Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany

Itohan Osayimbwese
Colonialism
and MODERN ARCHITECTURE
in GERMANY
Culture, Politics, and the BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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Colonialism
and MODERN ARCHITECTURE
in GERMANY

ITOHAN OSAYIMWESE

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For Iz Osayimwese,
who, after a lifetime wielding words
with surgical precision,
has lost his way.

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Contents

Acknowledgments vii

Introduction 3

CHAPTER 1 Expositions in German Colonialism and German Architecture 21

CHAPTER 2 The Irresistible Call of Adventure: German Architects and Ethnography 61

Color plates follow page 96

CHAPTER 3 Heimatschutz and the Competition for Colonial Architecture 105

CHAPTER 4 Reform and World’s Fair Thinking at the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition 153

CHAPTER 5 The Colonial Origins of Modernist Prefabrication 187

Conclusion: Decolonizing the Landscape of Colonial Memory in Germany 243

Notes 249

Bibliography 295

Index 325
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Colonialism and MODERN ARCHITECTURE in GERMANY
Picture a late afternoon meeting in a Berlin office building in the summer of 1913. Sitting around a massive oak table are some of the men now considered to be the doyens of modern architecture in Germany: Henry van de Velde, Hermann Muthesius, Bruno Taut, Walter Gropius, Hans Poelzig, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, and Dominikus Böhm. Around this first ring of notables sits a group of their lesser-known colleagues and protégés—Carl Rehorst, architect and local organizer of the upcoming German Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne; Adolf von Oechelhäuser, art historian and chair of the Bund Heimatschutz (League of Homeland Protection); Margarete Knüppelholz-Roeser, Breslau Royal School of Art and Applied Arts alumna and designer of the women’s pavilion at the Cologne exhibition; prefabrication pioneer Konrad Wachsmann; and others. As the coffee flows, the men and lone woman at the table passionately debate a single topic: the status of architecture in the German colonies. Their topic may be surprising, but their ideas and their language are familiar to readers today. They critique the excessively ornamented “style architecture” of the German protectorate of Kiaochow. They bemoan the lack of “objectivity” in the floor plans of the “parvenu” villas that proliferate in its main city, Qingdao. Someone points out that the German colonial administration in Dar es Salaam has somehow, despite its apparent apathy to objectivity and purposiveness, managed to develop some standard housing types. Everyone falls into throes of ecstasy over these types and the simple, streamlined prefabricated houses that German manufacturers mass produce and ship to settlers in Cameroon. Perhaps, they murmur, there is something to be learned from Germany’s costly colonial adventure after all.
INTRODUCTION

Nowhere in the gallons of ink spilled on the history of modern architecture in Germany—whether in manifestos written by the self-proclaimed first generation of modernists, the hagiographic histories written by their contemporaries, the interpretative tomes that have added more and more detail to our knowledge of established narratives, or the self-reflexive analyses of more recent vintage—do we find even a hint of this story. Indeed, this anecdote is fictitious in its finer details. There was in fact a meeting in Berlin in 1913, but only two of the protagonists mentioned were present in person, while their colleagues were indirectly involved in the project. As this book argues, the striking image of the masters and their protégés discussing colonialism and architecture holds true if we consider that they exchanged views and shaped policy through a series of exhibitions, competitions, meetings, lectures, journal articles, books, correspondence, and actual buildings and spaces that reached back to at least the 1890s and continued into the interwar period. Through this extended conversation, the multidimensional effort to articulate a new approach to architecture in twentieth-century Germany became implicated with Germany’s official colonial project and the array of financial and technoscientific interventions through which the German empire exerted influence across the non-Western world.

Almost twenty-five years ago, Jill Lloyd shocked the art historical establishment when she made a similar claim about modern art in Germany. She spelled out, clearly and compellingly, just how unthinkable expressionist painting, sculpture, woodcuts, and graphic and decorative art were without the antibourgeois primitivism of the avant-garde and very real colonial character of their milieu. More recently, the formal innovation and luxurious materiality of fin-de-siècle art nouveau in Belgium has been linked to metropolitan fear and fascination with colonialism in the Congo. Neither of these radical arguments would have been possible without the Museum of Modern Art’s seminal 1984 show Primitivism in Twentieth-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern, which inspired critiques of European modernist appropriation of the arts of the colonized. But such claims are yet to be taken seriously in histories of modern architecture in Germany.

On its own, the notion of “affinities” between modern and non-Western architectures is no longer startling. Indeed, one recurring strand of the scholarship on colonial architecture and urbanism pursues the mission of illuminating the colonies as laboratories of social modernity and modernism in architecture. Like the once-dominant primitivism narrative of modern art, the “laboratory” narrative of modern architecture also has roots in the utterings and actions of European protagonists of
colonialism—people like the urban planner Henri Prost who were able, in the colonies, to design and build on a scale and in a manner impossible at home. And like the primitivism narrative, the “laboratory” hypothesis has been eclipsed by scholarship showing that intersections between colonialism, modernity, and modernism far outstripped anything that the colonial state and individual agents of colonialism could have conceived. For example, experiments with design education in India were deeply linked to the economic goals of the Raj but they also reverberated in education policy in England.

In the midst of all of this fine-grained analysis, however, our interpretative lens rests disproportionately on the former colonies. Modernism in architectural history resolutely remains, with few exceptions, a European construct transmitted by architectural professionals to the rest of the world. Contrary to the model of modernism as one of colonialism’s imports, three decades of scholarship in postcolonial studies have shown decisively that colonialism was anything but a unidirectional project. Europe was made by its imperial projects just as the colonies were shaped by European prerogatives. By focusing on how colonial encounters and imperial entanglements affected architectural developments within Germany itself, this book responds to postcolonial studies’ provocation to “provincialize Europe.”

In this context, a focus on Germany is particularly apt. Germany is sacrosanct in architectural history as the birthplace of the Bauhaus, the institution that refined and disseminated new approaches to the applied arts, fine arts, and architecture from 1919 to 1933. Most of the apostles who are said to have carried the message of modern architecture into the world from the 1930s onward were born or trained in Germany. And many of the questions that the modernists posed—about if and how contemporary conditions should be reflected in design education and built processes and forms, the place of tradition in contemporary life, and architecture’s relationship to national economy—were presaged in architectural and art historical debates in Germany through much of the nineteenth century. Even though the dominant narrative of modernism embodies the architectural version of the Enlightenment metanarrative of progress whose critique is one of the premises of postcolonial studies, postcolonial critique has been slow to penetrate the historiography of modern architecture in Germany. The narrative of modern architecture as the brainchild of a few masterminds working in the incubator of turn-of-the-century Germany has been central to all conversation about the discipline and is crucial to its self-identity. Its canonical status poses an obstructive structural condition for critique, which is compounded by the fact that German colonial
INTRODUCTION

history has only slowly infiltrated popular consciousness in Germany and elsewhere, and has only become a recognized academic subfield since the 1990s. It is no surprise, then, that the issue of colonialism has barely touched histories of German architecture even though architectural debate and experimentation was at a fever pitch in the same decades that the German empire was embroiled in the colonial fray.6 This book offers a history of modern architecture in Germany that takes into account Germany’s formal colonial endeavors, informal imperial practices, and deep involvement in global developments in the late nineteenth century.

GERMAN COLONIALISM: ABBREVIATED BUT SIGNIFICANT

With the annexation of Southwest Africa (contemporary Namibia), Cameroon, Togo, and East Africa (contemporary Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda) in 1884, and Kiaochow (northeast China) and the Pacific colonies (Samoa, New Guinea, and a number of smaller islands) in the late 1890s, Germany embarked on a colonial period that was unique for
INTRODUCTION

its lateness and brevity (figure I.1). It was late in part because the German nation-state emerged after other European nation-states. Late nation building meant a distinctive path toward industrialization that did not rely on alienated foreign labor and extraterritorial natural resources. Colonial supporters were able to turn this tardiness into an advantage, however, by positing that Germany could learn from the mistakes of earlier colonial powers. This argument especially shaped the development of the German protectorate of Kiaochow, which was conceived as a model colony that would avoid problems like financial dependence on the metropole.7 German colonialism’s late beginning was compounded by an early end when the empire was forced to concede its colonies to the League of Nations as part of the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I.

Despite these distinctive traits, there were significant continuities between German colonialism and other European colonialisms of the modern era. Like many colonial empires before it, Germany’s appeared accidental because the state intervened only when German businesses overseas forced its hand. In this case, the state stepped in order to save German interests by declaring a protectorate over Southwest Africa when the Bremen merchant Adolf Lüderitz overextended himself and damaged Germany’s reputation. German territorial expansion was anything but accidental, however; a variety of interest groups had been lobbying for it since the early decades of the nineteenth century. As the late literary scholar Susanne Zantop pointed out, colonial agitation significantly preceded and helped intensify German national feeling in the prelude to unification in 1871.8 But Germany also shared its colonial motivations with neighboring powers. Germans too dreamed that the colonies would provide new sources for raw materials, new markets for manufactured goods, and cheap labor for the German economy. The German colonies were never profitable, however. They remained a controversial drain on the imperial coffers for the entire period of their existence. Second, colonial supporters believed that targeted emigration to colonial territories would help the state maintain some control over the movements of its citizens, prevent the continued decline of the German nation, and provide an outlet for social tensions brewing at home. This too proved to be a fantasy as the colonial lobby was never able to generate enough interest in emigration to the colonies. Lastly, Germans, like their peers in Britain and elsewhere, also subscribed to the notion that it was their duty to “elevate” less-civilized peoples by exposing them to education, religion, and wage labor—this was the German version of the “civilizing mission.”

Like other colonialisms, German colonialism was not monolithic. Though official policy was articulated in relation to established binaries
INTRODUCTION

Like settler versus trade colonies and indirect versus direct rule, actual policies responded to conditions on the ground and even varied across individual colonies. Through all of this, Germany’s colonial project retained one signature of all colonialisms: it violently expropriated life and livelihood from its subjects. This and other aspects of the colonial experience have had a long afterlife whose measure we have only recently begun to take. Since the 1990s, interest in colonialism has been fed by public debates about immigration, multiculturalism, and national identity in Germany. The topic remains timely in the current climate of large-scale migration to Germany from the Middle East and northern and eastern Africa.

This book takes the position that German colonialism must be understood as a broad set of activities pursued by the German empire and specific corporate groups and private individuals in the context of the pan-European imperial project of the nineteenth century. As such, it reflects a recent turn in the historiography of German colonialism away from earlier scholarship that analyzed political economy and social history, attempted to articulate a German colonial Sonderweg (exceptionalism), and became overshadowed by National Socialist histories. A number of research foci, all shaped by cultural history, have taken the place of these earlier concerns. These include, as characterized by historian Sebastian Conrad, a focus on the patterns of knowledge production and modes of representation that structured German colonialism, the variety of colonial subjectivities that evolved despite the proclaimed binary of racial and cultural difference, and the long-term effects of colonialism on those subjectivities and on the social, economic, and cultural lives of affected societies. Issues of memory—exemplified, for instance, in recent calls for reparations for the 1904 genocide of the Herero people in Southwest Africa—have reminded scholars to pay attention to colonialism’s material and structural effects alongside the abstractions of colonial discourse and representation.

In 2004 Germany was for the first time publicly reimagined as a postcolonial nation when the minister of development aid, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, apologized to Namibia for the Herero genocide. Beyond reparations, the significance of colonialism to German history is one of the most widely debated topics in the field. How are we to weigh the import of an experience that lasted a scant thirty years and directly involved only a few thousand German citizens at its height? Understanding and counteracting the invisibility of colonial history in the contemporary German national psyche has also become fertile ground for scholarship. While remaining wary of simplistic causal arguments, this book supports
the claim that colonialism is embedded in German history on a number of intersecting levels, and contributes to efforts to make colonialism’s impact more visible.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE GERMAN COLONIES

Becoming a colonial power required at least a minimal level of investment and intervention in the built and designed environments of each colony. Soldiers, bureaucrats, and merchants needed acceptable lodgings and places to conduct business. Harbors, roads, and railroads had to be built in order to export products like sisal, palm oil, and bird of paradise feathers to Germany. German colonial officials and settlers built entirely new cities, towns, and districts, as well as a wide variety of public and private buildings. In order to design and erect these buildings, the colonial administration brought in engineers, “building technicians,” and architects from Germany and other parts of Europe. A few architects also established private practices in larger colonies such as Southwest Africa and Kiaochow. Labor, too, in the form of overseers and specialized craftsmen, had to be imported in the early years because locals were not acquainted with German construction methods and materials. “Arab, Indian, Goan, Greek and Italian” builders were used in German East Africa, while Basel Mission Society–trained workers from the Gold Coast and bricklayers from Togo assisted in German Cameroon. Despite their invisibility in official accounts, local unskilled laborers—paid or forced—did much of the strenuous and at times dangerous work of excavating, hauling, and assembling materials. The situation gradually stabilized as German officials became more familiar with and were able to harness local resources like the black volcanic rock of Buea (Cameroon), and launched Western-style brickyards like Diederichsen Jebsen and Co. in Qingdao. However, manufactured items like windows, toilets, and light fixtures continued to be imported at great cost. When time and resources were limited in the early days, administrators and settlers built provisional utilitarian structures, rented from cosmopolitan elites like the Douala in Cameroon, or expropriated buildings from locals. Over time, they rebuilt or transformed these first shelters into permanent and more elaborate buildings. They chose scale, form, material, and siting for practical reasons such as defense, but unspoken objectives also governed these choices. Monumental structures like Buea’s immense white neo-Renaissance colonial governor’s palace complete with a grand neo-Palladian entry sequence, entrance portico, flanking polygonal towers, rusticated first-floor walls, quoins, and crowning lantern dome, served to proclaim German political, economic, and
cultural power (figure 1.2). This reliance on historicist style, so common in high-profile buildings in Wilhelmine Germany, became characteristic of public architecture in the German colonies. On the other end of the spectrum of colonial buildings, simple, utilitarian settlers’ houses articulated racial difference through their snow-white linens and curtains or policed it through kitchens placed “in a special small addition, in order to keep the black personnel as far from the house as possible.” In this sense, architecture was part of the field of representation that, together with actual colonial institutions, reproduced and naturalized structures of power.

Despite the opportunity to learn from earlier colonial powers, German builders made some of the same mistakes. In East Africa, German
buildings often used soft woods that were soon besieged by termites. Rooms were laid out in tight configurations that obstructed ventilation and trapped heat. This too changed with experience. But experience itself could be a pitfall: attempts to apply accumulated knowledge led, for instance, to the construction of tropically inspired verandas in the relatively temperate climate of Qingdao in eastern China.

This overview makes it clear that German colonial architecture bore many similarities to the practices and forms developed by existing colonial empires. Like these architectural cultures, German colonial architecture disregarded local building practices and architectural traditions or characterized them as technically simplistic and aesthetically unprepossessing. Thus, a German army officer named Smend declared bitingly in a 1909 article about Togo that “the dwellings of the negroes are generally small and musty. . . . They are always put together randomly and without a plan.” Around the same time, a public health officer in British colonial Zanzibar in 1913 explained that “native huts” were “without any sort of proper lighting or ventilation” and therefore bred all sorts of nasty diseases. There were a few exceptions to this pattern of denigrating indigenous architecture, such as the “beehive” domes of the Mousgoum (Cameroon) and the soaring “saddle-roofs” and ornate figural veranda posts of elite Bamum architecture (Cameroon), which German colonial administrators and visitors mythologized. With the exception of the massive, multistory, residential masonry complexes of the Arab elite on the coast of East Africa, however, even these celebrated indigenous architectures were not seen as suitable models for German structures. Despite their commendable qualities, they too did not meet European expectations for hygiene and comfort, nor could they satisfy colonialism’s need to visually and materially assert authority.

On the larger scale of urban design and planning, Germans also implemented policies similar to those of other colonial empires. In Dar es Salaam, officials initially set themselves apart by denuding the landscape surrounding their houses in order to eliminate insects and diseases. This was not an overtly segregationist policy, but it foreshadowed a practice of spatial segregation between Germans and locals that would soon be institutionalized. Four years later, in 1891, the first building code for the city explicitly designated much of the desirable land adjacent to the harbor for European use only. In Qingdao at the turn of the century, colonial officials designed a segregated city from the beginning, with a swath of open space separating European and Chinese districts. They based these policies on racializing rationales that equated biology with poor personal and housekeeping habits that invited disease, and with subpar buildings
susceptible to fire. At this time, British and French colonial city planning were both turning toward overtly segregationist policies in response to the discovery that mosquitoes transmitted tropical diseases. As urban historian Odile Goerg points out, this scientific evidence actually justified and formalized existing attitudes. The same logic characterized German urban planning. However, Germany invested considerably less in colonial city building, in an effort to avoid the mistakes of colonial states that had sunk excessive amounts of money into infrastructure. German colonialism therefore interacted explicitly with other colonialisms. This policy was expressed in architectural terms when the director of the building department in East Africa, Friedrich Gurlitt, traveled to India in 1899 to evaluate British colonial architecture for lessons for East Africa.18

It is important to pay attention to these analogies between colonialisms. Was knowledge shared through specific mechanisms? Or did similar conditions and goals invariably result in similar practices and built forms? German colonial engineers, technicians, and architects responsible for building in the colonies conversed with each other, wrote reports, published journal articles, and presented lectures to interested audiences in Germany. Missionaries, administrators, and settlers also shared their experiences and voiced their opinions on how colonial designed environments should work. Together, these professional and lay articulations formed a body of knowledge accessible to architects and historians then and now. A 1913 proposal to compile a library or collection of sources for German architects designing colonial buildings shows that Germans were very much in dialogue with this body of knowledge.19

INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPERIALISM

Germany’s formal colonial project did not occur in isolation. Rather, it was just one—perhaps the most visible—of the German state’s attempts to jockey for economic and political power on the late nineteenth-century world stage. In addition to official efforts, German companies and individuals were globally mobile in ways that sometimes advanced and sometimes undermined state goals. Their activities were part of the increasing integration of the world via capitalism, imperialism, cultural exchange, and migration.20 That Germany was deeply embedded in these developments is frequently forgotten or dissociated from analyses of other aspects of German history—like architecture. State efforts seem to have focused especially on regions of the world that were yet to be incorporated into European spheres of influence. Unlike much of Africa, south Asia, South America, and the Caribbean, it was theoretically still possible for Germa-
ny to gain leverage over places like the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Japan, and some parts of Southeast Asia like Siam. Governments in each of these regions were aware of their precarious positions, and many attempted to reform their economic and political institutions and modernize on their own terms in order to counteract the European threat. One common thread in their various efforts was a willingness and even a desire to interact with the German state, German businesses, and professionals. Prussia had showcased its military prowess when it defeated Napoleon’s armies in 1871 and its share in foreign trade had multiplied in the last decades of the nineteenth century as a function of the newly unified state’s rapid industrialization. Precisely because it was in a state of emergence and because it too was fighting British and French monopolies, Germany was seen as a relatively neutral party and potential ally for modernizing states. To that effect, governments in Japan, Siam, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire invited German military officers, state bureaucrats, professionals, scholars, and technicians to consult on modernization initiatives. While each government was working toward its own context-specific ends, the German government welcomed these invitations as opportunities not only to gain new market shares but also to guide developments in these countries to benefit German interests. Some in government circles, the press, and fringe private interests strategized about how German economic and material assistance could become a foothold for full-scale colonization. For example, winning the concession to build the Baghdad Railway after decades of groundwork by German engineers, surveyors, and financiers and engagement with the Ottoman leadership was seen as evidence, by some observers, of imminent German colonization of Asia Minor.21

Often, German consultancy involved some form of intervention in the built and natural environments of these regions through the construction of railroads, road networks, new cities and towns, harbors, telegraph stations, factories, buildings, and other amenities. A certain mythology developed around the person of the German engineer. The German government encouraged this trend by establishing a program to send “technical attachés” abroad in the 1880s.22 Historian Dirk van Laak has developed the concept of “infrastructural imperialism” to describe this complex confluence of imperialist strategies and technoscientific knowledge production and dissemination that characterized German relations with some subaltern societies.23 I reconnect this phenomenon to the architecture and urbanism of official German colonialism for several reasons. First, though many of the technical experts involved in infrastructural imperialism were engineers, training in engineering and architecture were closely intertwined during this period in German history. For instance,
the German engineer Franz Baltzer, who designed the railroad connecting Tokyo to the rest of the (initially) British-built rail network in the country, also designed Tokyo’s main station and associated structures. Second, some of these personnel circulated between the formal colonies and nonimperial spheres of German influence. Others believed that consulting in the Ottoman Empire or Siam gave them the authority to offer advice about Germany’s formal colonies even if they had never set foot in them. Richard Seel, who was part of the contingent of German architects who had worked on the railroad in Japan, concocted an award-winning design for a hospital for German Samoa in 1914. Third, as Laak convincingly illustrates, technical expertise and financial support rearticulated as “development” became the means through which Germany maintained relations with its former colonies during the era of independence in the 1960s—a fact that highlights deep connections between distinct periods in German and world history and Germany’s diverse brands of political and economic engagement with non-European societies. Some of the most interesting links between colonialism and modernism discussed in this book occurred at the nexus between colonial architecture and infrastructural imperialism with its special emphasis on modernization.

