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Wiebke Mohr

The Treasure

QIÉN, QIÈN, NATURALEZA,
levantando tu gran cuerpo desnudo,
como las piedras, cuando niños,
se encontrara debajo
tu secreto pequeño e infinito!

*If only one could, oh nature,
lifting your big naked body,
like stones, when children,
will be found below
your small and infinite secret!*

Juan Ramón Jiménez ¹⁾

¹ Heart, die or sing, poems, Zurich 1969
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Translation into English by Wiebke Mohr

The Bergedorfer Zeitung newspaper reported on 12 June 2021: "Rare insect treasure from Lohbrügge inspires researchers", *the scientists have obtained a treasure from Lohbrügge of whose existence only very few people knew for decades.*"²)

A collection of old insects - who needs that - some of us have probably thought such something like that or something similar. There was a time when there was a desire to destroy these and other collections. At the very least, they ended up in dark corners or cellars and were forgotten. Allegedly, this collection was found in the cellar when the Thünen Institute was planning its move from Reinbek Castle to Lohbrügge. Now, something that is in the cellar has actually been written off, but we'll put something like this back in the basement for now mainly because we don't really want to part with it yet.

So: Who needs this stuff, one would ask?

We do! - Call the experts, we want to look at them and study them. Above all, we need the TYPES ! We want to see which species still exist and where.

The ideas of what is contained in this collection in terms of species, number of individuals or qualities of the insects in this collection were strictly speaking, only vague and full of assumptions. However, it is clear that it contains mainly beetles (Coleoptera) and butterflies (Lepidoptera). But it also has flies (Diptera), lice (Psocodea), cicadas and true bugs (Hemiptera), and all sorts of other 6-legged insects, and some other-legged animals.

The Thünen Collection is the property of the Thünen Institute for Wood Research and has been made available to the Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change Hamburg (LIB) as a permanent loan for research purposes. Here, it is stored behind the thick walls of the Museum der Natur - Zoologie - Hamburg or Zoologisches Museum Hamburg (ZMH) for short, and is readily made available to researchers on request.

Whenever I chatted to experts and told them I was working on the Thünen" Collection, they would immediately ask me: "Oh - what did he collect?" That's the way we are today: highly specialised. You no longer just collect beetles (or stamps) but you collect certain beetles (certain stamps), such as ground beetles or jewel beetles (only stamps from Australia). And here comes the need to explain: Johann Heinrich von Thünen was anything but an Insect collector -

² Christina Rückert, on loan to the university, Bergedorfer Zeitung 12.6.2021



- This collection has been bought!

The collection was purchased in 1944 by Dr Franz Heske - almost 100 years after Heinrich von Thünen's death - for the forestry institute he headed. The seller was Eugène le Moul, who was probably the largest insect dealer in the world at the time, at least in Europe.

The material in the collection are between 60 and 160 years old. However, a more precise statement about the origin of each individual beetle, butterfly or fly can only be made on the basis of the labelling.

The following chapters will deal with precisely these labels. They contain information that scientists normally only use for comparisons. For me, they triggered associations with travelling, kings, carpets, historical events, adventures, feelings such as horror, incredulity, cheerfulness and longing to travel.

Strangely, almost mystically, almost all of the labels listed here are only present once among the more than 63,000 individual objects. As if a magical hand had hidden them among all the many objects as a reward for the painstaking work of inventoring and cataloguing them.

The organisation of the chapters is an attempt to bring topics together in some form, but this is not always successful. Order is a tricky thing: what are the criteria for sorting? The order of nature has always preoccupied and continues to preoccupy science.

This is not an encyclopaedia, a travel guide, a textbook or an explanatory book - it is a hands-on book, an exploration book and therefore a fun-book! Dear reader, you can expect interesting, entertaining and adventurous facts about geography, history, art and culture.

