung über das Museum. In: Rolshoven, Johanna; Schneider, Ingo (Ed.) (2018): Dimensionen des Politischen. Ansprüche und Herausforderungen der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft. Berlin, pp. 262–276; Brigitte Heck\_ Wirkungsgeschichte/n. Neue Perspektiven auf die Entstehung volkskundlicher Sammlungen. In: Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie, 13 (2021), pp. 558–568. [↑](#)
3. Rebecca Habermas: Rettungsparadigma und Bewahrungsfetischismus. In: Sandkühler, Thomas; Epple, Angelika; Zimmerer, Jürgen (Ed.): Geschichtskultur durch Restitution? Ein Kunst-Historikerstreit. Vienna 2021. [↑](#)
4. Still a good introduction is offered by Sebastian Conrad, Shalini Randeria: Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt. In: Dies., Regina Römheld (Ed.): Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften. Frankfurt a. M. 2013<sup>2</sup>, pp. 32–70. [↑](#)
5. For a recent contribution, see Dorota Kołodziejczyk, Siegfried Huigen: East Central Europe Between the Colonial and the Postcolonial. A Critical Introduction. In: Dies. (Ed.): East Central Europe between the colonial and the postcolonial in the twentieth century. Cham 2023, pp. 1–33. [↑](#)
6. Particularly influential in this regard was Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford 2009<sup>2</sup>. [↑](#)