THINKING THROUGH THE ARCHIVE

How have scholars analyzed the impact of the colonial experience on colonizing societies and cultures? Similarly, how do architectural historians conceptualize transformations in architectural practices and forms in response to new conditions such as colonialism? The concept of the archive is useful for thinking through these questions. Colonialism, like much human activity, left traces of itself everywhere. In the German context, we register these traces today when we enter the African Quarter in the Wedding district of Berlin. Or we might encounter, in a flea market somewhere in Germany, a cigarette tin richly decorated with minarets, palm trees, and camels. Or a handful of faded family portraits: the Cameroonian-born Ekwe Ngando, Silesian-born Ida Kleinfelt, and their four mixed-race children dressed in their early twentieth-century Sunday best. These are the informal archives of German colonialism that provide historians with crucial information that might be missing from official records maintained by the formerly colonizing and colonized states. But informal and official colonial archives were and remain much more than artifacts of happenstance. Archives, according to a growing number of theorists of postcolonialism, are sites of knowledge production where the colonial state collected, included and excluded, ordered and reordered
information in the belief that comprehensive knowledge would lead to total control of colonized societies. In this vein, colonial states encouraged and perfected existing and invented new information-generating projects like the museum, the library, and the historical, geologic, and ethnographic survey. Throughout the nineteenth century, these archives were accessioned from the colonial periphery to the imperial center in a process that sheared them of the violence embodied in their acquisition. Though scattered, these material archives are available for writing German colonial histories and they serve as crucial sources for this book.

This materialist concept of the archive is distinct from but overlaps with a more discursive definition. Though the colonial state could never fully control its subjects despite its rampant information gathering, the archive was nevertheless highly productive. By providing colonial administrators with nuggets of graspable knowledge amid vast oceans of information, colonial archives conditioned policies and specific actions in the colonial field. Colonial archives can therefore be understood as systems of organization that defined the “rules of practice” for what could and could not be said within colonial discourse. They were the “instituting imaginaries” that made colonial narratives possible. Archives were the condition for the production of knowledge but were themselves conditioned by existing knowledge, the means and tools available to generate new information, and by the personal circumstances and concerns of those creating the archives. Consequently, they are, in the words of historical anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler, chronicles of “colonial uncertainty,” indicative of the partiality, instability, spasmodic character, and anxieties of colonial rule. This is the source of their power for postcolonial interventions. In entering the archive to perform the task of making meaning, we as historians and members of the public can either walk the path well-trodden, proceed along the archive’s many detours, roundabouts, and dead ends, or track the path not followed. Seen in this light, a postcolonial approach to the archive can facilitate a “re-centering of material for the construction and contestation of knowledge.”

In contrast to the extensive scholarship on the colonial archive, the discipline of architecture has an unacknowledged archival logic at its heart. Architects produce new works by interacting creatively with a bounded body of knowledge alternately branded as precedent, history, tradition, memory, or the canon. This corpus of knowledge consists of extant buildings; their frequently decontextualized fragments and spolia; architectural representations like drawings, models, and photographs; and texts—books, journals, lecture notes, correspondence, and so on. The means of reproduction of this collection especially in the face of new
knowledge has long been debated. Some theorists have posited environment, culture, religion, or social and political factors as the stimulus for new architectural developments. Others emphasized available technologies, and yet others linked architectural change to shifts in cognition and psychological phenomena. What these theories have in common is the conviction that architecture has always been derivative within a limited set of constraints. Design historian Alina Payne has noted, however, that something changed in the fifteenth century. Exploration expanded the horizons of the European intelligentsia and brought the Western idea of a static, unimpeachable ancient canon of knowledge into crisis. For Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu, the entire idea of the architectural canon as a stable, universal, accumulated body of knowledge is an artifact of an epistemological shift brought on by colonial encounters. Thus, by the nineteenth century, architecture was concerned with “transmuting archaeology,” one of several new colonial sciences, “into invention.”

What I am describing as architecture’s archival logic is similar to the “archival reasoning” that Thomas Osborne attributes to disciplines like art history. Osborne argues that these disciplines depend on an “evidentiary paradigm” to make their truth claims. An analogy also exists between collecting in art history and archiving: both practices “introduce meaning, order, boundaries, coherence, and reason into what is disparate and confused.” Put another way, the art historical canon is a “structuring structure” in a continuous process of self-reproduction mediated through external forces. This paradigm is also at work in the architectural design process and in the architectural object itself, but, contra Osborne, it exists long before the architectural historian intervenes. Like the genealogical relationship between works of art, precedent, and memory—what art historian Hal Foster describes as art’s “subtextuality,” architecture has a filial relationship to the corpus of which it is part. Similarly, Osborne writes of art history’s “evidentiary paradigm” in terms of the discipline’s obsession with detail but the multiple meanings of “detail” in architectural thinking extend beyond his argument. A detail is a small and specific element of a building (a number of which make up the whole). But a detail is also a large-scale, fine-grained drawing of one of these elements. In “archispeak,” to detail is to draw or build said element. The detail is therefore the linchpin between architecture’s “archival” and “transformative” gestures. It is how the architect moves from precedent to innovation. Just as the purpose of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European neoclassical architecture was to obey the law of the architectural archive, so too reformist architecture in Europe and the United States since the end of the nineteenth century depended on a deep intimacy and conversation
with the archive. All architects, in the words of Mark Wigley, are therefore “archival experts.”

Some theorists of the archive have recognized architecture’s archival character. For Achille Mbembe, architecture’s archival logic has implications for all archives: the archive’s storage function, archivization process, and material site of the official state archives (the monumental edifice similar to a temple) are deeply entangled. The archive, like architecture, is a “montage of fragments” that creates an illusionary unity. It has an “inescapable materiality” that feeds into its role as an instituting imaginary. Despite their apparent differences, the materialist and discursive interpretations of the archive are not at odds. Indeed, it is the very looseness—alternately, the capaciousness—of the concept of the archive that is productive. The two modalities of the colonial archive—archive as encyclopedic documentation and archive as a system governing discourse—offer a framework for analyzing how German architecture came to terms with the new social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of colonialism. How can we, I ask, read the German colonial archive in relation to architecture’s own archival logic?

Apart from the idea of the archive, scholars have developed a variety of concepts to address how architecture negotiates knowledge produced through interaction with foreign societies. “Influence” is the de facto argument: the Japanese sukiya residential building type epitomized in Katsura Palace in Kyoto influenced, via interlocutors like Bruno Taut and Frank Lloyd Wright, modern architecture in Germany and the United States. However, the influence hypothesis is not sufficient, as art historian Michael Baxandall eloquently argues, because it forecloses further analysis and is misleadingly one-sided. “Influence” flattens all sorts of complexities and nuances and is especially disingenuous because it discounts asymmetrical power. “Translation” has been proposed as a heuristic to come to terms with this problem. Here, translation describes the movement of people, ideas, information, technologies, and images between two or more places, and the process of transformation that occurs during this repositioning. Translation therefore shares some features with the concept of archive. “Archive,” however admits the possibility that what goes into the archive can be recombined to produce outputs with little to no resemblance to the original idea or form. In fact, not all inputs necessarily lead to outputs. The archive can produce nothing at all, since archives are meaningless outside actual use. In a sense, archive precedes translation by defining, in the first instance, the limits of what it is possible to think and say about subaltern cultures and societies, and thereby providing the raw material for translation.
INTRODUCTION

of specific objects, buildings, and designed environments in Germany in relation to colonialism, the concept of the archive extends beyond previous approaches to focus on known and potential routes of knowledge generation and their nuanced implications. The architects discussed in this book themselves use the word *archive* to describe their activities. But even more than this, the archive as instituting imaginary provides a means to transcend the limiting focus on architectural form as the necessary location of architecture’s engagement with colonialism. Rather, it creates an opening to explore the profusion of writing, idiosyncratic language, and distinctive rhetorical formulations associated with both modernism and colonialism in Germany during this period.

OVERVIEW

This book considers the effects of colonialism—broadly construed—on the development of modern architecture in Germany from the 1850s until the 1930s. Through five case studies, I explore the myriad ways in which modernism and colonialism engaged with each other. The men and lone woman around that fictional Berlin table in 1913 were only the most high-profile instantiation of this history. The archive—colonial and architectural—is the theoretical apparatus that makes it possible to reconstruct this history: this book reconstitutes elements of the dispersed archive of German colonialism but is also itself a new archive created from these sources. Each case study slips back and forth to suggest the archive’s diverse modalities: materialist, discursive, and otherwise. Chapter 1 makes the case for German colonialism as part of a larger nineteenth-century pan-European imperial project by following the colonial archive par excellence, the universal exposition, as it traveled around Germany. At the same time that Germany’s mini-expositions shaped German colonial ideology and practice by collecting and ordering knowledge, they also stimulated new architectural thinking. Exhibitions created the intellectual and material conditions for architectural experimentation. My focus in this chapter is on the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition and the colonial exhibition that took place in association with it. While this was not the first display of its kind in Germany, it was the largest ever held, and it cast a long shadow over future German exhibitions as well as over the genre across Europe.

Chapter 2 turns to German architects who went to China, Japan, and Siam at the end of the nineteenth century. These architects were agents of infrastructural imperialism, but they also conducted ethnographic research on the allegedly disappearing traditions of these countries. To
In contrast to the first two chapters, which foreground colonialism’s and architecture’s overlapping documentation projects, chapters 3 and 4 are more concerned with discursive convergences between colonialism and modernism. They unpack efforts to reform colonial architecture according to emerging modernist tenets like objectivity, purposiveness, and contextualism. Chapter 3 takes the case of the cultural reform organization the League of Homeland Protection, which carefully expanded its distinctive concept of reform to embrace the colonial cultural and built landscape. “Colonial Heimatschutz” not only selectively embraced the colonies as part of the German Heimat (homeland), it also framed the colonies as mirrors that magnified the problems with Germany’s own historicist approach to architecture. Colonial Heimatschutz therefore helped resolve some of the pressing concerns of modern architecture: the extent to which cultural forms of the past should inflect contemporary thinking, and the nature of the relationship between universal experiences of modernity and local specificities.

Chapter 4 examines the effort to reform colonial architecture through the construction of a model colonial house at the 1914 German Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne. Drawing on my earlier analysis of world’s fairs and their crucial role in colonialism, I show that this seminal event in the history of modern architecture was imbued with colonial activity. Exposition types, including a bifurcated site plan, a model colonial house, and a native village, permeated the exhibition. For the organizers of the Werkbund colonial house, the question became how to reconcile colonialism’s mandate to visually and materially project German hegemony with modernism’s pursuit of objectivity, contextualism, and purposiveness. This chapter reevaluates the Werkbund Exhibition—a momentous event in the history of German modernism—in terms of Germany’s colonial concerns, and challenges inherited narratives about modern architecture in Germany in the process.

In chapter 5, the materialist and structuring functions of the archive merge in a case study of Germany’s prefabrication industry. Like its equivalent in Britain, German prefabrication had overlapping colonial, religious,
and military origins. Institutional histories of two of the country’s earli-
est prefabrication firms, Christoph & Unmack, of Niesky (Saxony), and
F. H. Schmidt, of Altona-Hamburg, show that their fortunes rose and fell
with Germany’s territorial expansion and access to global markets. By the
time reform-minded architects like Gropius and Poelzig discovered them
in the 1910s, these firms had long been mass-producing technologically
advanced, standardized buildings. This chapter demonstrates that the ob-
session with prefabrication that plagued reformist architects in Germany
in the interwar period, and followed German emigrés to the United States
in the 1930s and 1940s, had complex origins and associations.

These five case studies upend the image of German insularity com-
mon in histories of late nineteenth-century German architecture and
construct instead a picture of a country deeply embroiled in global cur-
rents. Together, they challenge us to expand our vision of the character
and scope of modern architecture in Germany, which can certainly no
longer be seen as the product of a few visionary modernist masters, or
of uniquely German social, economic, and political conditions. Since
nineteenth-century German architectural developments are typically un-
derstood as crucial to the evolution of modern architecture worldwide in
the twentieth century, this book globalizes the history of modern archi-
tecture at its founding moment.
CHAPTER 1

Expositions in German Colonialism and German Architecture

When we describe modernity and its effects, the image of the nineteenth-century exposition with its newfangled gadgets, milling flaneurs, and awestruck families immediately springs to mind. The same can be said of expositions and colonialism: it was through the characteristic phenomenon of the world’s fair that Europe’s colonial experiment came home to roost. From Paris to London, New York to Melbourne, and Kingston to Johannesburg, world’s fairs were iconic sites that showcased and stimulated the brave new world of industrial capitalism, rapid urbanization, and the creeping territorial expansion of European nation-states. Likewise, it is impossible to speak of modern architecture without speaking of expositions. Many of the technological and stylistic breakthroughs now understood as characteristic of modern architecture were associated with a specific exposition. Joseph Paxton’s prefabricated glass behemoth at London’s 1851 Great Exhibition, for example, frequently frames a narrative about the effects of new building materials and technologies and changing social and economic mandates. Following the 1867 Parisian exposition, German craftsmen and manufacturers recognized expositions as a new mass medium: by displaying complete room interiors at exhibitions at home and abroad, they attempted to transform bourgeois taste toward a new appreciation of the home as a venue for art. Moreover, as architectural historian Wallis Miller contends, expositions helped to formalize architectural collection and display as discrete professional activities for German architects. It was at these expositions that modernism’s design language and roster of protagonists was first established.

With this triple iconic status of the exposition in mind, this chapter discusses the development of the international exposition in a country
not usually associated with the phenomenon: Germany. It shows that Germany participated actively in the so-called world’s fair craze by hosting numerous small-scale exhibitions modeled on the universal exposition. As was the case in Britain and France, these events became an important medium for spreading “the colonial idea.” And architecture enabled this process.

THE “EXHIBITIONARY COMPLEX”

Since their advent in the first half of the nineteenth century, expositions have been the subject of literary paean, social critique, journalistic satire, and individual dreams and tragedies. Both period and present-day critics have devoted much energy to analyzing this fascinating genre. Fairs have been known for much of recorded human history, from religious celebrations in the ancient empires of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Mesoamerica to religious and military spectacles in the classical Greek and Roman worlds, and market fairs and carnivals in medieval Europe and in the African diaspora during transatlantic slavery. Something changed, however, in the nineteenth century. New fairs that had little to do with religious observances or traditional forms of commerce emerged. Over two hundred expositions as well as innumerable national, regional, and local exhibitions, trade and professional fairs, and other specialized exhibitions were held primarily in Europe between 1851 and 2001. It was through these fairs that new nations could imagine themselves in relation to their own pasts and to previous forms of community, and to neighboring societies and distant peoples, places, and times. What made the exposition unique was its condensed and hybrid character. Time and space were intensified in unprecedented ways that stimulated new kinds of communal and individual action. In his incisive analysis of the “exhibitionary complex,” Tony Bennett has argued that exhibitions were one of several intersecting institutional sites that inscribed and broadcasted a new message of power.

Long before Bennett, German sociologist Georg Simmel had already argued that the international exposition was the definitive embodiment of modernity. In his view, the strategy of collecting an encyclopedic range of objects and experiences in a single place and time and thus creating a “momentary center of world civilization” was uniquely modern. Even as it aspired to encyclopedism, however, the exposition aimed to create a unified experience out of this alienating heterogeneity. New visual and spatial technologies—the building blocks of the soon-to-emerge modernism—emerged to harmonize this discord. Related to this was the simultaneously fleeting and permanent nature of the exposition, which was available for
a finite period but left traces of itself in the physical fabric of the city and in the character of urban and global culture. Put another way, long after their closing, expositions still served the material function of the archive that had been part of their original purpose. Finally, Simmel argued that expositions were inherently globalizing in the way they fostered both collaborative and competitive interplay between individual and groups of states and nations.

Though Simmel did not specifically mention colonies, their presence epitomized the convergence of space and time that characterized the exposition for him. Colonialism was present in many forms at expositions—from the shocking corporeal presence of colonized people on exhibit to ethnographic ensembles that displayed the cultural products of the colonized, and manufactured cotton, rubber, and other products of alienated colonial labor. It is now clear that colonies represented more than a mere afterthought in expositions. Rather, their insistent appearance at world’s fairs illuminates their central role in European modernity. Using the occasion that inspired Simmel’s canonical reading, the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition, as a point of departure, this chapter shows that expositions played a similar role in Germany.

**REPLICATING THE EXPOSITION: TYPE AND ARCHIVE**

One feature that distinguished the 1896 Berlin exposition from its predecessors was the speed and completeness with which the idea and form were disseminated and reproduced. Bennett’s term *exhibitionary complex* hints at this rhizomatic aspect of the exposition. Expanding on Bennett’s ideas, historian Alexander Geppert replaces *exhibitionary complex* with *exhibitionary networks* in order to emphasize the “far-reaching internal references and formative transnational and interurban connections” that characterized the world’s fair. As he notes, these references were both conceptual and formal, and were perpetuated through print and other media and by individuals and organizations that moved across geographic and temporal boundaries.

Neither *network* nor *complex*, however, quite captures the archival workings of the exposition. Rather, the architectural concept of “type” seems more salient. Since the eighteenth century, architects have used type to explain continuity and change in architectural forms. Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier’s discussion of the tree trunks and branches of the primitive hut as the archetype of the classical column and pediment and universal basis for architecture in his *Essai sur l’architecture* (1753) usually marks the beginning of architecture’s preoccupation with the concept.
Other eighteenth-century architectural theorists, including Jacques-François Blondel, Antoine Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, and Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, used type to think through the relationship between causes, precedents, and models as they tried to come to terms with the expanding mandate of architecture in the modern era. By the late nineteenth century, the term again experienced a paradigm shift in response to a renewed focus on technology, economy, and production. More recently, in reaction to modernism’s inhumane functionalism, postmodern theorists like Aldo Rossi have revived type as a way to generate connections to the past in contemporary architecture and urban form.8

Even from its earliest mention, type has been closely associated with the exposition genre. This link is seen, for instance, in the work of Blondel, who included fairgrounds and vauxhalls as one of sixty-four types in his *Lessons on Architecture* (1771–1777). Both the traditional fairground and the newfangled vauxhall, or pleasure garden, of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England were linked to the nascent public sphere and new ideas about commerce, science, and social order that culminated in the international exposition. Blondel’s embrace of the vauxhall in particular speaks to one of the underlying goals of his project: to elaborate an operative strategy for eighteenth-century needs that built on French architectural tradition.9 Blondel’s example reveals that the architectural idea of type emerged contemporaneously with the genre of the international exposition. That this link between type and expositions was well established may explain why the concept of *type* appears regularly in nineteenth-century German-language writing on expositions.

In Germany, exposition buildings were already considered a type by the date of publication of Ludwig Klasen’s classic catalog of building types, *Grundriss-Vorbilder* (1884–1896). Klasen distinguished fairgrounds of the past from new nineteenth-century spaces of public display and consumption. This new category, “Buildings for Art and Research,” included such novel subtypes as “art museums, museums for patent models, botanical and ethnographic museums, aquariums, libraries, archives, buildings for art exhibitions, buildings for international expositions, buildings for provincial exhibitions and county fairs, theaters, buildings for scientific observations and measurements, academies for learned societies, and ateliers for artists.”10

Klasen is most clear about what he means by “type” in his discussion of exposition buildings. The exposition type is a structure in which all the art and industry of a single society is exhibited. Like many subsequent writers, he relies on statistical, structural, and spatial comparisons between exposition buildings to identify the characteristics of the type:
how did Cornelis Outshoorn’s Crystal Palace in Amsterdam (1855), for example, compare to Paxton’s Crystal Palace in London (1851) in span, square footage, and attendance? For Klasen, new developments in exposition planning and design were a response to the lessons from previous expositions. The result was a cycle of innovation and dissemination of the type.11

By analyzing these innovations, Klasen established a taxonomy and genealogy of exposition structures. His catalog included, among other subtypes, the all-inclusive multistory basilica with transepts (London, 1851), the “fishbone” main hall system consisting of a nave and multiple transepts (Vienna, 1873), and the infinitely expandable “pavilion system” (Berlin, 1883).12 Ultimately, in Klasen and other architects’ discussions, type was a shorthand for specific arrangements of form and function that responded equally to historical practices and contemporary needs. The reproduction, continuity, and differentiation of architecture is always already embodied in type. It is this open-ended quality that makes type useful in analyses of expositions. Because an originative idea is always retained in a type, typological analyses are helpful for tracing the dissemination and transformation of the exposition genre and architectural, spatial, material, and visual cultural developments associated with it. Thus, type helps to elucidate the peculiar “archivism” of both architecture and expositions.13 Conceptualizing colonial expositions as archives replete with types that have the ability to transcend space and time opens the door to appreciating the diverse and complex processes through which German architectural culture digested lessons from colonialism.