It's not about little insect mummies. It is about those who collected and identified them, about the places where they were found, about the time in which they were found in these particular places, and also about events that once took place in these places. It is about the collectors, authors, traders, countries, places, regions, expeditions, adventures and historical events. Poetry, mythology and fantasy are not neglected either. Supposedly boring lists can turn out to be a veritable and reliable treasure trove of information.

Look behind and beyond the labels and look at them without judgement, enjoy the thoughts that come to you spontaneously. Judgements quickly impose themselves, look at things as



they were or seem to be. Let yourself be moved by a kaleidoscope of associations, imagine travelling around the world.

Check the notes and do your own research, start where the respective chapter ends, don't let yourself be held up, pick up an atlas, a globe or a world map (or their electronic variants) and run your finger through the areas of the world you encounter in the book, draw information from encyclopaedias or electronic sources of information. Follow me in the typical zig-zag flight of insects across space and time, explore the world, let yourself be tempted to explore, find beauty, joy, adventure, the unspeakable, the exciting and the scary.

The Stauffer Emperor Frederick II, who was the grandson of the great Frederick Barbarossa, was already known as the "stupor mundi" during his lifetime called - "the wonder of the world" –

Be amazed!



About Collecting **7**, Retailer **10**, Eugène Le Moult **11**,
 Franz Heske **12**, J.H.von Thünen **14**, Of the value **16**,
 Types **19**, It all began **21**, Change of perspective **23**,
 Labels **24**, Fisimatenten **26**, Mysteriuous abbreviations **28**,
 Herrmann **29**, Ochsenheimer **31**, Kelemen **33**,
 Rakos mezo **34**, Banat **35**, Herkulesbad **36**, Macedonia **37**,
 Trapezunt **39**, Kherson **42**, Musca domestica **43**,
 Caucasus **44**, Elisabethpol **45**, Sarepta **46**,
 Mesopotamia **47**, Elburs **49**, Aulie Ata **50**, Bukhara **51**,
 Samarkand **53**, Croisière Jaune **54**, Almost **56**,
 the oldest **57**, timeline **58**, Novara **61**,
 New Holland **62**, New Hebrides **64**, Nova Teutonia **65**,
 Theresopolis **67**, Colonia Hansa **68**, Tring Museum **69**,
 Rossitten **70**, Beresina **72**, Napoleon's adjutant **73**,
 Names, names, names **75**, Casablanca **77**, Omo **78**,
 Niger-Benue **80**, Moorish butterfly **82**, Goliath **84**,
 Bushmannsland **85**, Cape **86**, Natal **87**, Transvaal **88**,
 Orange Colon **89**, Women **91**, Asia minor **93**, Versaille **95**,
 Azores **97**, Suez **98**, Travel around the world **99**,
 Tahiti **102**, Coromandel **103**, Pionierbivak **104**,
 New Guinea **105**, Diego Suarez **107**, Usambara **108**,
 Zanzibar **109**, Governor **111**, Lappmark **112**,
 Finlande **114**, Hedin **116**, Przewalski **119**,
 Kamchatka **120**, Alaska **122**, Long 134°-Lat66N **124**,
 Saguenay **127**, New York **129**, Pennsylvania **130**,
 Dyar **131**, Athos **132**, Pater Marie **134**,
 Shrine **136**, Jerusalem **137**, greetings from Pharaoh **138**,
 Mythology **139**, The whole world **140**, Blumenthal **144**,
 Heinrich **145**, von Harling **147**, Escherich/Eidmann **149**,
 Country-Site-Regions **152**, Worldview **154**,
 Reading stuff **155**, Thank you **158**



About collecting

What do you collect?

If you revise the pockets of a small child, you'll find all sorts of things picked up, no longer the frogs of earlier generations, but various kinds of things picked up from the street. Even as adults we can't help but do it: if you go for a walk on the beach on any given day, you can see how every man and woman occasionally bends down - really everyone! It is not only those that have a keen interest in Nature. In fact, I don't know anyone who doesn't collect something: Shells, crown caps, elephants, stamps, cars, paintings, and so on.