7. For biographical information, see Gustav-Adolf Küppers: *Leben im Sturm der Zeit*. In: *Jahrbuch der Dobrudschadeutschen* (1970), pp. 107–121; Bernd Wedemeyer: *Ein Außenseiter niedersächsischer Körperkultur. Der jugendbewegte Siedler Gustav Adolf Küppers (1894–1978)*. In: Krüger, Arnd (Ed.): *Aus Biographien Sportgeschichte lernen. Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Henze*. Hoya 2000, pp. 149–162. For previously unpublished results, see Judith Schühle: *Gustav Küppers als Ethnographica-Sammler*. Unv. Manusc. Berlin 2011. [↑](#)
8. Küppers' connections to the reform milieu are revealed in many letters, which are mainly located in the archive of the German youth movement [Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung] (AdDJ), cf. for example, the files P 1, No. 1906; N 61, No. 1; N 14, No. 189. [↑](#)
9. See, inter alia Gustav-Adolf Küppers-Sonnenberg, *Begegnung mit Balkanzigeunern*. In: *Volk und Rasse* 6 (1938), 183–196. [↑](#)
10. Protokoll No. 20 and Beschluss des Antifa-Ausschusses Kreis Zauch-Belzig (17.03.1948) as well as Begründung zu Protokoll No. 20 (03.03.1948), Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Rep. 203, AVE ESA 5165. [↑](#)
11. Apparently, the initial idea was to travel from the Balkans to the Baltic States, cf. Küppers 1970, 113f. [↑](#)
12. A letter from Küppers to the life reformer Hugo Höppener 'Fidus' provides an insight into his philosophical outlook (29.06.1929), AdDJ, N 38, No. 175. On the ethnographic paradigm of "primitivity", cf. for example Bernd Jürgen Warneken: *Ethnographie populärer Kulturen*. Wien 2006, p. 26ff. [↑](#)
13. It can be assumed that he wanted to use the trips to secure a permanent position at the museum in the long term. Cf. Küppers an Generaldirektor (26.04.1937), Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, Vorg.-No. E 463/37 as well as a letter written in December 1944 (!) also to the General Director of the Berlin Museum. *Ibid.*, Vorg.-Nr. E 191-1944. [↑](#)
14. For the quotations, cf. Küppers an Baumann (27.04.1935), Archiv des Ethnologischen Museums Berlin, IB 124, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Bd. 1; Letters between Hannes Rosenberg and Elisabeth Tietmeyer (06.06.1999), *Museum Europäischer Kulturen*, Registry of the Director; *Diary of Heimtraut Küppers*. *Museum Europäischer Kulturen*, Inv.-No. N (62 F) 2/2023, p. 22. [↑](#)
15. Franka Schneider: *Handgreifliche Geschichte. Dingpolitiken im Museum für deutsche Volkskunde Berlin*. In: Brat, Andrea; Früh, Anja (Ed.): *Politique de la mémoire. Museen als Orte geschichtspolitischer Verhandlungen im 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*. Basel: 2017, pp. 127–140, 129. [↑](#)
16. Baumann to Kuratorium der Bäßler-Stiftung (30.04.1935). Archive of the Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, IB 124, *Sammelreisen Dr. Küppers*, Bd. 1. For the department „Eurasia“, see Elisabeth Tietmeyer, Konrad Vanja: *Das Museum Europäischer Kulturen und der Nationalsozialismus. Eine Geschichte der Anpassung in zwei Teilen*. In: Jörn Grabowski, Petra Winter (Ed.): *Zwischen Politik und Kunst. Die Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*. Cologne 2013, pp. 387–408, 400ff; Heide Nixdorff: *Hundert Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin. Abteilung Europa*. In: *Baessler-Archiv* 21 (1973), pp. 341–358. [↑](#)
17. Werner Petermann: *Die Geschichte der Ethnologie*. Wuppertal 2004, p. 546. [↑](#)
18. For the former, cf. Christian Marcchetti: *Balkanexpedition. Die Kriegserfahrung der österreichischen Volkskunde*. Tübingen 2012. [↑](#)
19. Gustav-Adolf Küppers: *Erwachender Balkan. Völkerkundliche Autostreifzüge durch Karpathen, Karst und Karawanken*. *Wir und die Welt* (1938/39), 34-40, 36. [↑](#)
20. *Diary of Heimtraut Küppers*. *Museum Europäischer Kulturen*, Inv.-No. N (62 F) 2/2023. [↑](#)
21. In this, Küppers was, of course, fully in tune with early concepts of scientific collecting, cf. for the Berlin Museum the practice of collecting in Sardinia, Magdalena Buchczyk: *Weaving Europe, crafting the museum. Textiles, history and ethnography at the Museum of European Cultures*. London 2023, p. 79ff. For an excellent socio-historical insight into transformation processes in rural Bulgaria, cf. Ulf Brunnbauer: *Gebirgsgesellschaften auf dem Balkan. Wirtschaft und Familienstrukturen im Rhodopengebirge (19./20. Jahrhundert)*. Cologne 2004. [↑](#)
22. Quoted in Heide Nixdorff: *Hundert Jahre Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin. Abteilung Europa*. In: *Baessler-Archiv* 21 (1973), pp. 341–358, 343. [↑](#)
23. Cf. Gustav-Adolf Küppers: *Ornamente und Symbole südslawischer Bauernlauten (Guslen)*. In: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 84,1 (1959), pp. 88–109. [↑](#)

24. G.A. Küppers an das Landratsamt Celle, Unterstützungsgesuch (30.02.1925), Kreisarchiv Celle, L 601. [↑](#)
25. Küppers an Nevermann (07.06.1942), Zentralarchiv des Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/MV 225. [↑](#)
26. In the Bulgarian-Greek-Turkish border region, in particular, he found evidence of destroyed churches and refugee camps where displaced people had been living in some cases for over 20 years, cf. references in the travel diary of Heimtraut Küppers, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Inv.-No. N (62 F) 2/2023, o.S. [↑](#)
27. Cf. Inter alia Gustav-Adolf Küppers: Die Schokatzken der Batschka und der Baranya. In: Volk und Rasse 13, 3 (1938), pp. 77–84. [↑](#)

## Literature

- Buchczyk, Magdalena: Weaving Europe, crafting the museum. Textiles, history and ethnography at the Museum of European Cultures. London 2023.
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