A WORLD’S FAIR IN GERMANY?:
THE 1896 BERLIN TRADE EXHIBITION

It was not until the dawn of the new millennium and Hanover’s EXPO 2000 that Germany officially hosted a world’s fair. Yet between 1850 and 1930 German states, cities, professional organizations, and trade groups organized a plethora of exhibitions, which, in their individual form, content, and the personal and professional networks that brought them into being, developed on world’s fair practices. As German commentators like Franz Huber suggested, when taken together, these exhibitions performed much like a universal exposition.14 Typological analyses link German exhibitions to this larger tradition and reveal Germany’s investment in using the genre to advance its colonial and imperial projects. At the same time, expositions and their localized expressions in Germany were crucial sites for reformist architectural discourse.
Treptower Park in southeastern Berlin is well known today as the location of the Soviet War Memorial (built 1946). In 1896, it was the venue of the city’s grandest public event, the Berlin Trade Exhibition. Between May 1 and October 15, Berlin hosted more than 7.4 million people on a 1.1-million-square-meter strip of land along the River Spree (figure 1.1). Visitors could approach the fenced complex from at least five major entrances, all of which were connected to a newly expanded rail and road network. Major attractions were located on all sides of a central artificial lake set amid rolling hills and verdant landscaping. A large exhibition hall dominated the western sector (figure 1.2). The long nave, subdivided aisles, and primary and subsidiary transepts of this building immediately establish its allegiance to the “basilica type” exposition building made famous by Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace. In front of the basilica in Treptower Park, however, was a sweeping colonnade that recalled the Trocadéro built for the Parisian exposition of 1878. Other elements of the Main Hall, such
as its Byzantine massing, onion domes, and minaret-like towers, also point to the exotic Trocadéro, itself an eclectic combination of references including Islamic motifs.15

Exhibition organizers had commissioned Bruno Schmitz, a rising star known for designing royal and national memorials in a new, bombastic, monumental style to create the Main Hall in Berlin. The choice of Schmitz to design a building meant to represent German industry and culture to the world suggests that the organizers of the fair linked their commercial and political goals to questions of national identity. Schmitz collaborated with Karl Hoffacker and Hans Grisebach to design the primary buildings at the fair.16 Many of these buildings cloaked their modern iron or concrete structure in historical garb and therefore still operated within established Wilhelminian architectural paradigms. But overall,
by citing previous exposition buildings, like the Trocadéro, the architects started to imagine a language beyond the limits of German traditions and to conceptualize universal architectural solutions.

The internationalism that Simmel identified in the range of products and people at expositions was thus also echoed in the architecture of the Berlin fair. As Simmel pointed out, world’s fairs offered architects the opportunity to work outside the “historical ideal” and thereby create something new that transcended the norm of permanence and monumentality. The result was a new mode of architecture that responded to the transient character of modern life. Simmel still, however, attributed limits to the innovation made possible by the exposition: “The architects of our exhibition have succeeded in not making the opposition to the historical ideal of architecture a matter of absurdity or lack of style. Rather, they have taken the point last reached in architecture as their starting point, as if only this arrangement would allow its meaning to emerge fully against a differently colored background and yet be seen as part of a single tradition.”

The vast grounds of the Berlin Trade Exhibition included, in addition to Schmitz’s Main Hall, halls dedicated to a variety of industries and sectors such as gas, fishing, healthcare, education, and sports. There were also pavilions for the city of Berlin and firms such as the electrical engineers Siemens & Halske; a variety of restaurants and wine, beer, and champagne bars; and numerous concession stands. To the south and somewhat separated from the Main Hall were two large exhibits, “Old Berlin” and the “German Colonial Exhibition,” and an amusement park. Similarly detached on the southern boundary of the exhibition grounds was “Special Exhibition Cairo.” Lastly, the Spree formed a natural boundary to the north. Altogether, this veritable city within a city housed more than three hundred structures and thousands of objects, the likes of which many Berliners had never seen. The exhibition created a variegated atmosphere and temporarily transformed the city into a center of world culture that was widely reported in local and foreign news media.

Even on the basis of this description of the grounds alone, it should be clear that despite its parochial title, the Berlin Trade Exhibition was much more than a local affair of minor consequence. In fact, it was the culmination of a decades-long debate about the viability of hosting an exposition in Germany. The topic was of such great concern that it acquired its own moniker: journalistic and scholarly writing of the period abounds with references to “the world exhibition question.” As Alfons Paquet points out in his 1908 dissertation on exhibitions and national economy, the profusion of publications by German authors should be read as an
Leading Berlin businessmen and industrialists first proposed the idea of hosting an event in Berlin after the 1855 Exposition Universelle. The idea was discussed again in the 1880s, and after decades of lobbying a decision was made to host an event in 1896. These businessmen and industrialists imagined an event that would stimulate new foreign markets for German goods, teach German manufacturers about their competitors, give Germany an opportunity to host the international community, and transform Berlin into a world city. Achieving these goals was a national duty. Unfortunately, Chancellor Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and a group of businessmen who saw no economic or political advantage in the endeavor thwarted the plans of these leading Berliners. This explains why, in its final form, the Berlin exhibition was less ambitious than intended and occupied a liminal category somewhere between a universal, national, and regional exhibition.

But even by other measures, such as the level of foreign representation, the Berlin fair reveals its allegiance to the exposition tradition: despite a condition that only foreign companies with offices in Berlin could participate, foreign artifacts, products, and people infiltrated the fair as elements of the imperial and colonial spatial, architectural, and visual types commonly seen at expositions. These types became part of a ubiquitous, complex, multisensorial archive that flooded German society with knowledge about subaltern societies and cultures. This archive embraced panoramas, ethnographic museums bursting with curious objects, and zoological and botanical gardens with carefully staged exotic fauna, flora, and “human displays.” It also included colorful advertisements and postcards, Wild West play sets, children’s textbooks, newspaper reports, penny dreadfuls, colonial superstores like Bruno Antelmann’s Deutsches Kolonialhaus, monuments and memorials to famous colonists, and city districts and streets named after colonial territories and personalities. Where is this Germany in histories of architecture?

**SIX EXPOSITION TYPES IN BERLIN**

At least six spatial, visual, and building types link the Berlin Trade Exhibition with world’s fair practice and colonialism. First is the binary design of the site, which embodied the two major objectives that expositions had come to serve: producing a middle- and working-class public through industrial and cultural education on one hand, and through consumption on the other. In Berlin, strongly axial tree-lined avenues culminating in
large halls defined the central, western, and northern zones of the site. These halls contained commercial and industrial displays organized into instructive categories like “graphic and decorative arts and book trades” and “teaching and education.” By contrast, smaller buildings grouped picturesquely into thematic ensembles like “Special Exhibition Cairo” and “Old Berlin” were found to the east and south of the grounds. Though Beaux-Arts planning was not a major tradition in Germany, the Berlin fair preserved elements of the by then conventional dualism between Beaux-Arts axiality and picturesque planning seen at expositions. This strategy had only gradually emerged in exposition planning as organizers recognized the financial value of the sideshows that sprang up around early fairs. The design of a spatially distinct pleasure ground, the Midway Plaisance, at Chicago’s 1893 world’s fair, stabilized the dual format of exposition planning. The transition to institutionalized pleasure seeking was not smooth, however. Entertainment’s incursion into the exposition frequently led to tensions between organizers who supported the high-minded goal of educating the public and those who touted the profit motive. These tensions were reflected in the peripheral siting of entertainment zones, epitomized by the amusement park, “Old Berlin,” “Special Exhibition Cairo,” and the “German Colonial Exhibition” at the Berlin exhibition. Individually, however, each of these exhibits represented a well-established type that confirms the Berlin fair’s fealty to world’s fair tradition.

“Special Exhibition Cairo,” at the Berlin fair, embodies a second type: the native village. A partial reconstruction of Cheops’ Pyramid, tucked into a corner of the gated precinct, formed the focal point of the exhibit. A stereoscopic photograph of the replica pyramid shows its convincingly textured wall surfaces and large scale (plate 1). The technology itself, stereoscopic photography, had already come to characterize expositions in Britain and France since its invention in the 1850s. Encircling the ersatz pyramid in Berlin were a large arena, temples modeled on ancient sites, rock-cut tombs, replicas of two fifteenth-century mosques—the al-Muayyad and Qaytbay Mosques, a “fellah” village, some bazaars, and several restaurants and “Arab cafes.” This exotic assemblage was the work of architect G. Wohlgemuth, painter and set designer Moritz Lehmann, and artistic director Willy Möller, who took a trip to Egypt to prepare for their work in Berlin. In Berlin, they fitted their buildings with artifacts loaned from Egyptian authorities, spolia collected in Egypt, and Egyptianizing objects and products manufactured by European firms, and surrounded them with palm trees, camels, and horses imported from “the East.” Postcards, like one depicting a cross-section of
vibrant, colorful arched interiors, domes, minarets, roof terraces, crenellations, polychromatic walls, and lush trees and groundcover, constructed a reality that existed neither in Cairo nor at the Berlin exhibition itself (plate 2). Scholars of French expositions have theorized that such discrepancies between reality and representation were meant to stabilize the unstable construct of racial and cultural difference that was one of the messages of universal expositions.\(^{27}\) What guaranteed the “Cairo” exhibit’s financial success, however, was the fact that it was actually inhabited by over four hundred “fellahs, Nubians, Sudanese, Arab traders, Abyssinians, and Bedouins” brought to Berlin. Swathed in white gowns and turbans, some of these “living exhibits” lounge strategically against the blocks of the pyramid in the stereoscopic image in plate 1.\(^{28}\)

This policy of integrating living people from colonized regions into world’s fair displays dates back to the Great Exhibition. By the Parisian exposition of 1878, it had become standard to stage “natives” in seemingly authentic settings some distance away from the strictly educational zones of fairs. These ideas merged with nineteenth-century orientalist discourse about Islam as the exotic, feminized other of the West to produce a subtype first seen at the 1889 exposition in Paris—“Cairo Street.” By recreating an entire district of old Cairo, the Berlin fair reproduced and surpassed its immediate predecessor, the Cairo Street at Chicago’s Midway.\(^{29}\)

Like the exposition genre itself, native villages were also shaped by long-established ideas about spectacle as well as the newer scientific idea of collecting and analyzing live specimens. Outside the exposition context, native villages overlapped with the phenomenon of private, commercial ethnographic shows. Germanists Eric Ames, Sierra Bruckner, and others have demonstrated that Germany developed a particularly energetic tradition of ethnographic shows personified in the life and work of the animal handler Carl Hagenbeck. Hagenbeck combined indigenous people, animals, artifacts, and built structures with theatrical lighting and novel performance techniques to create extraordinary spectacles for the consuming public starting in the 1870s. Hagenbeck’s shows, like the 1898 “India” show at the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin (plate 3), were very popular and his brand traversed Europe and the Atlantic and shaped spectacular entertainments into the twentieth century. His status as Germany’s premier impresario was embodied in three separate displays at the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition: “Monkey Paradise,” “Zoological Circus,” and “Arctic Sea Panorama.” Though they sometimes presented people from Germany’s overseas territories and invoked and expanded on racializing tropes in popular culture, Hagenbeck’s shows did
not have a simple, causal connection to German colonialism. Rather, they reflected Germany’s participation in the global economic order and the rise of consumerism and mass entertainment.30

Native villages were crucial to how world’s fairs functioned as propaganda instruments for colonial projects. They brought the putative native into European metropolises for all to see. In their deliberate siting in proximity to but removed from the latest machines, charts and specimens, and innovative products and services, native villages offered an entertaining reprieve for exhibition visitors weary of the didacticism of other exhibits. But, as exposition studies scholars contend, this liberation from elite and bourgeois pedagogical projects was deceptive: through a play of contrasts with the bodies and material culture of the colonized other, native villages also taught metropolitan publics that they shared a common national, racial, and Western identity.

At first glance, the “special exhibit” at the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition, “Old Berlin,” appears quite unlike the native village type. “Old Berlin” stood on a thirty-thousand-square-meter walled plot north and east of “Special Exhibition Cairo.” Inside was a picturesque arrangement of 120 buildings including churches, a city hall, market squares, houses, towers, and restaurants and cafes (figure 1.3). More than five hundred workers dressed in period clothing enhanced the exhibit’s authenticity, sold beer and food, and played music through its winding streets. Hoffacker used a combination of plaster and wood, fragments from old buildings, and items borrowed from private collections to create a veritable half-timbered Backsteingotik (brick-gothic) wonderland. According to historian Katja Zelljadt, “Old Berlin” provided the occasion for Friedrich Gilly and Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s early nineteenth-century Backsteingotik to be reappropriated as a “homegrown” style (Heimatstil) suitable for modern German use.31

“Old Berlin” represented another type—old Europe, which shared some characteristics with the native village type. Like the “Cairo” exhibit, “Old Berlin” used human display, spatial differentiation, and spolia, but applied them to construct a narrative about European history and culture. This old Europe type was first seen at the Parisian fair of 1867. Early examples recreated a single historical European urban street, but the idea soon expanded to include entire districts. Organizers paid little heed to accuracy in their recreations, however. As Paul Greenhalgh has suggested, the tendency to emphasize the medieval period in these old Europe displays indicated the ascendant bourgeoisie’s nostalgia for the past. But Berlin’s inconsequence during the medieval period led the architects of the 1896 fair to focus on the mid-
seventeenth-century. Even here, however, they obfuscated the reality of a war-torn, plague-ravaged city in lieu of a picturesque assemblage. Like the native village, “Old Berlin” offered visitors the opportunity to explore unfamiliar geographies and times, but to different ends. Whereas the native village denigrated societies that seemed to stand outside linear (Western) history, old Europe celebrated anachronism as a means of escape from the civilized, modern, European present.\textsuperscript{32}

The Parisian exposition of 1878 inaugurated one of the most important material expressions of colonialism at world’s fairs: the colonial exhibition type. Spatially, materially, and visually, colonial exhibitions replicated, intensified, and condensed many aspects of the typical univer-
sal exposition. They followed the binary site-planning strategy but made its intentions more explicit by mapping it onto a largely aspirational vision of segregated colonial space. In Berlin, a major road, Parkstrasse, separated the “German Colonial Exhibition” into two sections: the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” and the scientific-commercial section. Organizers adopted the native village format for the former and designed the latter around a series of buildings that either creatively reimagined buildings in the colonies or followed other well-known exposition building types. In contrast to the native village’s focus on the unimproved “native,” buildings in the scientific section portrayed the positive impact of European intervention on the colonies.

Not everyone agreed with the plan to host a colonial exhibition at the Berlin fair. Critics worried about the welfare of would-be performers in the colonial exhibition’s native village. In response, members of the planning board declared that it would be inconceivable to stage the kind of event they had in mind without including this sensationalistic element: “Dead collections are not in a position to enlist the masses, who must be considered for financial reasons.” This comment was a testament to the kind of pressure—of public opinion and economics—that stimulated colonial activity in Germany. If done correctly, supporters insisted, a colonial exhibition and its native village would (1) stoke public interest in the colonies, (2) change critics’ views about colonialism, and (3) improve Germany’s international standing.

The colonial painter Rudolf Hellgrewe, with Fritz Wolff, an architect and professor at the Technische Hochschule Berlin-Charlottenburg (Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg), designed the native village in Berlin’s colonial exhibition to meet all requirements of the type. Visitors approached the sixty-thousand-square-meter exhibit through a gate that evoked the dramatic flying gables of some ceremonial structures in recently colonized New Guinea (figure 1.4). Beyond the gate lay a “bush factory,” Togo “huts,” a Cameroonian village, houses and ceremonial structures from the Bismarck Archipelago, a New Guinea village, a pali-saded East African town (or quikuru) and a fortified residential complex described as an “Arab tembe” (figure 1.5). Some of these buildings were modeled on and named after actual places—for example, the colonial lobbyist Gustav Meinecke made much of the faux quikuru’s resemblance to one near Tabora (German East Africa) where the famous Chief Isike made his last stand against the German colonial army in 1893. By recreating these unfamiliar buildings, Wolff and Hellgrewe aimed to instruct the Berlin public about racial difference: replicas of pile dwellings in Kaiser-Wilhelmsland would, for example, help visitors correlate “our
FIGURE 1.4. ENTRANCE TO “COLONIAL EXHIBITION,” BERLIN TRADE EXHIBITION, 1896. THE ROOF EVOKED THE FLYING GABLES SEEN IN SOME CEREMONIAL BUILDINGS IN NEW GUINEA (THEN A GERMAN COLONY). LARGE MASKS ARE EMBEDDED IN THE WALL ON EACH SIDE OF THE DOORWAY. FROM GUSTAV MEINECKE, DEUTSCHLAND UND SEINE KOLONIEN IM JAHRE 1896 (BERLIN: REIMER, 1897), 14. COURTESY OF BUNDESARCHIV BERLIN LICHTERFELDE.

own prehistoric period” with the colonized present. Buildings in the native village were constructed from authentic materials such as nipa palm leaves imported from New Guinea. They were filled with and surrounded by representative objects. Most importantly, they too were inhabited by 103 people brought to Berlin from the colonies. Dressed in traditional garb, these people performed their lives for the benefit of Berlin crowds. Organizers recognized that visitors would not be fooled by such artificial scenes, but nevertheless hoped they would see the native village as a “serious imitation” of a real phenomenon rather than an amusing sideshow. In this way, the entertainment function of the native village fused with the pedagogical project that dominated the rest of the fair.

Yet the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” was not remotely authentic. Even as he argued for “serious imitation,” the South Seas explorer and consultant on the native village Dr. Friedrich Finsch acknowledged that, in contrast to what had been built at the exhibition, “the original tree houses [in the Bismarck Archipelago] are often considerably smaller, [and are typically built] from weaker beams.” What was his rationale for exaggerating an admittedly rare building type? Finsch provides no answers, but architectural historians have suggested that in French contexts such deliberate misquotations were part of the ideological economy of an architecture that materialized claims about insurmountable difference between colonizer and colonized and simultaneously aimed to depict colonialism’s positive influence on these allegedly moribund cultures. World’s fair designers made buildings work for colonial discourse by selectively mimicking, augmenting, or attenuating indigenous architectural traditions, and carefully staging them in photographs and renderings produced to commemorate these exhibitions. Berlin’s designers also employed this strategy. Furthermore, it would have been impossible for organizers to actually create authentic environments at the fair. Visitors could catch glimpses of the red walls and towers of “Old Berlin” from the “Exhibition of the Indigenous,” and encounter Ewe fishermen in their canoes alongside modern motorboats in the carp pond. Such jarring juxtapositions highlighted the modernity of the native village and the exposition of which it was part. Indeed, to understand the native village as a representation of tradition-bound subaltern cultures, visitors had to conceptualize it in proximity to new and old Berlin.

In the end, critics’ fears about the native village were well founded. There were complaints about inadequate accommodation, clothing, medical care, and compensation that may have contributed to the death of three of its inhabitants. Members of the village originated from all of the German colonies, and had volunteered to participate primarily for eco-
nomic reasons. Their expectations were not met, however, as the case of Bernhard Epassi illustrates. The Berlin exhibition transformed Epassi, a young man from Cameroon, from “a nice friendly bloke with forthright ways” into a person of “intractable character” who was forcibly deported from Germany several years later. By 1901, controversy over the village led to a ban on displaying colonial subjects in Germany. Such displays continued, however, since the ban applied only to people whose ancestors were indigenous to the German colonies.

In contrast to the emphasis on spectacle and ethnography in the “Exhibition of the Indigenous,” economic and scholarly incentives governed the scientific-commercial section of the colonial exhibition. For Meinecke, trade was the main point of this exhibit and of German colonialism in general, since “everything else . . . benefits trade in the final analysis.” At the scientific-commercial exhibit, trade meant the display and sale of Germany’s manufactured products and colonial raw materials, primarily coffee and cocoa, in the Colonial Hall. Statistically speaking, few colonial products were displayed. Instead, the display emphasized the processes of colonial production, which may, as historian David Ciarlo has suggested, have deliberately obscured the low profitability of colonial trade. But trade in this context also meant the promotion of German industries and enterprises that, while not exclusively colonial, benefited from the colonial market. Examples include the Woermann Shipping Line, the tropical outfitter Tippelskirch, and the building firm F. H. Schmidt who all displayed products at the fair.