Collecting is as much a part of our lives as laughing, loving, doing sport, learning and playing. We collect for pleasure, out of a thirst for knowledge, for reasons of prestige, because we are bored, because we have too much space - or whatever the case may be. People are able to give meaning to everything they do. A stamp collector once said to me that stamps are the little man's paintings.

The same goes for hoarding the collected items. We sort them by colour, size, shape, - some kind of system will be found. The collector must be concerned about the order., It is existential in order to be able to make comparisons. Which criterion is suitable as a decisive characteristic? Colours, sizes, shapes, alphabets, date of collection, number of legs or wings? This question actually concerns all collectors. Biologists have picked out the biggest chunk with their "binary nomenclature", according to which they sort nature today. It was once devised by a certain Carl von Linné.

So at some point, you have a collection together, finely sorted and beautifully presented. And then we proudly show it off - our collection. We also go to a club to exchange ideas with other collectors and talk shops.

After all, we collect in the name of Science. The more material, the better the scientific accuracy can be substantiated, and the thesis can be more substantiated or refuted. Just keep the stones, leaves, seeds, dead birds and beetles coming. With spiders, scorpions and snakes, there is also the creepy factor. You just have to listen quietly to the people in the Natural History Museum...

However, collecting not only requires passion, but also the necessary skills. To get an idea of the size of the objects shown

here, just take a pin; insect pins are usually a little longer than normal pins. To make it easier to estimate the size, a cent coin, an everyday object, has been integrated into the photos, quite unscientifically. A very scientific scale can also be found here. In the event that the font is too small, you will certainly need to use a magnifying glass. This will give you the most important tools of an entomologist: magnifying glass, forceps, tweezers and insect pin.

The objects in the Thünen Collection were collected at a time when everyone went out into Nature and enjoyed it. People saw themselves as part of Nature., They had arrived on Earth, so to speak. The “Wandervogel“ was invented, the end of Romanticism had its consequences, and an interest in Nature itself had developed. People no longer saw themselves as separate from Nature, but began to realise that man was a part of Nature and subject to its mechanisms like any other living organism. People began to collect not only for pleasure, but above all for the sake of Science. The sensual-mythical magic of butterflies, beetles and the like was transformed into romantic décor, and a hunting mood emerged ³). It was the time when scientific societies were founded to exchange knowledge, ideas, conduct scientific research and simply have fun. The first entomological society was founded in France as early as 1832. This was followed by the first directory of entomologists in 1834. Between 1860 and 1914 alone, 88 natural history societies were founded in Germany ⁴). All the big names in natural history guilds were and are represented in these societies. It was also a time of adventure, of conquering the last blank spots on the maps of the world. Expedition after expedition set off into unknown worlds, discovering new realms and exploring the dimensions of life.

Ordinary collectors made the biggest contribution to the creation of collections. Then there were those enthusiastic people who used their leisure hours alongside their jobs to do scientific work on insects. And finally there are traders who mix everything up and turn it into money.

Collections connect us with history. Everyone has the desire to leave something behind for posterity; it is only when future generations have forgotten us that we are truly dead. But collections also represent a treasure that can teach us about the past.

³ Wiemers, Carola, Just a flap of wings, 1 April 2014 Deutschlandfunk

⁴ Daum, Popularisation of Science 2002

And so it is only logical to name these collections after the collector or owner. As a further consequence of collecting, exchanging, giving and trading, a collection is created that also contains parts of other collections. The small labels are then labelled with terms such as 'col' or 'Coll' for collection, or 'ex Museo' for "from the collection", followed by the name of the original collector from whose holdings the small object originates. Sometimes the specimens are labelled with just an "ex" and the name of the collector. Movements of individual objects can also be found. In these rarer cases, two or even more "ex" can be found. If you follow these movements, you can uncover unexpected connections and a whole network.

Retailer

Usually a single person collects and when they have collected enough, no longer feel like it or have even died, the collection is given away, sold, bequeathed or sometimes thrown away. In turn, heirs do the same.

Collections therefore usually also bear the name of the person or people who collected them. We are therefore dealing with a collector. So if someone wants to get rid of something, they can throw it away, give it away or sell it on the assumption that someone else sees the same value in it as they do. You therefore turn to a dealer. You become a seller.

Traders are people who buy and sell, thus initiating and maintaining the flow of goods and skimming off their profits in between. Conversely, insects have also become a means of earning money. This is how insects are traded. In the past, as well as today. Only the trading platforms have changed; today the internet is the platform for buying or selling absolutely everything. Nevertheless, there are still swap fairs here and there, the best known and largest of these insect swap fairs in Europe takes place once or twice a year in Prague.

Many of these dealers no longer exist; the Second World War not only destroyed many collections, but also these trading structures. In addition, the media have developed even more rapidly in recent years, and with them more possibilities.

The balance sheet at the end of this booklet contains a list of dealers who could be identified as such, and through whose hands at least one of the objects contained in the Thünen Collection passed. These were often collectors who wanted to part with their own collected items.

The majority of the collection analysed and documented here comes from one of the greatest dealers of his time, Eugène Le Moult from the cosmopolitan and city of lights - Paris

Eugène Le Moul't

Name: *Drypta crampeli*, Alluaud
Location: Fort-Crampel, Congo-Francaise
Collector: Alluaud det.
Previous owner: Coll K.
Owner: **E. de Le Moul't**
COTYPE

The present "Thünen Collection" comes mainly from the stock of the French naturalist hunter, collector and dealer Eugène Le Moul't (1882-1967), Rue Duméril, Paris.

Growing up in French Guiana, a French penal colony, he specialised early on the bright blue morpho butterflies. He collected the blue butterflies truly excessively and sold them with great success to the French motherland and to the rest of Europe.

In his time, he was regarded as the largest insect dealer in the world. At the same time, Eugène Le Moul't quickly developed into a globally recognised specialist for morpho butterflies. Together with Pierre Réaleine, between 1962 and 1963, they wrote a revision of the taxon "Les Morpho d' Amerique du Sud et Centrale", Paris.

The most famous portrait of him deliberately illustrates him in a style of an image of a saint with a butterfly net draped as a halo.

At the beginning of the 20th century, butterfly exports were French Guiana's third largest export, alongside exports of tropical timber and gold. Its primary customers included major museums in Europe and America, as well as private collectors, such as the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, and the son of Russian Prime Minister Khrushchev.

His collection of morpho butterflies was said to be the fourth largest in the world. His butterfly collection alone was said to be valued at one million specimens after his death.



Franz Heske

Franz Heske was born in Frauenberg, Bohemia, in 1892 and studied forestry at the University of Soil Culture in Vienna.

In 1931, he founded the Institute for Foreign and Colonial Forestry in Tharandt, Saxony, where he worked as the director of the Institute for Forestry Organisation and as a professor of Forestry Science at the Forestry College.

This is also where he devised the Journal of World Forestry in 1932. With his work on guidelines for timber utilisation, silviculture and especially for forest conservation in the tropics, he gave decisive impetus to the development of world forestry.

On the instructions of the Reichsforstmeister (the Empire Forest Master) Hermann Göring, the institute was then declared an Empire Institute in 1937, and in 1940 it was renamed the Empire Institute for Foreign and Colonial Forestry, and moved to the castle in Reinbek near Hamburg.

In 1943, Franz Heske was appointed as the head of the Forestry and Soil Science department at the German Institute he occupied in Paris. This is probably where he got to know the insect dealer Eugène Le Moulton and his colleagues, Deyrolle, Henri Beureau and others.

Based on the principle of sustainability in forestry, which emerged at the end of the Middle Ages, Franz Heske transferred the idea of sustainability to other areas of life and developed the 'Philosophical School of Thought of Organic' in 1954.

Sustainable forestry is understood to mean the management of forest areas in such a way and to such an extent that the productivity, soil yield, regeneration capacity and vitality of the forest areas are not only maintained but also improved.