Science was closely connected to trade at the Berlin fair’s “German Colonial Exhibition.” The scientific aspect of the display included presentations of colonial geography, demography, ethnography, religion, raw material specimens and equipment samples, scale models of industrial structures and objects in the Scientific Hall, Tropical House, Colonial Hall, Machine Hall, and Industrial Exhibition Hall. Thanks to the strange but characteristic logic of expositions, exhibits such as the Industrial Hall, through their nomenclature and function, mimicked displays in the main (noncolonial) section of the Berlin exhibition. Several of the buildings in the scientific-commercial section were also modeled on actual colonial buildings, including the “Arab-style” German consulate in Zanzibar. Like the buildings of the Exhibition of the Indigenous, these architectural quotations signaled a commitment to authenticity, but the focus this time was on settler life. This explains the use of Islamic architectural motifs throughout the scientific-commercial exhibit. Colonial administrators and lobbyists privileged Arab culture from the very be-
beganning of German colonial rule in East Africa. They harnessed a range of evidence to support what Edward Said described as orientalism—the nineteenth-century intellectual tradition that formulated a common origin for European and Asian languages and cultures, even as it defined the Orient as Europe’s inferior. In an architectural version of this idea, Captain August Leue, who led the German occupying campaign in East Africa, observed that Arab buildings were most suitable for German inhabitation because they were large, built from masonry, displayed obvious technical and aesthetic merit, and therefore were closest to European traditions. Official documents, newspaper articles, travel narratives, and other colonial literature echoed this sentiment, which was then applied to exhibition design in Germany and to colonial buildings in East Africa itself. The conical shape and molded stucco finish of the tower bridge between the Exhibition of the Indigenous and the scientific-colonial section recalled a coastal East African monumental stone construction tradition that dated to at least the fourteenth century and its characteristic building type, the fortified residence, or boma (figure 1.6). Simi-
larity, balconies imitating Islamic *mashrabiyya* screens projected above the ogee- and horseshoe arches of the Colonial Hall. Its entire façade was decorated to mimic mosaic tile while fanciful Moorish-style crenellation capped its parapet walls (figure 1.7). By using these architectural markers, organizers attempted to appropriate what they perceived as the hegemony of the Arab elite in East Africa. The interior of the building was more ecumenical in its attempt to provide an overview of the entire colonial empire: samples of rubber, coffee, and other colonial products, statistical tables and maps, pamphlets and books, and scale models of German establishments in the colonies were almost overwhelmed by masks, shields, feathered headdresses, and other ethnographic materials that imparted the sense of spectacle familiar from the neighboring native village (figure 1.8).48

Of the many buildings included in the scientific-commercial section, the Tropical House best exemplifies the functions that architecture served in colonial exhibitions. The Tropical House was a model residence for the colonies, and thus represented the model housing type commonly found at world’s fairs but adapted here to suit the
needs of a colonial exhibition. At the Berlin fair, the Tropical House showcased an exhibit funded by the Foreign Office, which commissioned the “tropical building” company F. H. Schmidt to construct one of its popular prefabricated houses as an exhibition pavilion. F. H. Schmidt buildings played an important role in the early occupation of the German colonies and therefore met the standard of authenticity that governed the “German Colonial Exhibition” in Berlin.

Standing immediately beyond the entrance to the scientific-commercial section, on the main circulation route, the Tropical House was a two-story wooden structure, surrounded by verandas, and elevated on iron pilings placed in bowls of oil to repel vermin. A typical colonial “double roof” and numerous openings ensured cross-ventilation. No overtly ornamental elements are visible in a photograph published in the exhibition catalog, although details on the posts and beams of the veranda recall southern German half-timbering traditions (figure 1.9). Yet the machined quality of the building’s exterior boards
identifies it as an industrial product. In response to settlers’ needs, “export buildings” like this one typically combined work and residential space. Berlin’s model Tropical House reflected this norm: an import-export store on the ground floor offered exhibition visitors a firsthand experience with colonial trade, while a second-floor dining room, study, and living and bedroom, and annex with kitchen, bathroom, and pantry, were set up to illustrate colonial family life. Each room on the second floor was fitted with photographs, colonial landscape paintings, scale models of buildings, colonial furniture and housewares, and books and maps to illustrate Germany’s four original colonies. The now-ubiquitous ethnographic material was present here as well, blurring distinctions between different sections of the fair.52
The fact that the Tropical House was shipped to Douala, Cameroon, at the close of the fair was touted in the exhibition report as proof of its authenticity. Unfortunately, once reassembled in Douala, the wood and cement board components of the building succumbed to humidity and pests. Nevertheless, by leaving traces of itself behind in the form of the Tropical House, the Berlin Trade Exhibition displayed characteristic world’s fair behavior. The fact that this residue was displaced to the colonies allows us to rediscover the ties that bound the distant colonial periphery to the center of empire.

A sixth exposition type, the elevated viewpoint, connected the Berlin exhibition to previous universal expositions. The elevated viewpoint was one of the most ubiquitous world’s fair types. It offered visitors a visual command of the exposition grounds and increased their ability to navigate the site, but also created a novel form of entertainment in the panoramic aerial urban spectacle. Additionally, these tall structures provided exposition management with a means of surveillance that improved their ability to control crime and engage in the all-important task of collecting statistical data about exposition attendance and consumption patterns. As the example of the Eiffel Tower at the 1889 Exposition Universelle illustrates, significant structural and aesthetic innovations often occurred in the design of these structures. It was at this juncture of technology, entertainment, and public order that the architectural modernity of the exposition was most visible. Beneath the “ambition toward a specular dominance over totality” embodied in the elevated viewpoint lay a concern with the visual, physiological, and psychic intelligibility of the exposition, however. Germany’s unique contribution to exposition discourse, the concept of “exhibition fatigue,” encapsulates this aspect of the genre. “Exhibition fatigue” described a range of antirexposition sentiments from arguments about the adverse psychological and corporeal effects of inhumanely scaled exhibition grounds to opposition to the outrageous expenditures necessary to run expositions. Interestingly, this rhetoric closely paralleled late nineteenth-century anxieties about the changing spatial and material character of Germany’s cities.

Again, we can look to Simmel for an elaboration of this phenomenon. In his 1902 article “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” he hypothesized that the modern metropolis bred a new type of subjectivity. Continually assaulted by clashing sounds, sights, and smells, the urban dweller became entirely self-interested and lost his or her sense of empathy. This theme is also present in Simmel’s analysis of the 1896 Berlin fair: the “mass effect of the merchandise” disrupted “every fine and sensitive feeling” even as the “richness and variety of fleeting impressions” palliated
“over-stimulated and tired nerves.” Here, the exposition became a synecdoche for the city where, as Timothy Mitchell famously recognized, the line between “external reality” and representation became rather blurred. The synecdoche was better than the original, however, because the exposition had the ability to temporarily make sense of the heterogeneity of modern urban life. The elevated viewpoint was one means of achieving this unity.

Several displays at the Berlin fair could function as elevated viewpoints. Among them were “Dr. Woelfert’s Dirigible,” a “Colossal Fettered Balloon,” an “Air Carousel,” and a “Giant Distance Telescope.” All of these exhibits were in or near the amusement zone. From any of these structures, visitors could gain an even better grasp of the contrasts—picturesque versus formal, monumental versus vernacular, primeval versus modern—between the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” and the scientific-commercial section, and between the “German Colonial Exhibition” itself and the rest of the fair. From this aerial vantage point, racial and cultural difference could be made even more explicit, and the colonial subject—the Ewe fisherman in his canoe—could be understood in contrast to modern German urban life.

At least fifty exhibitions featuring some or all of these types—binary siting, native village, old Europe, colonial exhibition, model housing, elevated viewpoint—appeared regularly in Germany before and after the 1896 Berlin exhibition. They took place in almost all major cities but were also popular in the provinces. Though they ranged in scale and scope, they often followed the binary system that characterized the colonial exhibition type and included native villages. Through these exhibitions, Germans linked their cities and towns to the wider world.
Internationale Baufach-Ausstellung (IBA; International Building Trades Exhibition) held at the same location in Leipzig during the previous year, Bugra contributed to Leipzig’s growing reputation as an “exhibition city.”

A published site plan shows that Bugra’s designers adhered closely to the binary planning principle common at world’s fairs (plate 4). In the educational section of the exhibition, original examples of ancient and modern script illustrated book history. More dramatic exhibits like a “true copy of the cave ceiling of the Altamira” in the Hall of Culture demonstrated the prehistory of the graphic arts. Exotic types like the “Tanagratheater,” a sideshow involving living miniatures; “Old Istanbul;” a Japanese village; and “Upper Bavaria” attracted crowds to the amusement park.

Bugra also included a colonial exhibition, “Deutschum und Deutsche Kolonien” (Germans and German colonies), whose aim was to publicize Germany’s status as a global power. Located in the educational zone of the exhibition, the colonial exhibition was in a simple one-story masonry hall that was surrounded by a veranda on three sides (figures 1.10 and 1.11). Though different from the lightweight wood construction of the Tropical House at the 1896 Berlin fair, the Bugra pavilion’s unadorned exterior surfaces, squat masonry massing, encircling veranda, and low roof bore some resemblance to settlers’ residences in German East Africa—themselves shaped in part by the Anglo-Indian bungalow. The building contained two displays: a colonial exhibit organized by the Imperial Colonial Office and German missionary societies in one half of the space, and a “Germandom Abroad”

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exhibit dedicated to illustrating the spread of German “intellectual” work across “all areas of the earth” in the other half. The binary principle shaped the format and content of the colonial display, which presented titillating samples of “native literacy” as well as German colonial works. Ethnographic artifacts and paintings by the colonial painter Ernst Vollbehr rounded out the display. Immediately beyond the door of the would-be colonial residence, the native village type was condensed into a single tableau: a cylindrical, thatched “indigenous church” and freestanding church bell, surrounded by palm trees and “healing plants of Africa,” and two sculpted figures of African children. This tableau and the model it offered of an architectural language suited to a specific colonial need but also cognizant of the local context inspired a critique of emerging Werkbund-inspired efforts to reform architecture in the colonies.
As if to clinch its relationship to the world’s fair genre, Bugra organizers semantically highlighted their globalism by appending the term international to their event. They also attempted to realize the encyclopedic ideal of expositions by including a centrally located “Street of Nations.” Austria, England, France, Italy, Russia, and several other countries built pavilions here. Through such measures, Bugra organizers hoped to promote “peaceful world interaction” in lieu of “gunpowder.” Such foreign policy ambitions were commonplace in the self-reflective discourse on expositions, and their appearance here connects Bugra to the larger tradition.

Bugra 1914 and Berlin 1896 demonstrate that German exhibit designers were adept with exposition discourses and forms. Their facility with these things did not emerge out of nowhere, however. Since 1851, individual German states had organized exhibits at universal expositions. The trend accelerated with the unification of the Reich in 1871 and associated desire to project the image of a modern German nation. Of these events, the Philadelphia fair of 1876 stands out as a turning point, as Franz Reuleaux, the German government representative to the fair, published a biting critique of his country’s showing. Agreeing with commentary published in the foreign press and comments by industry leaders visiting the exhibition, Reuleaux described German products as “cheap and bad” in their technical realization. Worse yet, he lambasted the use of anachronistic “partisan-patriotic” motifs in German industrial and fine arts. Reuleaux’s salvo galvanized a new awareness of the country’s unprepossessing industrial status and global image, and stimulated a commitment to transforming them through innovation and industry. This experience colored German economic, political, and cultural discourse, and stimulated a reorientation of artistic and architectural production toward global markets and international politics deep into the twentieth century. Government and industry leaders believed more and more that participating in expositions was beneficial to the Reich. Thus, German exhibits became curated portraits of national identity. Arguably, the frequency of German participation in world’s fairs abroad indicated more than a passing interest.

German businessmen and exposition organizers joined a transnational network of officials, entrepreneurs, industrialists, and scholars who attended these fairs and exchanged information about them. The same individuals who organized exhibits and represented Germany abroad were involved in exposition efforts at home. Before he designed “Old Berlin” in 1896, Karl Hoffacker had studied the applied arts and worked as an assistant and teacher at the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Applied Arts
Museum) in Berlin, and as editor of the \textit{Kunstgewerbeblatt}. After a successful showing at the Applied Arts Exhibition in Munich in 1888, he became a presence at many German exhibits at expositions abroad and exhibitions with international ambitions at home. His \textit{Deutsches Dorf} (German village) at the 1893 Chicago fair was well received and likely laid the foundation for his subsequent designs for the Berlin fair.\textsuperscript{69} Foreign expositions also served as sites of professional development for a younger generation of designers like Bernhard Pankok, Bruno Paul, and Richard Riemerschmid. After showing a radical new approach to the design of everyday objects and interiors in Paris (1900), these designers were entrusted with representing German art to the world in Turin (1902), Saint Louis (1904), Munich (1908), and Brussels (1910).\textsuperscript{70} The careers of these designers illustrate how expositions cross-fertilized the local and the global in architecture and art.
The appearance of the native village type as a component of German national self-representation abroad after the turn of the century exemplifies this reciprocity. By the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904, colonial representation had become important to the global image of the Reich. German colonialism was represented in two exhibits in Saint Louis.71 The first, housed in the Education Building, was an exhibit of colonial plants from the newly opened Imperial Botanical Garden in Berlin-Dahlem. A larger exhibition organized by the German East Africa administration was mounted in the exposition’s largest building, the Agricultural Hall, amid the colonial exhibits of other nations. This display presented the economic and scientific benefits of German colonialism, interpreted through the lens of agricultural production and ethnography.72

Germany built its colonial display between the columns and open-web trusses inside the Agricultural Hall. On its exterior, the exhibit re-
sembled an East African “Arab” *boma* with “white walls and battlements,” and “large archways decorated with weapons and hunting trophies and an artistically carved Swahili wood door” (figures 1.12, 1.13, 1.14).73 The characteristic chain and date palm motifs on these doors and their typical sequencing suggests that they were actually spolia from elite houses in Bagamayo or another coastal East African town. By referencing the *boma*, exhibit designers entered a dialogue with the 1896 Berlin fair where several buildings in the “German Colonial Exhibition” were also modeled on the *boma*.74

Like the exhibitions in Berlin and Leipzig, the German East African display in Saint Louis reveals that characteristic modes of colonial representation infiltrated some of the most high-profile sites where German
national identity was constructed. Together, these three exhibitions illustrate what commentators such as art historian Julius Lessing and cultural critic Alfons Paquet described as Germany’s engagement with the “world’s fair question” via multiple, simultaneous, but disaggregated national, regional, city, and trade exhibitions. Tracing spatial, architectural, and visual types makes it possible to link these exhibitions to their predecessor, the universal exposition, and to envision how some of them supported German colonial projects.

**PRODUCING COLONIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE AT GERMAN EXHIBITIONS**

How exactly did these colonial exhibitions and native villages impact German colonialism and architecture? Much like their counterparts in France and England, German exhibitions served as repositories for charts and tables that advertised colonial trade revenues or, like the wall of plaster busts of East African “tribes” at the German display in Saint Louis, stabilized racial and ethnic categories. Maps like those in the missionary section of the “German Colonial Exhibition” at Berlin’s 1896 fair presented a united image of what was actually a fragmented colonial empire. Thousands of photographs depicted and reified colonial life for the benefit of existing and potential colonists. Expositions also archived agricultural raw materials and the manufactured goods produced from them. The profusion of tree samples, cotton, sisal, coffee, cocoa, coconut, copra, tamarind, vanilla, and other specimens at the German East African display in Saint Louis elevated this idea to a new level. In what was perhaps their most direct intervention, expositions also collected ethnographic artifacts, objects and structures illustrating traditional and colonial modes of inhabiting space, and colonial subjects themselves.

In effect, expositions opened the floodgates of knowledge production. Administrators, missionaries, entrepreneurs, and scholars saw Germany’s “almost expositions” as opportunities to publicize everything they had learned and done abroad. As Osborne explains, archives of all kinds are contingent on the existence of a public whose memory they are designed to serve. By sharing colonial knowledge with the public, expositions met this “principle of publicity” of the archive. Objects emerged out of institutional filing cabinets and were borrowed from the glass cases of museums. Others were specifically created to illuminate some particular aspect of colonial life on the occasion of the fair. At Berlin in 1896, for example, anthropologist Felix von Luschan observed and measured inhabitants of the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” in order to theorize human
biological variation in relation to cultural history. Exposition architects created imaginative reconstructions of indigenous non-European architectures. At Bugra, the chapel on display outside the colonial pavilion was modeled on the conical, heavily thatched houses of the Wachagga in East Africa, but “improved,” in the words of mission director August W. Schreiber, through the addition of clerestory windows and a Latin cross finial (figure 1.15). Of course, the impression of comprehensiveness that expositions gave was misleading. At the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” in Berlin there were no signs of the buildings that early German colonists rented from the Douala elite of Cameroon, who had built them using wealth accumulated from centuries of global trade. Such strategic exclusions and inclusions are also characteristic of archives.

When everything was said and done, objects on display at German colonial exhibitions were returned to their repositories, or reconstituted into new collections to nurture the memory of the exposition and the memory of its host city. Newspaper articles, maps, advertisements, postcards, paintings, and a large number of photographs of these exhibitions
still materialize at secondhand bookshops and flea markets today. Expositions generated large- and small-scale material residue, as Simmel so insightfully observed in 1896. Like the Eiffel Tower from the 1889 Parisian exposition, the Archenhold Observatory stands in Treptower Park today as a visible trace of the 1896 Berlin exhibition. Smaller items became part of a traffic in evidentiary objects between exhibitions, museums, and private collections. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon was the German Colonial Museum, which was founded in 1899 using the spoils of the colonial exhibition at the 1896 Berlin fair. Similarly, the plaster casts in the German East African exhibit in Saint Louis were borrowed from the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, which likely obtained them in German East Africa (figure 1.16). When the show was over, these and other objects from the East African display made their way into Chicago’s Field Museum and the now-defunct Philadelphia Commercial Museum.81

FIGURE 1.16. INTERIOR, GERMAN EXHIBIT, AGRICULTURE HALL, LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXHIBITION, SAINT LOUIS, 1904. ON THE RIGHT ARE PLASTER CASTS OF “TRIBES” FROM GERMAN EAST AFRICA. THE CASTS WERE BORROWED FROM THE ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN BERLIN AND ARE NOW PART OF THE COLLECTION OF THE FIELD MUSEUM IN CHICAGO. COURTESY OF MISSOURI HISTORY MUSEUM.
There is also little doubt that Germany’s colonial displays shaped the terms of metropolitan discourse about the colonies for years to come. Organizers of the German colonial section at the Saint Louis exposition described their “substitution” of life-size casts of East African “tribes” in place of living people as a choice forced on them by circumstance (figure 1.17). It seems likely that the ban instituted after the death of three inhabitants of Berlin’s 1896 “Exhibition of the Indigenous” was the circumstance in question. Perhaps the ban also explains the use of representations of living people at the colonial exhibition at Bugra. Colonial displays also shaped metropolitan discourse about colonial architecture when the Wachagga-style chapel at Bugra was presented as a worthy model for colonial architecture. Scholars of French colonial architecture have
explored a similar phenomenon in which innovations like the “Sudanic” style, concocted at expositions in Paris, were later applied to buildings in French West Africa.84

For modern architecture, expositions have functioned as an “instituting imaginary” all along. As Simmel surmised in 1896, German architects recognized the exposition as an ideal medium through which to amend public taste. In the heterotopic space of the exposition, architects were free to transcend the constraints of the given architectural repertory. Whether through their newfound interest in the “complete domestic interior” first seen at expositions or by appropriating the world’s fair idea of full-scale models to approximate the actual experience of a building, reform-minded architects sourced ideas from expositions.85

Architects were certainly among the seven and a half million visitors that streamed through the elaborate, neomedieval, multipinnacled main portal of the 1896 Berlin fair.86 For most architects, exhibitions and ethnographic museums along with scholarly texts and travel narratives were the only available sources of information about building and design traditions outside of Europe. Exhibitions like the one in Berlin differed from written sources and even from museums because they attempted to contextualize this knowledge. In Berlin, one could see buildings surrounded by flora from the famed islands of the Pacific. One could walk through the New Guinea–style gateway to the “Exhibition of the Indigenous,” get a sense of its scale, feel its shaggy thatch, and stand face to face with the fearful masks attached to its walls. If in many cases these buildings were only simulacra of originals and could not provide architects with significant information about structure and materials, smaller-scale objects—like a sinuous stool carved in a subtractive process from a single piece of wood and imported from Bali (northern Cameroon)—could offer food for thought.87

Descriptions and analyses of the Berlin fair appeared in professional journals such as the Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung.88 Julius Lessing, director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, reported on the fair to the Verein für deutsches Kunstgewerbe (Society for German Applied Arts) on September 30, 1896, while Karl Hoffacker offered his opinion to the group on October 14 of the same year. A common thread in these descriptions was the use of statistics and formal analyses to compare the Berlin fair to precedents in Paris and Chicago. Lessing noted, “The last Paris exposition, where the main building was placed at the terminus of the Champ de Mars, provided the basic idea for the arrangement in Treptow [Berlin]. But here, the idea was implemented with more surety.”89 With this strategy, Lessing, Hoffacker, and others followed a long tradition of self-referential exposition commentary, which reinforces the typological links posited in this chapter.
What effects did these fairs and their colonial displays in particular have on actual architectural practice? Lessing was rather critical of the Berlin event. He noted that whereas universal expositions stimulated innovation and advanced taste by showing the best examples of human production, the Berlin fair featured only conventional wares produced by handworkers full of misplaced pride. Interestingly, Lessing’s comments echo well-known critiques of the 1851 Great Exhibition, which are widely understood to have inspired a new experimental attitude that culminated in the modern applied arts and modern architecture in England, continental Europe, and India. Lessing’s comments therefore link the Berlin exhibition to the larger world’s fair phenomenon and to the role of expositions in stimulating modernist reform. The Berlin fair, according to Lessing, only met the world’s fair mandate on five counts: the layout of the grounds, design of the main hall, and designs for “Old Berlin,” “Special Exhibition Cairo,” and the “German Colonial Exhibition.” In his qualified praise for the exotic but simultaneously “serious and dignified” colonial exhibition, Lessing suggested that the “Exhibition of the Indigenous” had the capacity to perform a desirable pedagogical function for architects. Its components were “carefully selected exemplars of the black peoples of the German colonies” and “houses and implements brought directly from Africa.” Though he did not specify what lessons the exhibition might teach, Lessing entertained the possibility that it could do so. What was important was that the exhibition could infuse the architectural archive with new material.

The anonymous author of a lengthy review of the Berlin fair in the Centralblatt offered a more specific interpretation of the effects of Special Exhibition Cairo on metropolitan architectural practice. To him, the exotic structures at the fair suggested an ideal language for new spaces of spectacle and commerce—a new architecture for the new consuming public. This mindset might explain why orientalist motifs were included in Bruno Schmitz’s Main Hall, which, as the primary structure in the exhibition, had to bear the burden of enticing the public into its vast interior. Stefan Koppelkamm makes a similar argument in his book The Imaginary Orient: Exotic Buildings of the 18th and 19th Centuries in Europe. He shows that Prussia, like other European states, adopted a generic orientalist architecture as the language of elite leisure in the eighteenth century. As knowledge of foreign cultures improved, orientalist garden pavilions became more accurate in their architectural references. Now, exotic styles mimicked their models not only in general exterior form but also in floor plan, interior details, and construction materials—but never in function. At the same time, this architectural language migrated from
gards and parks into more mainstream praxis. Architects deemed orientalist styles suitable for buildings that were meant to appeal to the senses (bathhouses, coffeehouses) and for building types for which no obvious precedents existed (synagogues, factories, resorts, specialty shops selling tropical goods, and zoological gardens). Therefore, by suggesting the usefulness of neo-Cairene architecture, the Centralblatt author endorsed an ongoing phenomenon.

Similarly, the German East African display in Saint Louis was noted by the colonial press, mentioned in reviews in architectural and geographical journals, and described with accompanying photographs in lengthy official reports. The overwhelming sentiment in these commentaries is pride at Germany finally representing itself as a colonial power. One of the organizers of the exhibit, Dr. Hugo Hardy, boasted that “only the United States, who offered a living picture of their colonizing work in the Philippines, and Germany with their exhibition of German East Africa, displayed a complete picture of colonial development and economy.” Other colonial nations interpreted colonialism exclusively through the lens of commerce and thus limited themselves to describing the extraction and distribution of colonial products. He laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of fair organizers who had failed to recognize and implement the established guidelines for the colonial exhibition type. Hardy had little to say on the subject of the impact of the East African exhibit, though he suggested that it resonated particularly strongly in the United States because of the “lively interest in the negro question.” In conclusion, he suggested that the German colonial exhibit, when understood alongside other displays like the Native American villages organized by the United States, produced new ethnographic and art historical knowledge: “What became clear were similarities between the basket-weaving and pearl decoration of the East Africans and the American Indian tribes.” The fair therefore substantiated an increasingly popular evolutionary understanding of human cultural and artistic development.

Overall, the Saint Louis fair had a significant impact. A number of German elite, businesspeople, manufacturers, architect-engineers, and journalists made the exciting trip to Saint Louis. Among them were the renowned sociologists Max and Marianne Weber and Werner Sombart, and architects Bruno Möhring, Hermann Muthesius, Hermann Knauer, and others. They too might have seen and discussed the colonial exhibit. In fact, the Saint Louis exposition was a major coup for Germany. Foreign and German critics alike celebrated the German applied arts exhibition, organized by Bruno Möhring, as the long-awaited merger of function and aesthetics. The designers of the objects and interiors in this
display were none other than Henry van de Velde, Bernard Pankok, Bruno Paul, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Peter Behrens, Albinmüller (artist name of Albin Camillo Müller), Richard Riemerschmid, and several others, who had developed and refined their ideas at preceding expositions, and would soon become leaders in architectural reform in Germany. Paul’s “President’s Study for the Government House in Bayreuth,” which was a complete interior handmade with wood paneling, matching “quadratic” ceiling panels, and furniture with strong, simple lines, by the revolutionary Munich-based crafts workshop the Vereingte Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk (United Workshops for Artistry in Craftsmanship), exemplifies the radical character of these exhibits (figure 1.18).
The aftereffects of the German applied arts exhibit are well known: Wanamaker’s department store purchased twenty-one interiors from the display and moved them to Philadelphia. Frank Lloyd Wright was so taken by the German interiors that he paid for one of his apprentices to visit the fair. Architectural historian Narciso Menocal traces Wright’s preference for strict geometries in part to his fascination with Olbrich’s “heroic” work in Saint Louis. And Anthony Alofsin notes that Wright later collected paintings by several German artists whose work he had seen at the fair. Indeed, it was at the Saint Louis exposition that Wright likely first came in contact with architectural reform from Europe and formed links that would advance his career as a leading modernist in the United States. Meanwhile, the widely publicized successes in Saint Louis improved the reputations of the radical applied artists and set the stage for the victory of modern architecture at home in Germany.

Prussian architect Hermann Muthesius, recently returned from his stint as a technical attaché in England, recognized the significance of the applied arts exhibit for Germany’s image abroad. He noted that the exhibit was one of the main attractions of the entire exposition—“even for visitors uninterested in art.” Using the strongly militaristic rhetoric of national competition, he described the exhibit as a “victory” for modernism. Some critics considered the success of the applied arts exhibit to be a rebuttal to the disappointing fine arts display in Germany’s national pavilion (designed by Bruno Schmitz of Berlin 1896 fame). In a highly publicized controversy, Kaiser Wilhelm II had banned modern painters from participating in the national exhibit. As a result, the fine arts display was full of conservative paintings heavy on patriotic themes. But Muthesius made it clear that despite this unfortunate mistake, the German sections were successful because they evinced a “unified, systematic, and artistically presented” strategy. He mentioned Germany’s education exhibit, which included a small collection of colonial flora, but made no reference to the German East Africa section. Yet this exhibit, too, garnered thirteen awards and was received with fanfare by American global trade enthusiasts and anthropologists. At the suggestion of Dr. Hugo Hardy, the Field Museum in Chicago purchased the entire ethnographic content of the East African display.

Thus, the East African exhibit had an afterlife in Chicago—but did it also infuse German architects with new energy and ideas, offer new models, and change their ideas of what was possible? Recent scholarship, including Katherine Kuenzli’s history of the pioneering pairing of modern and “primitive” art at the Folkwang Museum in Hagen, reaffirms Jill Lloyd’s intimation that modern architecture, applied art, and eth-
nography formed overlapping fields of knowledge production and professional expertise in early twentieth-century Germany. Just a year after the Saint Louis fair, art historian Julius Meier-Graefe recalled Peter Behrens’s enthusiasm for Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Indonesian works at the most recent Parisian exposition, and his “troubling” obsession with ancient Egyptian buildings during the Turin fair in 1902. These examples suggest that we must remain open to the possibility that the German East African exhibition, like the Parisian exposition for Behrens, furnished grist for intellectual thought and creative practice for German architects. In 2004, an exhibition at the Missouri Historical Society combined pieces from the German colonial sections at the Saint Louis fair, including an East African harp with a simple wedge-shaped wood sound box and a long, graceful neck; and pieces from the German applied arts display including a slender, gracefully curved, marble-inlaid, corner cabinet designed by Albinmüller using imported tropical hardwoods. This gesture, perhaps unintentionally, recovered the contemporaneity and coproduction between the colonial and the modern that I theorize in this chapter.

Scholars have decisively linked late nineteenth-century German territorial expansion and dominance in global trade and industry with the growing presence of non-European objects in museums, exhibitions, and private homes and the emerging language of abstraction in painting and sculpture. They have done this by identifying moments when known artists came in contact with specific non-European objects and analyzing formal similarities between these sources and their German avatars. This chapter identifies parallel instances in which German architects were implicated in generating specific visual, spatial, and architectural strategies that engaged with colonialism. Exhibitions, which feature in every case study in this book, are the sites where this phenomenon took root. But is evidence of architects attending these fairs and encountering these objects necessary for positing a convergence of colonialism and modernism? The archival logic of architecture suggests otherwise. If the archive is more than a collection of sources and the institutions that house them, and is equally the system that determines what can and cannot be said within a certain discourse, then the reproduction of specific non-Western architectural elements within the oeuvres of individual architects cannot be the sole measure of the colonial within German architecture. Rather, by using the concept of the archive, we can argue that German colonial-
ism, broadly construed, may have engendered architectural effects that operated beyond the limits of form and instead intervened on the level of discourse—the level where architects and designers generated new ideas in relation to existing knowledge.
At the turn of the nineteenth century, German architectural discourse functioned in an expanded geographic and cultural field. Prior to this point, architectural thinking in Germany was relatively parochial in its geographical range. Classical Greece and Rome were the frames of reference. Apart from the grand tour tradition that started in the sixteenth century, architects learned about foreign cultures via written accounts and were users rather than producers of this knowledge. Around the turn of the century, however, German architects themselves started to produce knowledge about African and Asian architectural cultures. Recent work on German architects practicing in the German colonies reveals that the architectural profession in Germany was not as insular as we have assumed. Furthermore, a number of scholars have pointed out cases in which well-known architects engaged with ideas and forms derived from outside Europe. These examples, which include the work of Gottfried Semper in the second half of the nineteenth century and Bruno Taut in the 1910s, are often presented as episodic within the oeuvres of specific architects and peripheral to broader developments in German architecture.

Contrary to standard histories, this chapter shows that German architects had become more globally mobile by the end of the nineteenth century and had developed an interest in ethnographic research. Drawing on the biographies of several architects, I demonstrate that these architects’ fascination with African and Asian traditions predated the period that existing scholarship associates with such ethnographic activity in art—interwar expressionism. Instead, German architectural interest in the Other had multiple origins including the opening up of previously inaccessible regions of the world via colonial annexation, the emergence
and popularization of ethnography, art historical efforts to write a world history, the spread of travel as a tool in architectural education, and the nineteenth-century reorganization of architectural occupations in Germany and consequent demand for new markets for architects.

Unlike other work that has focused on the disproportionate effect of expatriate German architects on the design cultures of their host societies, this chapter reverses Europe’s imperial gaze by focusing on how architects’ travel experiences affected developments at home in Germany. Postcolonial studies defines the imperial gaze as the all-knowing male visualizing practice that interpellates or brings the colonial subject into being through the ideologies and apparatuses of imperialism. It is a panoramic, roving eye that commands all that falls within its gaze in terms of the possibilities of a Eurocolonial capitalist future. In contrast, a reversal of the imperial gaze places colonizing subjects and societies under scrutiny. By analyzing the effects of travel and ethnographic research on German architects, I seek to operationalize, in architectural historiography, the idea that the empire struck back.

Ethnography was one of the means through which colonialism affected German architecture. Ethnography refers to both the characteristic methodology and the outcome of cultural anthropology (itself understood as the analytical study of cultures). Historically, ethnography has involved a two-step process: the observation of people and cultural activities “in the field,” and the subsequent production of written accounts that present these observed cultures as though they were neutral, preexisting entities entirely unaffected by the ethnographic process itself. From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, Germany played a formative role in the worldwide development of cultural anthropology. German anthropologists were involved in many of the major research expeditions of the period and their British, French, and American colleagues recognized German leadership in the discipline. By the 1870s the largest and most respected ethnographic collections were found in Germany. These objects were brought to Germany under a variety of auspices: museums organized expeditions or commissioned researchers and travelers to procure ethnographic material across the globe. They cultivated networks of collectors who voraciously acquired artifacts and data legitimately through trade or illegitimately through theft or forced appropriation. For example, when the Museum of Ethnology (now Grassi Museum) in Leipzig moved into its first custom-designed building in 1896, it combined the collection donated by the former director of the royal library at Dresden, Gustav Klemm; artifacts acquired by the Tokyo-based Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasien (German Society for the Natural
History and Ethnology of East Asia); a vast collection purchased from the wealthy South Seas merchant Johann Godeffroy in Hamburg; and artifacts from other sources (figure 2.1). Many advances in ethnographic methodology, such as the shift from typological to geographic classification systems, and much of the theoretical scaffolding of cultural anthropology emerged within the German-speaking sphere. In Germany, ethnographic knowledge circulated via ethnographic museums and scholarly reports as well as exposés in illustrated weeklies, newspapers, and other mass media outlets, and through commercial ethnographic shows (for example, Carl Hagenbeck’s shows), and static ethnographic exhibits at trade, city, and state fairs throughout the country. Put simply, ethnographic knowledge and methods were part of the late nineteenth-century German milieu.

References to ethnography also appear repeatedly in the scholarship on modern architecture in Germany and elsewhere. Architectural historian Barbara Miller Lane suggests that an ethnographic perspective was crucial for the newfound appreciation of folk traditions that formed the basis for national romanticism in German and Scandinavian architecture in the 1880s. In turn-of-the-century Vienna, Adolf Loos drew on European ethnographic research in the Pacific when he linked the “primitive” tattooing practices of Papuans to body ornamentation among contempo-
European criminals and lowlifes, and theorized that Western society was evolving away from ornament toward a “radical aesthetic purism.” By the 1920s Bauhaus designers like Marcel Breuer and Gunta Stölzl were digesting expressionist paintings and engravings (many of which emerged from encounters with objects in ethnographic museums) to produce objects such as the curious thronelike, rough-hewn wood-and-fabric “African Chair” discussed by art historian Maria Stavrinaki. Some members of the next generation, including Aldo van Eyck, Michel Ecochard, and Bernard Rudofsky, appropriated ethnographic research as a means to reinstall modern architecture with social meaning or moral authority. Thus, we can draw parallels between the anthropological practices of earlier European colonial architects and policymakers and the “ethnographic regime” that later colonial architects used to selectively operationalize vernacular practices at the end of the French empire in North Africa. But little has been done to develop this thesis for the important German context. As a prelude to an analysis of five turn-of-the-century architect-travelers, this chapter summarizes the ethnographic activities of three well-known architects—Gottfried Semper, Bruno Taut, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe—who built an archive of architectural-ethnographic knowledge in order to transform German architecture.

ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE WORK OF SEMPER, TAUT, AND MIES

Gottfried Semper’s work is recognized as one of the first cases in which ethnographic knowledge became a tool for theorizing the origins and development of architecture. In exile from Germany in England in 1849, Semper gained access to the British Museum to observe the archaeological triumph of the day: Assyrian treasures recently excavated from Nimrud and other sites. Through connections to Henry Cole, who was in charge of implementing Joseph Paxton’s design and organizing the interior displays for the Great Exhibition, Semper was hired to coordinate the exhibits of Turkey, Canada, Sweden, and Denmark. He visited the exhibition site during construction and came into close contact with objects from these countries, of which the polychromatic costumes and beaded fiber items from indigenous peoples of Canada made a strong impression. After the exhibition opened, he attended it regularly and observed with interest the many objects and goods from across the British empire and outside Europe. Like his British peers Henry Cole, Owen Jones, and others, he was especially taken with the “Indian Court,” whose artifacts seemed to demonstrate a harmony and simplicity missing from European objects. These were the very same objects that British reformers would
soon purchase to display at the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of their effort to improve British design. Semper, it seems, was fascinated in general by everything “primitive” at the Great Exhibition. He praised the latticework of native New Zealanders, polychromatic grass skirts “from Africa,” and the woven walls and bamboo frame of a full-scale “Caraib” Indian house from Trinidad. But the objects Semper was looking at were not devoid of context. Rather, they were animated by centuries of discourse about cultures outside Europe and a plethora of supplementary material evidence. For example, the “Indian Court” included a version of the native village type—hundreds of scale figures of Indian laborers and artisans making textiles, jewelry, and ceramics. These displays gave Semper and other observers an understanding of how artifacts were made and used in situ. The exposition became a substitute for travel and fieldwork. Semper, like other nineteenth-century theorists of culture, saw similarities between the contemporary “primitive” and prehistoric Europeans, but he used this idea to generate claims about architecture. He relied extensively on ethnographic knowledge for his theory (Bekleidungstheorie, or “theory of dressing”) that all architecture evolved from the hearth, the roof, the mound, and the enclosure, and was originally concerned with covering and dividing space. This focus on artifacts and their relationship to ritual was a radical reorientation of neoclassical approaches to the origins of architecture that attempted to identify the first or original work of architecture upon which all subsequent architecture was modeled. Semper found evidence for this theory in the displays at the British Museum and the Great Exhibition.

Even prior to his London interlude, however, Semper paid attention to archaeological, ethnographic, and natural science scholarship. During his initial exile in Paris, he even offered to undertake a “scientific-artistic” expedition to the Orient on behalf of the Prussian government. The trip would have rehabilitated Semper’s reputation in Prussia after his participation in the failed revolution of 1848. But it would also have given him firsthand experience with some of the cultures he had encountered through exhibitions and books. As architectural historian Harry Francis Mallgrave explains, Semper was particularly attracted to the work of the ethnologists James Prichard and Gustav Klemm. Prichard opposed the polygenist evolutionary and racializing bent of nineteenth-century English anthropology, but his paternalism and commitment to the “white man’s burden” was very much a product of England’s colonial expansion. In contrast, Klemm produced a strongly evolutionary and racializing theory of the development of human culture. His theory would have been impossible without the five-thousand-piece-strong assemblage of artifacts
that he collected, which later formed the kernel of the ethnographic museum in Leipzig.8

It is this precondition that is the subject of this chapter: what political, economic, and social factors enabled this kind of collecting, this ethnography, and the architectural theorization that ensued? How did the historically contingent “explosive growth of empirical facts” and “solid archaeological evidence” that scholars have mentioned affect architectural claims?9 Nineteenth-century anthropology was an emerging and politicized domain of knowledge production tied to European capitalist expansion across the globe. Mallgrave concedes that British architectural thinking and especially its emphasis on eclectic ornament were closely tied to the empire’s archaeological and anthropological research and colonial and trade relations in Africa and Asia. But he suggests that nothing similar existed in Germany.10 For its part, Germany produced numerous explorers who published influential scholarly works and were very much engaged in the scientific, political, and economic debates of the period. It was in part because of this high level of activity that Germany became a leader in the new field of cultural anthropology. When the country finally became a colonial power in 1884, German anthropologists gained easy access to new regions but the discipline never restricted itself to this colonial geography: colonialism was not a precondition but a helpmeet for German cultural anthropology, as scholars like H. Glenn Penny have argued. As I show here, anthropology, colonialism, and architectural innovation were also intertwined in the German context.

For Semper, ethnography provided evidence of the “instructive and unitary nature of early man” that contrasted with the fragmentation of contemporary Western culture and society.11 The link that he formulated between the origins of humankind, ethnographic knowledge, and the reform of European art has the hallmarks of the “noble savage” trope that postcolonial studies scholars have theorized. This trope represented non-European societies as debased and thus ripe for the civilizing mission of colonialism but simultaneously worthy, in their noble simplicity, of being emulated by corrupt European society. The concept of the noble savage first emerged among French Renaissance writers and then resurfaced with a vengeance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in connection with colonial expansion.12 Semper slips easily into the language of noble savagery when he waxes lyrical about native works in the Canadian display even as he assumes that they are the result of intuition rather than rational calculation: “It is generally recognized that the products of the most naive methods of material fabrication, as well as models for pattern and color, far surpassed the refined works of the civilized nations in
what one calls style." Here Semper extends the trope of noble savagery to architecture. It allows him to formulate a new conceptual model for architecture based on what he perceived to be architectural principles still extant among contemporary “primitive” peoples. Subsequent generations of architects have returned to Semper’s theories, but the fact that they hinged on ethnographic methods and objects produced in the unique context of the mid-nineteenth century has been largely forgotten.

More than fifty years later, German expressionist architects also made use of ethnography. Expressionism is often understood as an early twentieth-century revolt by young artists against the moribund academicism of state-promoted art and the complacency of bourgeois life. It entailed a rejection of realism in lieu of expressing underlying spiritual values, which was achieved through energetic use of color and forceful forms and lines. Expressionist architects translated these ideas into frenetic, fantastical designs that were both unrealizable in their complexity of form and structure and unrealized due to difficult post–World War I economic conditions. This approach is exemplified in the work of the Glässerne Kette (Glass Chain), a loose grouping of architects formed in 1919. Rosemarie Haag Bletter has argued that the group rejuvenated a long-standing Judeo-Christian and Islamic iconography of glass and crystal whose transformational properties they hoped would stimulate social change in Germany. They envisioned a causal link between these “amorphous and crystalline” forms and the free and harmonious society that they sought.