In his philosophy, Franz Heske also sheds light on the role of the moral or ethical guardian over the implementation of scientific findings: must we do everything that is feasible from a scientific and technical point of view? He also points out that the possibility of influencing social and individual life through technology, which is closely linked to natural science, makes every scientist responsible for the results of their work.

"The view of world events only as a (mechanical) RESULT, not as a TASK or path to a goal, promotes the epicurean rather than heroic view of life and the predominant view of the world as coexistence, not togetherness, is closer to an egocentric individualism than a serving absorption of the ego in a superordinate



structure. The here and now is in the foreground, and the atomisation of the spatio-temporal continuum promotes the tendency to concentrate interests in the self and in the present. [...] A world view that sees life not only as a result, but also as a task, and breaks down the ice armour that modern atheism has placed around the unsatisfied human heart by allowing religion to enter the realms of longing for salvation, which a technocracy, however powerful, can never fulfil and which finally unites in a new synthesis the two indispensable preconditions of humane existence, namely freedom and integration, in the life of the grown human social being, in the sense of the organic "suum cuique" (to each his own) instead of the mechanical "to all the same".⁵⁾

In doing so, he created the conceptual basis for the idea of a generally sustainable way of life and sustainability Science, which only increasingly emerged in the 1990s.

Until his emeritation in 1956, Franz Heske remained head of the Federal Research Centre for Forestry and the Timber Industry (BFH), which had been transformed from the „Reichsinstitut. From 1957 to 1961, Franz Heske was the Forestry-General in Ethiopia, having previously spent long periods working in the USA, India and Turkey.

Franz Heske's legacy continues: in 2008, the Federal Research Centre for Forestry was merged with the Research Institutes for Agriculture and Fisheries to form the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries within the remit of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

Franz Heske bought this insect collection at the time with the desire to have illustrative material of forestry-relevant insects available as specimens and study material. Another reason could be the destruction of the collections housed in the Hamburg Natural History Museum in 1943, as there are around 247,000 further specimens attributed to Eugène Le Moult in the collection of the Zoological Museum, under the accession number ZMH 1.1957.

⁵ Heske, Franz, Organics, Berlin 1954

Johann Heinrich von Thünen

The collection is thus named after the owner, the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries.

Johann Heinrich von Thünen (1783-1850) certainly picked up a few stones, but not to look for beetles underneath them. Nor did he jump across meadows and fields to catch butterflies with a net. No insect collection was found in his estate.

Johann Heinrich von Thünen was what we today call a social reformer. Based on the theories of the Enlightenment philosopher Adam Smith, he was concerned with the question of old-age security for people living on farms, i.e. today's farmers.

In his work called *The Wealth of Nations* (1764), Adam Smith dealt with questions about the role and function of the free market, the determination of the value of labour, profit, wages, productive and unproductive labour, the function of labour and the division of labour. Finally, the question of the effect and role of the state.⁶⁾

As the son of the landowner Edo Christian von Thünen who was based in Hooksiel, Johan-Heinrich von Thünen had the best possible qualifications. After his primary school years in Hooksiel and Jever, he completed an agricultural apprenticeship on various estates and under the guidance of renowned experts of the time, such as Lukas Andreas Staudinger who lived in Groß Flottbek near Hamburg and Albrecht Daniel Thaer who resided in Celle. He finally completed his training with two semesters of agriculture at the University of Göttingen. In 1809, he acquired the 465-hectare Tellow estate near Teterow in Mecklenburg.

He was primarily concerned with questions of soil fertility and the development of grain prices. In line with current political events - the formation of states in Europe was in full swing - he started from the assumption of the agricultural enterprise as a self-contained economic entity, a state, which had to assert itself in the network of production conditions, agricultural production conditions and market events. He analysed the relationships between capital, income and the market price of the com-

⁶ Zitelmann, Rainer, The fight against climate change will not succeed with a planned economy, Adams Smith on his 300th birthday, 3 July 2023 Focus Online