Taut was the intellectual leader of the group, and he was fascinated by the Orient in the Saidian sense of the term. For Said, orientalism was both the “style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’” and the academic institutions and entire discursive apparatus that emerged to create systematic knowledge about this Orient. In the Orient, Taut and his colleagues saw a model for an “organic unity” that was missing in the “chaos” of the Western industrial metropolis. Taut rabidly declared: “Kill the European, kill him, kill him, kill him off! Each tiny part of the great culture from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries in Upper India, Ceylon, Cambodia, Amman, Siam—what melting of form, what fruitful maturity.” The Orient offered “a possibility of redemption, a spiritual and harmonious totality of the self with his/her environment” that was especially pertinent in the face of the carnage wrought by World War I. Taut’s comments illustrate the typical assumption of essential difference between Europe and the non-Western world, but he also invokes a disingenuous noble savage argument: primitive simplicity will save Western materialism. But Taut’s Orient was not exclusively the home of the ancient civilizations of
Assyria, Persia, Egypt, and so on. Nor was it the decadent nineteenth-century Islamic Middle East that Said’s protagonists were so interested in. Furthermore, Taut’s examples do not fit easily into the Judeo-Christian and Islamic iconography described by Bletter. In addition to the Selim Mosque in Adrianopel (contemporary Edirne, Turkey) and the city of Cairo in Egypt, Taut refers in his 1919 book Die Stadtkrone to Angkor Wat in Cambodia, “the Confucius Temple in Qufu” in China, and several temples in India and Thailand. He uses these examples to illustrate his argument that modern cities should be designed around crowning communal structures in the spirit of the cathedrals of old European cities, the “pagodas above the huts of Indians,” and the “enormous temple district in the square of the Chinese city.” Of all of these examples, India stood out the most for Taut: “India towers high above all others as the purest culture of the Orient. Even China fades next to India. And our Gothic is again nothing but a beautiful dream of the Orient.” It is not enough to simply accept Taut’s zealous orientalism as fact. Rather, we must ask where it came from and what work it did in Taut’s thinking.

There is an extensive body of work devoted to understanding the relationship between Western abstract art and “Eastern thought” in general and Buddhist and Hindu philosophy in particular. As art historian Sixten Ringbom and others have shown, these influences were largely filtered through the transformative lens of theosophy, which many abstract artists dabbled in. Theosophy’s concern with color, geometry, and “formless form” may therefore have fed into the glass-crystal symbolism of expressionism. Many of the places referenced in theosophic discussions and expressionist publications were, however, either colonized by European states or under pressure from European expansion, and their appropriation into European art discourse must not be isolated from this political, economic, and cultural reality.

In Die Stadtkrone, Taut draws on architectural historical, antiquarian, archaeological, and ethnographic scholarship, as well as travel narratives. Notable among these is the British scholar James Fergusson’s magisterial synthesis of his extensive fieldwork in India, History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (1876). This book and the work associated with it not only set the standard for the close imbrication of colonialism, archaeology, and architectural historiography but also shaped postcolonial national identity and institutions in India. Taut also cites the work of Ernst Boerschmann, a German architect who had researched China’s architecture, landscapes, and people while on a tour of duty in China with the German occupying troops following the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Based on Boerschmann’s published research, Taut touted the ancient Chinese city
of Qufu as an example of the kind of holistic urban design that was absent from modern European cities. To illustrate his point, he republished Boerschmann’s drawing of the city of Qufu and its renowned “Confucius Temple” (plate 4). Taut would later employ an ethnographic lens similar to Boerschmann’s when he lived and worked in Japan and Turkey from 1931 until his death in 1938. In *Houses and People of Japan* (1937), for example, he does not limit his study to Japanese architecture but is concerned with “the peculiar features of Japanese houses and life from the viewpoint of cultural history,” which he comes to understand through field research: “And I felt how insufficient up to now my knowledge of these conceptions was. I sternly rejected the habit of calling a strange way of living and unknown customs ‘exotic,’ interesting only because they seemed remarkable and incomprehensible. Likewise, I was not satisfied with the explanations I had so far received regarding the climate and history and many other things. Thus I realized that I had to watch the seasons go by, noting at the same time the customs of the people.” Architectural travel and research have long included a cultural component, which I discuss later in this chapter. There was, however, a qualitative difference between the abstract observations of culture seen in conventional architectural research and the insistent cultural analysis evident in the work of architects like Taut. Their work carried a peculiarly ethnographic tenor that links it firmly to the wider political, economic, and social context in which it was produced.

Although Taut’s work in Japan and Turkey has been discussed extensively, the emphasis has been on his impact on his host countries. There, he contributed to a reevaluation of local architectural heritage as crucial to new national identities. Taut’s early death in Turkey may have restricted widespread awareness of his built oeuvre and real understanding of his theoretical positions. But his ideas were known within his immediate circle of reform-minded architects in Germany. Acknowledging the ethnographic character of Taut’s work changes our understanding of his oeuvre by placing it firmly within a corpus of architectural-ethnographic work that links architectural developments in Germany to practices, traditions, and experiences elsewhere.

Only a few years later and before he embraced the functionalist strain of modernism, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe sought “models for purposive form-giving” in the “primitive” architectural traditions of cultures outside Europe. He was inspired in this search by Le Corbusier, who was famously infatuated with Islamic cultures from the date of his first visit to Istanbul in 1911 or earlier. Le Corbusier identified Istanbul and Isfahan as masterpieces of harmonious urbanism, and the “primitive temple,” silos,
factories, ocean liners, cranes, motors, and automobiles as formal models for a new twentieth-century architecture. Mies similarly formulated an analogy between the primitive hut and the products of modern engineering in particular, and argued that architectural design should no longer be based on imitation but should build on a “primal order” instead. In a lecture he presented at the Bund Deutscher Architekten (Union of German Architects) in December 1923, he showed slides drawn exclusively from “outside the realm of Greco-Roman culture,” including an “Indian tent,” a “leaf house,” an “Eskimo house,” and an “Eskimo summer tent.” In analyzing this development in Mies’s thinking, architectural theorist Fritz Neumeyer suggests that “the emphasis on the ethnological and technical was equivalent to an act of cognition.”

Here, Neumeyer creates an opening for considering the role of ethnographic knowledge in German architecture: ethnography was relevant not because it denoted some selfless impulse to understand other architectural cultures but because to know these traditions through ethnography was to conceptualize the meaning of German architecture itself.

In fact, Mies was an avid reader of ethnographic texts, several of which were included in his personal library. A member of his atelier recalled in particular the architect’s fascination with the work of the maverick German ethnologist Leo Frobenius. Frobenius was the first German ethnologist to focus on African cultures. He undertook twelve memorable expeditions to the continent between 1904 and 1935. Based on his reading of existing sources, his observations in the field, and the extensive material he collected, Frobenius proposed the revolutionary argument that culture originated in one region and moved to other areas where it evolved to form cultural complexes (Kulturkreisen). One of Frobenius’s best-known books, Das unbekannte Afrika (The unknown Africa), was a fixture on Mies’s drawing table and may have informed his design for the Barcelona Pavilion. According to Frobenius himself, this book was meant to “demonstrate what the African continent has to say vis-à-vis what the philologist and historian Bachofen learned from the records of the ancient Mediterranean cultures.” Frobenius notes that between his early work at the turn of the century and the publication of Das unbekannte Afrika in 1923, German scholars had abandoned philology and the natural sciences in favor of “culture in general” and the culture of the “wild” continent, Africa, in particular. “A Buddha,” “an African figure,” and “an Oceanic mask” were now on equal footing in “ideal and material” terms. He was describing an exponential increase in knowledge about other cultures—ancient Mediterranean, Near Eastern, African, and Oceanic—enabled by his and other ethnologists’ research. In particular, he pointed
to the rise of “l’art negre” in France and Germany and its appropriation of African art. As early as 1908, artists such as Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Emil Nolde, like their peers in France, were visiting ethnographic museums and “native villages” at exhibitions and zoological gardens across Germany. They populated their homes and studios with motley ethnographic objects, adopted “primitive” practices into their everyday lives, and integrated these sources stylistically into their paintings and woodcuts. Frobenius’s ethnographies would have been especially attractive to these artists because he paid close attention to artistic questions and spoke the language of line and form that they understood. In his view, African art consists of “a small reserve of the most conceivably simple forms,” within which “the dominant line is the broken one.” The “character of the African style” is “practical, austere, stern, tectonic.” With some German artists using African art as a basis for experimentation, Frobenius could justifiably claim, by 1923, that his African discoveries were on the same “material” footing as ancient Roman and Greek art.

Around this period, art historians Carl Einstein and Wilhelm Worringer undertook theoretical studies of African art that relied on ethnographic collections and interpretations even as they proposed new paradigms for approaching the subject. In his groundbreaking book Abstraction and Empathy (1908), Worringer theorized that the abstraction often seen in non-European art was a tool to counter the psychic dread of human existence. In contrast, European art was simply a mimetic, self-indulgent reaction to feeling at home in the world. According to this logic, non-European art could help resolve the crisis in European art. Worringer apparently constructed this theory without any knowledge of avant-garde artists’ growing interest in abstraction, but in the process created an intellectual framework that buttressed their emerging tendencies. Soon thereafter, using innovative visual and rhetorical strategies, Einstein decisively dissociated African sculpture from ethnographic frameworks, redefined these objects as nonsymbolic and nonreferential artworks, hypothesized a unity of style and proportion between objects from diverse cultural traditions, and produced what became the modern Western canon of African art. Even as he was undoing the prevailing hierarchy of European and non-European art (whereby African objects did not qualify as art), however, Einstein still remained committed to a model in which non-Europeans were at the bottom of the evolutionary scale, and in which their very primitivism valorized their art as an instrument for the rejuvenation of European art. There are indications that Einstein read and appropriated images from Frobenius while he was formulating this theory.
Despite their apparent engagement with non-European art, we cannot consider either Worringer or Einstein’s writings as serious engagements with African cultures, histories, and societies. Their work is better understood as an appropriation of elements of African traditions, which perpetrated a form of violence on African systems of thought even as it wrote African societies and histories into the core narratives of European modernism. Like Worringer, Frobenius too saw African art as a response to a tortured, insecure existence, and he too distinguished between intuition and a rationalist worldview. Frobenius’s proposition, around 1931, that African art was simultaneously primitive and modern must have been informed by what these artists and theorists had done with his initial propositions and his archive of visual material and artifacts. Frobenius did not have much success in the academy or among his fellow ethnologists. But his success as a public intellectual illustrates how ethnographic knowledge rippled through German society.

Das unbekannte Afrika itself attempts an encyclopedic survey and taxonomy of cultural complexes in Africa. It is illustrated with fifty charts.
and over two hundred plates that depict buildings in north and west Africa through photographs, sketches, measured drawings, and a few paintings. Among these were images of post-and-beam buildings whose structural purity may have buoyed Mies’s emerging concept of “skin and bone construction,” his biological metaphor for articulating the load-bearing and non-load-bearing components of modern structures (figure 2.2). In Frobenius’s images and ethnographic writings, Mies had confirmation that it was possible to build in a way that evolved directly out of a building’s purpose and its materials, in accordance with the character of the age. The primitive, analogous to the non-European Other, provided the archetype for a new architecture that was neither historicist nor willfully modern. Through its art and culture, Africa had the potential to rescue Europe, as Frobenius noted repeatedly in his writing. By perusing Frobenius’s archive, Mies believed he could deduce transhistorical principles of architecture. Ultimately, Mies fulfilled the goals of Das unbekannte Afrika, which Frobenius had described as an “attempt to shore up the frequently all too weak aestheticism of many stripes [i.e., the new fashion for ‘primitive’ African art] with a framework of bones.” Given Mies’s far-reaching influence, it is likely that his reliance on ethnographic knowledge may have affected German architectural discourse in ways that are yet to be discovered.

Semper used ethnographic knowledge to ground his theory of the historical development of architecture. Taut invoked existing ethnographic evidence but also used ethnographic strategies to produce new knowledge. Mies in turn relied on a proliferating body of ethnographic data as he sought models for a successful synthesis of function, structural system, and form. Together, these three cases suggest a pattern based on a shared conviction that ethnographic knowledge of non-European traditions could help define a way forward for German architecture in the modern era.

ARCHITECTURAL ETHNOGRAPHY

In addition to these leading architects, there existed an as yet ill-defined group of German practitioners who were fascinated by cultures outside Europe. Their interests followed a similar course. The general pattern is one in which a state-certified architect or engineer took time off from work to conduct a study tour and document traditional architecture in a non-European region. Upon return to Germany, the architect typically published his research, which he presented as a patriotic, selfless contribution to human knowledge. These publications, I argue, constituted a new category of architectural text: architectural ethnography.
The idea of combining architecture and ethnography is explicit in Hermann Frobenius’s book, *Afrikanische Bautypen: Eine ethnographisch-architektonische Studie* (African building types: An ethnographic-architectural study; figure 2.3), published in 1894. The father to the cultural anthropologist Leo Frobenius, Hermann retired from service as a fortifications engineer in the Prussian army and embarked on a new career as a writer. There is no evidence that he traveled abroad before his book was published—he drew exclusively on written sources in the book. This approach conformed to the notorious nineteenth-century “armchair” model of anthropological research. Though he did not con-
duct fieldwork, Hermann Frobenius’s work was ethnographic because it focused on culture and relied on data collected by explorers such as Heinrich Barth, Gustav Nachtigal, and Hermann von Wissmann, who had used techniques such as “participant observation” during their long sojourns “in the field.” As Johannes Fabian has shown, “modern practices of ethnography were developed from premises, activities, and conventions that guided scientific travel and exploration in the late nineteenth century.” Indeed, the anthropological community recognized Frobenius’s work as ethnography; his books were reviewed in German, American, and British anthropological journals, and the retiree participated in some professional meetings related to the discipline.

In *Afrikanische Bautypen*, Hermann Frobenius compiled diverse sources on African architecture into a systematic survey. His interest was the link between architecture and culture. Borrowing elements from his son’s emerging diffusionist theory, he attempted to trace the geographic distribution of construction methods, building types and ethnic groups by analyzing formal, structural, and aesthetic characteristics. Book chapter titles link specific *Kulturkreisen* (“Bantu,” “Sudan”) with distinctive elements of spatial organization or structure (“tectonic frame with infill,” “right-angled floor plan,” etc.). Through text, sketches, and measured drawings adapted from his sources Frobenius provided the German reading public with one of the first surveys of African architecture written by a technical expert. He went to great lengths to determine the ethnic origins and developmental sequence for each of the building types that he identified, which links his analysis to the long-standing discussion of origins and elemental types (*Urformen*) in architectural discourse. He propounded a diffusionist and evolutionary theory of architectural development in which change aligned with geographic movement and cultural intermixture. At the same time, he, like Semper, Worringer, and others connected the architecture of Naturvölker (so-called primitive or uncivilized peoples) with instinct and communal spirit: “And [building] knowledge is therefore not individualistic or career-related, as it is with cultivated peoples [Kulturvölker], but jointly owned by every single member of the tribe.” In contrast to the situation with the “civilized nations,” therefore, the Naturvölker were not yet alienated from each other or from meaningful human existence. Ultimately, Frobenius challenged existing theories on the origins and development of African cultures by arguing that when understood in relation to the context of its production, African architecture showed technical and aesthetic prowess. Like his son Leo, Hermann Frobenius promoted the inclusion of Africa’s cultures and peoples into teleological history, but he did so by employing the now-familiar
rhetorical sleight of hand in which Africa was admired for some of the very characteristics for which it was also derided.49

Other German architects shared Frobenius’s interest in architectural ethnography. One important stimulant for their interest may have been the official journal of the Prussian public works ministry, the _Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung_. From its establishment in 1881, the _Centralblatt_ broadened the geographic scope of the architectural profession by publishing notices about German building technicians taking up posts in Serbia, Turkey, Egypt, Panama, Nicaragua, Buenos Aires, and elsewhere. Some of these individuals may have taken advantage of a newly established government program to appoint technical attachés to German diplomatic missions throughout the world. The goal of this program was to help architects and engineers become globally competitive, keep them up to date on developments in other countries, and support them in their attempts to understand other “technical building” traditions. This program should be understood in the context of initiatives from the 1870s onward that aimed to align Germany’s architectural and engineering capacity with the needs of a rapidly industrializing society and liberalizing economy. Once appointed, attachés were expected to spend much of their time traveling and collecting material on foreign building practices. A stipend of fifteen thousand marks was reserved for this purpose.50 While none of the architects discussed in this chapter can be linked decisively to the program, and while the description of the program suggests that it targeted technically advanced countries on which Germany could model itself in terms of public works and railway construction, the project offers evidence of the profession’s increasing openness toward foreign work.51 It is helpful to think about this phenomenon as “architectural diplomacy,” or a strategy through which the German government nurtured diplomatic relations while generating new markets for German products and services. In a sense, architectural diplomacy went hand in hand with infrastructural imperialism: while some German experts industriously gleaned information in the United States and Britain and transmitted it home to Germany, others were posted to Japan and Siam, where they shared German expertise with eager-to-modernize governments and thereby increased Germany’s political and economic power.52

Some architects working abroad pursued the kind of work that Hermann Frobenius aspired to do. Heinrich Hildebrand (1853–1924),53 an architect “who with permission from the authorities at home” was “in service of China for some years” is representative.54 Hailing from Bitburg in the Rhineland-Palatinate, Hildebrand went to school in Trier before studying architecture at the Polytechnic in Berlin. He passed the first
Prussian state exam in 1879 and obtained a position with the Berlin city railroad, then participated in the construction of the central train station in Cologne between 1888 and 1891. It is unclear whether Hildebrand thereafter volunteered or if the Foreign Office invited him to work in China. In any case, his assignment was to pursue Chinese language training and advise the Chinese government on its railroad construction program for five years. By 1891, one year after his arrival, Hildebrand had already visited and documented Temple Ta-chüeh-Sy (Dajue Si) in north China. By 1900 he had amassed a large collection of photographs (largely of his own making) showing Chinese motifs. Following the growing railway network, he moved from his original post in Beijing to Wuchang and Nanking, among other locations. Hildebrand transitioned from advising the Chinese imperial government to working for the Schantung-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft (Shantung Railroad Company), a privately held German company formed to take advantage of new construction opportunities created by Germany’s annexation of Kiaochow in 1897. Regardless of his official affiliations, Hildebrand regularly wrote reports to the German embassy. The fact that his reports made their way to Imperial Chancellor Bismarck’s desk suggests that Hildebrand’s work was political. Despite tensions with some Chinese officials, Hildebrand was apparently so influential that several hundred German and Chinese men attended his farewell gathering in Qingdao in October 1908. His experience in China was viewed at home as preparation for further foreign service: after his return to Germany, Hildebrand was briefly posted to Chile, Brazil, and again to China before his retirement in 1910.

The conditions of Hildebrand’s employment—the fact that he was learning Mandarin, that he traveled around the region, and that he met the Chinese elite—provided some opportunity for him to study Chinese culture. By writing a book, Hildebrand aimed to inform European readers about Chinese architecture, knowledge of which was limited compared to growing understanding of Chinese applied arts that was sustained, he claimed, by “the possessions of the Berlin Museum.” Hildebrand wanted to explain how a traveling European could experience Chinese buildings as “unworldly” even as they “remind him of previously seen . . . temples in antit” and “medieval European fortresses.” He argued that “the similarity [between Chinese and European architecture] can therefore only have arisen from the common wellspring from which these forms flowed.” He saw his work as an intervention in an ongoing conversation about the origin of Greek art in relation to the art of Asia Minor, Phoenicia, Assyria, Egypt, the Far East, and south Asia, informed by “recent excavations.” As Suzanne Marchand has explained, new research challenged
Hildebrand might have been motivated to use ethnographic techniques because they appeared so productive. He argued that a “multiyear on-site study,” along with a survey of all existing literature, was necessary to fully understand Chinese architecture. His work on the Temple Ta-chüeh-Sy was just a first step. Though his work was informed by previous travel reports and scholarship, his contribution would differ from them, he argued, because of his technical expertise: “China’s building practices are presented here, for the first time, from . . . the point of view of the master builder.”

Hildebrand systematically described, illustrated, and analyzed the temple from the overall layout of the complex to the exterior form and structure of individual buildings and interior design and furnishings.

In style and content, Hildebrand’s book was more technical in nature and narrower in scope than Hermann Frobenius’s, but the authors shared a deterministic model of the relationship between culture, history, and architectural practice, as illustrated in chapter titles such as “The reformation of the dominant Indian religion through Buddha,” “The fêng shui question,” “The frequent changes in regime,” etc. Using a cultural diffusion model, Hildebrand concluded that Chinese architecture bore a genealogical relationship to Indian architecture, with both being of ancient origin, perhaps even old enough to have served as antecedents to early European architecture. As he explained, his book was a contribution “not only to cultural history but also to art and architectural history.”

Another commonality between Frobenius and Hildebrand was their concern with cultural origins and belief in the transformative potential of ethnographic knowledge.

In 1892 Hildebrand sent his manuscript to the Prussian government, who forwarded it to the Vereinigung Berliner Architekten (Union of Berlin Architects). The union eventually published the book, Der Tempel Ta-chüeh-sy, in 1897. It is not clear if the author continued to work toward his goal of compiling a “complete picture of Chinese art and its history and its relation to the art of other cultures,” since the book under consideration here and an earlier (1893) article on Ming dynasty graves are his only known publications. At the time of his death in Berlin in 1925, Hildebrand was praised for his passion for China’s people, culture, and landscape and for “furthering Germany to such an outstanding degree during his long years in China.” In the context of conventional histories of German architecture at the fin de siècle, this emphasis on Hildebrand’s knowledge of China and foreign service may seem surprising. His research on temple architecture was outside the scope of normal professional activity and should be understood as part of the documentary project.
of colonialism, and his books and articles as part of the colonial archive. The culmination of Hildebrand’s work was the textual, architectonic, and photographic representation and dissemination of Chinese architecture, culture, and history on behalf of the German state and the Western intellectual project of writing a world history of art. Hildebrand’s case was not entirely unusual, however.68

Around the same time that Hildebrand was in China, another architect, Franz Baltzer, traveled to Japan. Baltzer was born into an educated bourgeois family in Dresden in 1857.69 He studied in the polytechnics in Berlin and Dresden before becoming involved in the construction of the Berlin city railway in 1880–1882 and the Cologne railway. In 1886 he attained the rank of government master-builder (Regierungsbaumeister). This was followed by service in the Prussian ministry of public works. It was during this period and in response to his growing reputation for railroad work that the Japanese government invited Baltzer to design the rail line terminating in the central train station in Tokyo. Baltzer was active in Japan from 1898 until 1903 and his role in Japan’s modernization through infrastructural development has been documented by historian William Coaldrake and others.70 Of particular interest in the context of this chapter is Baltzer’s controversial design for Tokyo’s Central Station, which the Japanese government rejected on the grounds that it did not convey a suitably modern image. According to Coaldrake, Baltzer’s design, which included elements of Momoyama and Edo period architectural iconographies of power, “unwittingly precipitated a crisis in the architecture of Meiji authority.”71

Though his primary assignment in Japan was to oversee the design and construction of the railway network and its principal buildings, Baltzer took time off from his duties to pursue architectural ethnographic research. In 1902 he published some introductory essays on Japanese architecture in the Centralblatt. For these, Baltzer drew on a new book by Japanese architectural historian Itō Chūta and drawings Itō had displayed in the much-celebrated Japanese section of the 1900 Paris Exposition. But Baltzer also drew his authority from his presence as a technical attaché posted in Tokyo, as his byline makes clear.72 His subsequent publications, Das japanische Haus: Eine bautechnische Studie (1903) and Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans (1905), relied more on firsthand experience—he traveled around visiting, drawing, and photographing buildings, and talking to informants. Das japanische Haus (The Japanese house) was a technical description of residential timber architecture illustrated by detailed drawings. According to Boerschmann scholar Eduard Kögel, this focus on the structural character of individual Japanese buildings was Baltzer’s primary in-
Baltzer’s interest and the main legacy of his work. If this was the case, then Baltzer’s next book, *Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans* (The architecture of Japanese religious buildings), broke the mold. Baltzer did describe *Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans* as the first German-language “scientific description” and analysis of Japanese temples. Its evocative front cover depicts a tall pagoda almost obscured by flora and fauna and a series of freestanding Buddhist gates (Torii) approached by a monumental stair being climbed by two tiny figures. However, this drawing foregrounds context in lieu of architecture, thus illustrating Baltzer’s interest in cultural and social analysis (figure 2.4). It is likely that his membership in the German Society for the Natural History and Ethnology of East Asia dates from this period as well. Baltzer’s premise in *Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans* is that religion was the wellspring of Japanese architecture and culture, and the book is structured accordingly. Baltzer emphasizes that his work is different from the superficial photographic endeavors of earlier European visitors. But it was also different from contemporaneous art historical scholarship: he points out that his inability to read the “difficult-to-learn” Japanese script, the “inadequacy” of Japanese scientific material, and his reliance on his own observations in the field meant that “small errors or inaccuracies may have occurred, [and] the individual details may not be in line with the results of the newest art historical research.” He acknowledges his ignorance regarding the “origins and
derivation of individual built and art forms,” and for this reason “leaves the further grounding of historical questions to art historical researchers.” Indeed, he suggests the historical development of Japanese architecture and its relationship to Chinese, Korean, and Indian traditions as a productive topic for future German art historical research. His goal in the meantime was simply to start the conversation and generate interest in Japanese traditions in art and architecture circles.

In Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans, Baltzer systematically describes the characteristic architectural elements, ornamental motifs, and building types in Japanese religious architecture. The karahafu, or “double curved [cusped] so-called Chinese gable” used in temple and palace architecture, which appears in Baltzer’s design for the Tokyo station, looms large in the book.76 Despite his disclaimer about engaging in art historical debates about the origins of specific traditions, Baltzer marshals evidence to argue for the “complete fusion of the Shinto and Buddhist ways of building.” The karahafu is evidence of this exchange. He argues further that the Japanese pagoda derived from the Indian stupa. These attempts to identify cultural histories using artifactual evidence resonate with Frobenius’s Kulturkreis concept and Josef Strzygowski and other art historians’ attempts to theorize the evolution of European art in relation to non-Western traditions.77 In his earlier book, Das japanische Haus, Baltzer had already acknowledged the relevance of ethnographic knowledge but also claimed that the topic held specific significance for the discipline and profession of architecture: “This object [the Japanese house], completely apart from ethnographic viewpoints, deserves the interest of our architects in some respects.”78 What did Baltzer mean? A review in an art history journal described Baltzer’s 1903 and 1907 publications as an initial collection of material or data that would serve as the basis for future art historical interpretation.79 Baltzer himself vehemently discouraged German architects from simply imitating Japanese motifs published in his books, “as one must be extremely careful with the implantation of such things in a country of completely different climatic conditions and fully divergent culture, as the example of Japan now teaches.”80 However, he may not have been averse to a more rigorous application of the underlying structural principles and unity of architecture and culture seen in Japanese architecture to European architecture—a point taken up later by architects like Bruno Taut.

Despite supporting evidence, scholars have made no attempt to connect Baltzer’s choice of traditional Japanese elements like the karahafu roof to the ethnographic research he conducted during his stay in Japan. The fact that upon his return to Berlin in 1903 Baltzer joined the Imperial
Colonial Office, where he oversaw the production of architectural designs for the various German colonies, further strengthens the link between architectural ethnographic work and expansionist politics. There is no evidence to date that Baltzer conducted ethnographic research in the colonies themselves, although his publications on residential architecture in the African colonies reveal some knowledge of indigenous traditions.81 His position as head of the Imperial Colonial Office’s technical division certainly afforded ample opportunities for travel and research. For example, in July to October 1907, Baltzer traveled to German East Africa as a technical advisor to the newly appointed head of the Imperial Colonial Office, Bernhard Dernburg. This journey was part of a new, more rational and economically-minded colonial policy that included higher investment in infrastructure and in “biological capital” (i.e., the indigenous population). Researching indigenous cultural traditions could have been construed as compatible with this new policy of “elevating indigenous culture.”82 Baltzer’s involvement in the 1914 Werkbund-led effort to reform architecture in the German colonies, and his role as a founding member, in 1924, of AKOTECH—an association of former colonial technicians who lobbied for the reinstatement of the German colonies—offer further evidence of how colonialism and architecture mingled in Baltzer’s oeuvre.83

Ernst Boerschmann (1873–1949), who worked in China, was arguably the best-known German architect-ethnographer of this period. Boerschmann studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule Berlin-Charlottenburg (Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg) between 1892 and 1896.84 In 1902 he joined the German occupying force in China and stayed primarily in Qingdao, Tianjin, and Beijing for two years. During this period he measured, drew, and photographed the Temple of Azure Clouds near Beijing. The publication of this research led to a leave of absence from 1906 to 1909 to allow him to pursue scholarly research on what he claimed, with stereotypical Eurocentric hubris, were the disappearing ancient buildings of China. The German government, somewhat unwillingly, funded his research until 1914.85 Boerschmann himself clarified, on several occasions, how his architectural ethnographic work supported state interests. He linked his work to Germany’s colonial expansion into Kiaochow and economic penetration of China, and argued that better knowledge of China could forestall events like the recent Boxer Rebellion. Furthermore, he framed the issue in terms of competition between world powers: it was crucial to preempt American dominance in the scholarship on Chinese cultural history, which would lead to economic and political gains for the United States. Boerschmann
called for Germany to invest as much in researching China as it had put into excavations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and India. An investment of this kind in China would produce brand-new knowledge and improve Germany’s international standing. According to Boerschmann, technical experts connected to the German government and working independently were already doing and should be encouraged to continue this “cultural work” across east Asia. Given these statements, I would argue that Boerschmann was not merely “condescending” toward Chinese culture (by assuming, for example, that German intervention was necessary to preserve China’s built heritage) but actively functioned as an agent of German imperialism. We cannot explain his sinophilia away as a simple case of “falling in love.” Rather, we must understand it as an effect of centuries of European discourse about China and the peculiar tenor of China-Germany relations in the late nineteenth-century world order.

A British reviewer described Boerschmann’s texts on Chinese architecture, published between 1911 and 1931, as “the first important attempt to deal with this subject.” Boerschmann himself, however, acknowledged a debt to his predecessors in Japan and China, including Hildebrand, whom he likely met during his first tour of duty in Qingdao, and Baltzer, whom Boerschmann mentions repeatedly in his correspondence. Both Baltzer’s and Hildebrand’s publications served as models for Boerschmann’s work. Indeed, Boerschmann succeeded where Hildebrand had failed: he produced a systematic survey of China’s architecture by visiting sixteen cities over three years. Boerschmann’s approach was anthropological: he presented his work as “an investigation of Chinese architecture and its relationship to Chinese culture.” He concentrated on late Qing dynasty (1644–1912) buildings and, unlike his colleagues researching other cultural traditions, did not consciously seek out antique works. Yet he too attempted to draw conclusions about the “laws of development” and the migration and transformation of artistic forms. Like Hildebrand, Boerschmann theorized that religion was central to all Chinese cultural practice. But unlike Baltzer, he focused on the arrangement of structures in the landscape rather than on the structural systems of individual buildings. To study this link, he walked and traveled by horse cart, boat, and train, and attended and documented “rituals” celebrated by the emperor in state temples. As Kögel explains, Boerschmann used photography, sketches, and notes to record his observations. He also archived written and oral histories in the regions he visited. These methods and activities were a far cry from Boerschmann’s technical training in architecture and his early work as a military building inspector in China. His interest in explai-
ing culture as well as his reliance on in-depth fieldwork mark his work as architectural ethnography rather than the more conventional form of architectural reportage that had originated in the Renaissance. Exhibitions were key for disseminating Boerschmann’s findings; he contributed to the ethnographic section of the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden (1911), and then held a major exhibit of photographs, watercolors, drawings, and public lectures at the Königlicher Kunstgewerbe-Museum in Berlin in June to July 1912. Because of its placement in this venue and the fact that an exhibit of Joseph Maria Olbrich’s drawings opened in the venue on the same day, many architects attended Boerschmann’s exhibit. Boerschmann’s research also found its way into art history via this exhibit: Joseph Strzygowski referenced Boerschmann’s exhibit in a 1912 article on the comparative history of east Asian art, and museums in Berlin, Vienna, and elsewhere purchased prints from the exhibit. Boerschmann’s use of photography was important—from its emergence before the middle of the nineteenth century, photography transformed old and stimulated new fields of knowledge production such as art history and anthropology. It enabled “armchair” scholarly knowledge about the colonial periphery, strengthened claims of scientific objectivity because of its apparent infallibility as a record of reality, popularized scholarly knowledge, stimulated new questions about the status of the copy and the type, and “preserved” endangered artifacts for posterity. Boerschmann used this technology to arouse German architects’ interest in China at the same time that other architects, such as Paul Schultze-Naumburg, were using photography to transform public perception of architecture.

For Boerschmann, the aim of his research was to provide an archive for his own and other future scholarship and a model for the development of contemporary European art. He stated that religious and philosophical texts were the “highest expression of China’s culture” and that they were “revealed in Chinese art, especially in architecture, with a precision that has not been attained in our own artistic creation.” Boerschmann’s goals were therefore realized ten years later when Bruno Taut cited Die Baukunst und religiöse Kultur der Chinesen (1911–1914) in his expressionist writings.

Boerschmann’s architectural ethnographic activities had a decisive impact on his subsequent career as a professor at the Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg (from 1925). He was the first professor of Chinese architecture in Germany, and possibly in the world. Of the more than six major books and multiple articles on Chinese architecture and art authored by Boerschmann, Baukunst und Landschaft in China (1923, published in English as Picturesque China: Architecture and Landscape)
achieved great commercial success due to its picture-book format and resulting attraction to lay readers (twenty thousand copies had been printed by 1926).\textsuperscript{99} In general, his books were well received by German, British, and American art historians, ethnologists, and sinologists. Given China’s increasing openness to the West during this period, it should come as no surprise that Boerschmann’s work also encouraged Chinese scholars to research their own traditions.\textsuperscript{100}

Karl Döhring exemplifies another model of the German architect-ethnographer. Born in Cologne in 1871, Döhring worked in the railway department of the civil service in the Kingdom of Siam from 1906 to 1913.\textsuperscript{101} Unlike Hildebrand and Boerschmann, Döhring became attached to the Siamese government through his own initiative rather than at the behest of the German government. Döhring’s case is instructive because it suggests that German architects became interested in working abroad for a variety of reasons and through a variety of channels. He had professed a great interest in “oriental” artistic traditions and a desire to experience them in person during his architectural studies at the Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg, which ended in 1905.\textsuperscript{102} It was this scholarly and antiquarian interest that motivated him to apply for a position with the Siamese government. For its part, the Siamese government accepted Döhring’s application as part of a larger modernization project that necessitated foreign technical expertise. Modernization simultaneously staved off European imperialist expansion, stimulated a period of modern nation building, and reentrenched the power of the Siamese royal family.\textsuperscript{103}

Döhring soon gained entry to Siam’s high society and was appointed architect to King Chulalongkorn.\textsuperscript{104} He designed four palaces in addition to various buildings for the railway, the first Western-style university in Siam (Chulalongkorn University), and several other government buildings in a variety of styles. Art historian Krisana Daroonthanom identifies \textit{Jugendstil} tendencies alongside Baroque neoclassic and Palladian motifs, all employed with a strong \textit{sachlich} (objective) eye, in Döhring’s work in Siam. Unlike most of his fellow Europeans in Siam, however, Döhring did not indiscriminately apply European architectural principles to Siamese problems. His intensive investigation of art and architecture in Siam had an impact on his architectural practice. The floor plans of Prince Damrong’s villa (1911), the king’s palace at Phetchaburi (1909), and the queen mother’s residence, Tamnak Somdej (1911), with their open plans, verandas, and overall attentiveness to wind direction, sun position, and the cardinal points, all reflect his knowledge of spatial organization in traditional Siamese residences. Nevertheless, Döhring “never attempted to adopt Siamese building ornament and introduce it into his buildings.”\textsuperscript{105}
On leave in Germany in 1911, Döhring defended his dissertation, “The Phrachedi in Siam,” and received a doctorate in engineering from the Royal Saxon Technical Institute in Dresden. He also commenced studies in political science, law, art history, and archaeology at the University of Berlin before returning to Siam. Poor health led him to travel to Germany in 1913 and the outbreak of war prevented his return to Siam. Döhring completed his art historical and archaeological education during this period, and received a PhD in 1914 from the University of Erlangen on the basis of research conducted during his Siam sojourn. He received an honorary professorship from the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art, and National Education in 1919. As I will suggest below, this transformation from technician to scholar is critical to understanding Döhring’s presence in Siam, his subsequent contributions to German architectural discourse, and the presence and activities of his compatriots in Japan, China, and elsewhere.

Döhring published extensively on architecture, art, and culture in Siam. Like his peers researching Chinese and Japanese architecture, he contrasted his work with prior descriptions: “It was impossible to create an accurate picture of the Siamese buildings from such reports because the majority of the authors had never seen Siam, and had either obtained their information from other sources, or had summoned it from their fantasy.” His goal was to gain an “accurate picture” by deciphering the evolution of temple and palace architecture from the earliest known examples to the present through fieldwork. Photographic evidence was crucial to attaining this level of accuracy that Döhring purported to bring to his topic and it was what differentiated him from his predecessors. Using photographs (figure 2.5), Döhring attempted to trace how Siamese buildings had been affected by external traditions, and how these traditions had “flowered” and “declined.” Indeed, Döhring saw his work on Siam as a contribution to a universal history of architecture that started with the tumuli of prehistoric primitive peoples across the world, and evolved into well-designed buildings that took unique forms in different regions. Phra Chedi (temples) were the Siamese manifestation of this universal propensity.

In addition to delineating its evolution, Döhring presented himself as a preservationist concerned with the “threat of a cessation of the Siamese art forms through increasing Chinese immigration and through closer contacts with Europe.” Comments like this reveal Döhring’s failure to attribute agency to a culture that had managed to rejuvenate itself for millennia. His ideas here were very much in tune with “salvage anthropology,” the late nineteenth-century mode of anthropology that aimed to rescue
endangered indigenous cultures before their demise. But he also envisioned that his work would benefit contemporary Siamese nation-building efforts: “Just as in other civilized countries, the old buildings must be measured and redrawn.” But crucially, Europeans also stood to gain: “It would give me great pleasure if, in addition to transferring knowledge about Siamese architecture to Europe, this would also stimulate the Siamese government to lend greater support to national architecture.”

As part of this renaissance in Siamese art, Döhring planned to publish a pattern book of Siamese ornament based on his research on temples. King Chulalongkorn not only encouraged Döhring to pursue this work, he commissioned the architect to write a folio on Siamese art, and used Döhring’s photographs in the Siamese pavilion at the 1911 world’s fair in Turin. Döhring was soon charged with the directorship of the Museum

FIGURE 2.5. BUILDING FOR THE CREMATION OF KING MONGUT, THAILAND, PHOTOGRAPH BY KARL DÖHRING. DÖHRING DOCUMENTED HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS DURING HIS SOJOURN IN THAILAND BETWEEN 1906 AND 1913. COURTESY MUSEUM FÜNF KONTINENTE, MUNICH.
of Siamese Antiquities and asked to lead archaeological excavations at various ancient sites. Döhring therefore serves as another case study in which foreign architects stimulated a new idea of built heritage as part of the novel notion of the nation as an “imagined community” at once modern and antique. Döhring engaged with existing art historical research on Siam, became a collector for Germany’s ethnographic museums, published in ethnographic journals, and cooperated with linguists working on Siamese languages and with members of the German Society for Ethnology and Anthropology.

The fact that Frobenius, Hildebrand, Baltzer, Boerschmann, and Döhring insistently framed their activities as contributions to a world history of art offers us some clues for interpreting their work. Alongside the better-known idealist tradition of nineteenth-century art history in Germany, there existed a school that situated art within the complexities of social life and gave it an agentive role with respect to religious and cultural life. This art history was inspired by the Humboldtian idea of a history of culture that included the “less developed and the ruined . . . as witness of the century in question.” In this school of thought, empirical observation and documentation were valued. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, ethnography, archaeology, philology, and other disciplines concerned with the transhistorical study of humankind enabled art history to fulfill its latent potential to know the entire world. But the growth of these fields posed a challenge to classical humanism and the centrality of Rome in European history. In their new focus on non-European cultures, the architects discussed in this chapter were responding to the so-called Indo-European thesis that posited common linguistic and cultural origins for Europe and Asia. Differences in methodology and conclusions about a world history of art took on a strident tone in 1901 when Strzygowski claimed, on the basis of field research, that the origin of Indo-European culture and architecture lay in Iran. The architectural ethnographies of Frobenius, Hildebrand, Baltzer, Boerschmann, and Döhring can be read as part of this politically charged debate.

These five were not the only architects to pursue this line of thinking, and the African continent, Japan, China, and Siam were not the only subjects of architectural ethnography. Because of its liminal geography and history, and the concerted reform campaign it embarked on in the 1830s, the Ottoman Empire also became a crucial site for transcultural architectural encounters. During his tours of Spain, Sicily, and North Africa in the 1840s, the German architect Carl von Diebitsch paid particular attention to potential links between European medieval architecture and Islamic traditions. Diebitsch’s itinerary was unconventional and embodied
changes in the European Enlightenment worldview and the global world order. As a result of his travels and research, Diebitsch became convinced that Islamic architecture was historically linked to European architecture and, because it was amenable to abstraction and industrial production, offered the makings of a universally relevant modern architectural language. On the invitation of the viceroy of Egypt, Isma’il Pasha, who was determined to modernize Egypt, Diebitsch relocated to Cairo in 1862, where he designed, among other buildings, a cast-iron kiosk at Gezira Palace. The kiosk was composed of generic Islamic forms and details such as a hypostyle hall and an octagonal roof lantern. His buildings in Egypt and back at home in Germany and his contributions to the London Exposition of 1862 and the 1867 Parisian expositions all embody an effort to articulate the content of a modern Islamic style. Scholars have only recently rediscovered Diebitsch, but there is consensus that the architect had a deep and comprehensive understanding of Islamic architecture that was a direct result of on-site observation and documentation in combination with his intellectual formation at the Bauakademie in Berlin. It is unclear whether he used ethnographic methods beyond standard techniques such as field measurement and drawing. Yet Diebitsch, even at this early date and without the institutional apparatus of a colonial state to support him, subscribed to the pernicious imperialist notion that the Orient could somehow rejuvenate Europe. We cannot entirely dismiss the colonial and imperial presumptions and implications of Diebitsch’s work if, as scholars of German colonialism and transnational history have suggested repeatedly, German state and society were already mired in complex asymmetrical global linkages early in the nineteenth century.

Some years into Diebitsch’s Cairo interlude, a notice in the Centralblatt reported on a government master builder, August Jasmund, who had taken leave from his duties at home to embark on a “study tour to the Orient.” Jasmund played a role similar to that of the architects discussed in this chapter in that he combined “archaeological studies” with “design work and construction execution” and later went into the service of the Ottoman government. In addition to large public works commissioned by the state, small private commissions, and an academic post at the Civil Service School of Engineering in Istanbul, Jasmund collected art for German museums. His earlier travels and studies of pre-Ottoman and Ottoman monuments in Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa, Izmir, Pergamon, and other sites likely inspired his occasional use of generic “oriental” motifs like the onion domes and horseshoe arches in Sirkeci Station in Istanbul (1889–1890), and elements from classic Ottoman mansions in his villas in Istanbul in the first years of the 1900s. No publications have been at-
tributed to Jasmund so far, however. In fact, Jasmund was one of the first of about two hundred German-speaking architects and engineers invited to Turkey to contribute their expertise to Turkish modernization efforts between the end of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth.\textsuperscript{123} Diebitsch and Jasmund’s activities take on a new light if we position them within a constellation of similar practices by German architects working as foreign experts in China, Egypt, Japan, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire, and if we consider the impact of their foreign work on architectural discourse in Germany itself. The careers of these architects paint a new picture of the reach of German architectural discourse and practice at the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet it is still not clear why architects like Döhring and Boerschmann moved outside the conventional scope of architectural work to pursue architectural ethnography. As I suggest below, the state of architectural education and professional practice in Germany, in addition to the larger political and economic context already mentioned, may have favored this development.

\textbf{THE GRAND TOUR AND THE PROFESSION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY}

Travel was the common denominator in architectural ethnographic work. But travel, of course, has a long and colorful history as a component of Western architectural education. A 1989 essay by architectural historian Edward Kaufman traces the links between travel, travel writing, ethnographic research, and cultural and symbolic capital in architects’ professional lives in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England.\textsuperscript{124} Kaufman describes the antiquarian tradition of making short expeditions to France from a comfortable base in a nearby city in England as one model for architectural travel. Another model imitated the “voyage of exploration.” These voyages required large investments of money and time as well as lengthy and comprehensive preparation, and often entailed exposure to danger. Architectural travel to sites like Palmyra and Baalbek in the eastern Mediterranean usually followed this paradigm. The grand tour offered a third and overlapping model for architectural travel. This was the mode enjoyed by elite gentlemen with the cooperation of a “dense infrastructure of support personnel,” including paid draftsmen.\textsuperscript{125}

These models of travel also shaped architectural education in Germany. German architectural travel, which became a noticeable trend around 1600, first grew out of the intimate economic relationship between northern Italy and southern Germany. Following an arduous route over the
Alps, the “artistic Italian tour” continued relatively unabated until the late seventeenth century when the German gentry and, later, middle class adopted the English grand tour. As a consequence, German itineraries expanded to include the Netherlands and France and travel acquired broader cultural, economic, and political significance. In addition to the existing models, German architects traveled in a variety of roles—as members of diplomatic missions, agents collecting art for or studying antiquities as a prelude to service to their benefactors, or during the course of military service. However, a formalized means of architectural-educational travel comparable to the French Prix de Rome (established at the end of the seventeenth century) did not exist in Germany for a long time.\(^{126}\) Eighteenth-century architect Johann Fischer von Erlach is perhaps the best-known German-speaking architect-traveler. His trips to Rome, Berlin, and London were indispensable for his subsequent professional development. It was during these tours that Fischer von Erlach was exposed to the material that he synthesized in his treatise *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur*, one of the first architectural histories to discuss Arabic, Chinese, Egyptian, Persian, Siamese, and Turkish traditions.\(^{127}\)

Architectural travel acquired a special importance in the nineteenth century as capitalism and industrialization transformed global political and economic relations, restructured German society, and caused the expansion and specialization of building markets, and the reorganization of the architectural profession and architectural education in Germany. Industrial structures usurped cathedrals and palaces in reformulated travel itineraries. For this reason, German architects became fascinated with the United States, which had become a leading industrial nation. Furthermore, architects reevaluated medieval architecture in response to contemporary debates about style, and Romanesque and Gothic buildings in Germany became destinations in the architectural study tour. The Italian tour continued but was transformed from its original purpose of providing direct inspiration for architectural design to its now-familiar role in architectural history education. Lastly, the nineteenth century inaugurated another phase in a history of German architectural travel that remained fundamentally unchanged except for the expansion of its geographical and material scope—the inclusion of the “Orient” and North Africa. Architectural historian Simon Paulus attributes this change to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, Ottoman Turkey, Morocco, and Japan featured prominently in the travel itineraries of the late nineteenth century. According to Paulus, German architects rarely traveled to Central Asia, India, or Indochina, leaving these regions to ethnographers and art historians.\(^{128}\) We must, however,
adjust Paulus’s history to include the architect-ethnographers discussed in this chapter, and the more than forty-five German architects and engineers who worked in Siam during Döhring’s sojourn. This chapter tries to account for the kind of travel represented by an architect identified only by the name “Forstmann” in Ranchi, India, who sent a letter to the German Colonial Society in 1914 inquiring about emigration to the German colonies, and other yet-to-be identified protagonists of Germany’s global architectural history.129

Kaufman’s discussion of the English context is useful for interpreting architectural travel in late nineteenth-century Germany. According to Kaufman, eighteenth-century English architectural travelers apprehended the sites they visited in topographical terms. Even when looking at objects of known antique origin, they discussed them in terms of the present and the distinctive local cultures to which they belonged. These travelers employed a process of “wandering, choosing, and collecting” that was reflected in their emphasis on itineraries and gazetteers and in the nondevelopmental narratives that they produced. Notably—and this is a point that Kaufman does not develop—this topographical approach coincided with Britain’s Industrial Revolution. As Mary Louise Pratt has explained, “the systematic surface mapping of the globe correlates with an expanding search for commercially exploitable resources, markets, and land to colonize.”130 In contrast, a concern with chronology replaced the preoccupation with topography in nineteenth-century English architectural travel. This change coincided with a new scientific interest in exploring time encapsulated in disciplines like archaeology, geology, and ethnography.

Publications by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century German architects returning from “the East” share some characteristics with Kaufman’s English architectural travel accounts. For example, German authors legitimized their claims to authority by repeatedly attesting to their presence in the field.131 Döhring, for instance, relied on photographs of himself, his wife, or local children and monks to offer the reader a sense of scale, and corroborate his role as a bearer of authentic knowledge.132 Similarly, Baltzer’s emphasis on his difficulties reading Japanese follows the convention of recounting hardship as a way to claim authority. Lastly, both the eighteenth-century British architectural travelers and turn-of-the-century German authors explicitly set themselves apart from previous traditions of travel. Based on his analysis of the process of architectural travel and its afterlife through publications, artifactual souvenirs, and new approaches to design and construction based on evidence accumulated during travel, Kaufman explains why this was the
case: “Travel was instituted as a basis for professional authority, [and] a contest began for control of travel knowledge, pitting architects and architectural experts not only against travel promoters or ‘admiralties,’ but against other experts.”

As I have already suggested, professional authority and travel-based knowledge were similarly interdependent for turn-of-the-century German architect-ethnographers. Döhring experienced this effect with his transformation from mere technician to professor to celebrity, as suggested in a statement by his sister: “In the meantime, mother was at Karl’s in Berlin and helped him with the publication of his second volume on Siam. Mother was introduced to the brother of the Siamese king and, through a translator, had a great conversation with him. The place was teeming with excellencies, privy councilors, representatives of museums, art, and technical institutes.” The transformation was complete in Döhring’s case, as he never again practiced architecture after his return to Germany. His ten-year-long attempt to organize another expedition to Southeast Asia is evidence that he now perceived himself as an art historian and ethnographer with little interest in technical matters. Döhring later enjoyed a career that relied on his knowledge of Siam’s people, culture, and landscapes—as a writer of exotic fiction.

Nevertheless, the goals and strategies of German architects on the historic Italian tour differed from those of architect-ethnographers. First, architect-ethnographers conceived and experienced travel in terms of a single destination (e.g., “Japan”) even though they often toured in and around this destination. Second, while temporary employment played a role in earlier forms of architectural travel, especially in cases where architect-travelers had to find ways to support themselves en route, architect-ethnographers first secured professional work before they undertook travel. Finally, though documentation had always been an important facet of architectural travel, architect-ethnographers focused on architecture’s relationship to culture instead of merely documenting “spatial and constructive structure, joints, material use, building technology, and functional solutions.” This new form of architectural travel was therefore linked to developments in politics, economics, science, and new travel technologies.

There were also changes to the structure of the architecture profession in late nineteenth-century Germany that might have encouraged architectural ethnographic travel. In the eighteenth century, state employees (Baubeamten), court architects, and private artisanal master builders (Baumeister) all practiced architecture. In the nineteenth century, industrialization led to the expansion and disaggregation of the profession
into a contentious body of Baubeamten, private architects, and building contractors. The growth of the middle classes created a market for private architects, but this market was only a small percentage of the total market that state architects and technicians monopolized. It seems likely that external markets, especially those with flexible rules governing professional practice (as would have been assumed for places like China, Japan, and Siam and was certainly the case in the official German colonies), would have been attractive to architects seeking alternative employment opportunities.

Changes in architectural education accompanied these changes in the structure of professional practice. As technical skills became more desirable, architectural education moved from art academies to new higher technical institutes. Even as the architectural profession supported this change, however, some constituencies criticized what they saw as an excessive emphasis on technical over artistic knowledge at the new schools and envisioned ways to reinfuse the curriculum with artistic content and “neohumanist educational values.” By so doing, architects hoped to gain the cultural and social capital associated with artistic and intellectual pursuits—capital that they previously had access to.

With the probability of earning a regular salary and maintaining an affiliation with the Prussian Foreign Office, architectural ethnographic travel might have appeared attractive especially to the growing number of architects and engineers from modest family backgrounds. Adventure, the “irresistible calling” that earlier European explorers and grand tourists had followed, may also have been an incentive. For the technician turned architectural ethnographer or art historian, research and the possibility of publication implied social and cultural gains. This was the case with each architect-ethnographer discussed in this chapter, but it was most discernible with Boerschmann, who became a public intellectual because of the popular appeal of his subject and the accessibility of his photographically illustrated books.

Existing scholarship on the German architectural profession between 1848 and 1918 does not explain the foreign activities of architects like Hermann Frobenius, Hildebrand, Baltzer, Boerschmann, or Döhring. This is the case even though scholars are aware that German technical expertise was highly sought during this period. There are three explanations for this omission: (1) since these architects worked abroad only briefly before returning to Germany, their standard professional biographies may not
reflect their foreign service; (2) German architects who worked abroad did not count among the leading architects of the period and are therefore not represented in canonical histories; (3) German architects abroad were an insignificant minority and thus do not appear in historical surveys. All of the above explanations apply in my estimation. I do not believe, however, that statistical insignificance obviates the fruitfulness of considering this topic. Even if the number of German architects working abroad was insignificant in proportion to the total number of architects in Germany, it is conceivable that just as these architects may have had a disproportionate impact on their host countries, they also influenced architectural culture back at home.

It is significant that the architectural ethnographers discussed in this chapter generally traveled to nations that were still independent of European rule—places such as Siam, China, Japan, and the Ottoman Empire, which themselves embarked on modernization projects in order to stave off European incursion. Several factors contributed to this situation, including the fact that Europeans had limited access to east Asia until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Germany was especially slow to breach these barriers. Thus, the production of architectural ethnographies coincided with a newfound political and economic openness to the West. This was not the case, of course, with most regions of Africa, which had long been subject to European exploration and colonization. European trading companies had already plundered Africa’s human and natural resources and explorers like Nachtigal and Barth had long discovered its scientific riches before the Frobeniuses joined the fray.

But why did these architects choose the medium of architectural ethnography? Here, I would like to reintroduce the noble savage trope that appears repeatedly in architectural ethnographies. We see it, for example, in Baltzer’s assertion that Japanese architectural traditions would reinvigorate German thinking. What made these non-European architectural cultures desirable (the “noble” in “noble savage”) was that they seemed to embody a harmony between self and environment that was missing in contemporary Europe. Architects such as Baltzer and Hildebrand understood ethnography as a tool to rediscover this harmony.

It is difficult to trace how the architectural ethnographies discussed in this chapter were disseminated and used. The texts and their authors are mentioned in German colonial newspapers and magazines and were available to the public at the German Colonial Society’s library in Berlin. They are also cited as sources of expert knowledge in the encyclopedic colonial documentation project German Colonial Lexicon (1920). But colonial supporters were not the only ones who found them useful: the
authors repeatedly identify architects as their target audience. To reach this audience, they published in architecture journals, lectured to professional organizations, and participated in exhibitions. Their work was also known in ethnographic and art historical circles. Together, architect-ethnographers formed a close-knit network of knowledge producers. Boerschmann knew of and likely met Hildebrand during his travels. Baltzer was asked to comment on Boerschmann’s application for funding and the two experts eventually coorganized, in 1927, an exhibition about architecture and religion in east Asia. Not surprisingly, Boerschmann knew of and admired Döhring’s work in Siam. These links are manifested in the intertextuality of the texts themselves: Boerschmann states explicitly that he modeled his book on Hildebrand’s and Baltzer’s prior contributions. All three texts therefore made their way into Taut’s Die Stadtkrone (1919), which reprints two of Boerschmann’s illustrations. Taut may also have drawn on Baltzer’s Das japanische Haus (1903) when he published a similar title, Houses and People of Japan (1937). Furthermore, the intertextuality of the texts parallels the archival logic of architecture. Mies, for example, absorbed Leo Frobenius’s work, which had itself been shaped by Hermann Frobenius’s Kulturkreis analysis of African architecture. Eduard Kögel has also identified several instances in which practicing architects in Germany and abroad mined Hildebrand and Boerschmann’s texts for formal, spatial, and philosophical models.

Beyond these traces, we may never be able to speak conclusively about how architectural ethnographies affected architects, but we cannot ignore their existence. The examples summarized in this chapter contributed to the formation of an archive of knowledge about non-European architecture that subsequent generations of German architects—including Taut, Mies, and others—cannibalized as they articulated a new architecture for the modern age. Reversing the imperial gaze enables us to recognize the proliferation of architectural ethnographic knowledge at the beginning of the twentieth century, destabilizes our assumptions about the origins and effects of ideas and forms, and begs a reconsideration of the genealogy of modern architecture in Germany.
PLATE 1. STEREOSCOPIC VIEW OF “CAIRO” EXHIBIT, BERLIN TRADE EXHIBITION, 1896, SHOWING A REPLICA OF THE GREAT PYRAMID OF CHEOPS. THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN WHEN KAISER WILHELM II AND KAISERIN AUGUSTE VIKTORIA VISITED THE EXHIBIT. COURTESY OF STIFTUNG DEUTSCHES HISTORISCHES MUSEUM.
PLATE 2. POSTCARD, “CAIRO,” BERLIN TRADE EXHIBITION, 1896, SHOWING REPLICA OF QAYTBAY MOSQUE (BUILT 1488) WITH ITS DISTINCTIVE MINARET ON THE LEFT. POSTCARD FROM AUTHOR’S COLLECTION.
PLATE 3. POSTCARD DEPICTING AN “INDIAN COFFEEHOUSE” FROM CARL HAGENBECK’S INDIA SHOW HELD AT THE KURFÜRSTENDAMM IN BERLIN IN 1898. NOTE THE ARCHES, CHATRIS, DOMES, AND DELICATE CRENELLATIONS OF THE PARAPET WALLS OF THE MUGHAL-INSPIRED ARCHITECTURE. COURTESY OF DEUTSCHES HISTORISCHES MUSEUM.
PLATE 5. CONFUCIUS TEMPLE, QUFU, DRAWING BY ERNST BOERSCHMANN. BASED ON ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTATION AND ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK. BOERSCHMANN’S DRAWING REAPPEARS IN BRUNO TAUT’S DIE STADTKRONE (1919). COURTESY OF EMILY KACHHOLZ.
PLATE 6. MEN’S HOUSE, PALAU ISLANDS, WATERCOLOR BY ELISABETH KRÄMER-BANNOW. KRÄMER-BANNOW ACCOMPANIED HER ANTHROPOLOGIST HUSBAND ON SEVERAL EXPEDITIONS TO THE PACIFIC. COURTESY OF MUSEUM FÜR VÖLKERKUNDE, HAMBURG.
PLATE 7. CHRISTOPH & UNMACK “WOCHENENDEHAUS” DESIGNED BY HANS POELZIG, 1927. THIS FLAT-ROOFED, VERANDAED BUILDING REAPPROPRIATES CHRISTOPH & UNMACK’S PREFABRICATED SYSTEM AND TROPICAL FORMS FOR USE IN GERMANY. COURTESY OF ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM DER TECHNISCHEN UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN, INV.-NR. 3435.
PLATE 8. CHRISTOPH & UNMACK CATALOG COVER, CA. 1930S. CHRISTOPH & UNMACK SENT PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS TO MANY REGIONS OF AFRICA, SOUTH AMERICA, NORTH AMERICA, ASIA, AND OCEANIA. COURTESY OF MUSEUM NIESKY.
CHAPTER 3

Heimatschutz and the Competition for Colonial Architecture

“Cultural Work,” “All Power to the Fatherland,” “Bird of Paradise,”
“Lucie Woermann,” “Queen Augusta,” “Colony & Homeland,” “Apia,”
“Good Ventilation,” “Over the Waves,” “Four Little Negroes,” “As Far as a
German Flag Waves,” “Arcadia,” “Yaounde,” “Safe and Strong,” “Black
White,” “From the Tropics for the Tropics,” “The Form Born from the
Object,” “Deutschland über alles,” “Equator,” “Tropical House,” “Fu-
ture,” “Waterberg,” “Nigger,” “German Land in Africa,” “Not a Pontok,”
“Colonization,” “Simple and Unadorned,” “Pro patria,” “Garden City,”
“Zulu,” “Master and Slave,” “Type.”

—List of competition entries submitted to
German Colonial Society, summer 1914

Approximately four hundred designs were submitted by German archi-
tects to a competition organized by the German Colonial Society in
the summer of 1914. Keywords used to describe these designs spanned
a range of themes from distinctly architectural terms like “type” to bla-
tantly patriotic mottoes such as “Deutschland über alles” and overtly
racist descriptors such as “Nigger.” Used in place of participants’ names,
these keywords enabled a blind review of competition entries. They also
encapsulated the essence of each design in the mind of its creator, and
therefore opened a window into each participant’s understanding of the
overall goals of the competition: to generate a new approach to archi-
tecture in the German colonies that took into consideration the colonial
context as well as the specific purpose for which each building was being
designed. In other words, the goal of the competition was to apply ideas
about architectural reform that were beginning to take shape in Germany
to the colonies. As it turned out, however, some of these ideas were al-
ready emerging on the colonial periphery.

The Colonial Society was a philanthropic organization founded in
1887. It aimed to promote colonialism for the good of all Germans, many
of whom, it was believed, simply did not grasp the benefits of colonialism.³
The society was involved in many arts-related projects during its forty-
nine-year existence—it was a major player in the 1896 colonial exhibition in Berlin, funded construction projects in Southwest Africa, subsidized the publication of colonial literature, and much more. However, the 1914 competition and the exhibition of winning entries that followed constituted the society’s most significant foray into architecture. One influential member of the Colonial Society, Professor Adolf von Oechelhaeuser, spearheaded the Colonial Society’s effort.

Oechelhaeuser was born to an aristocratic family in Mülheim in Baden-Württemberg in 1852. He studied architecture and engineering at the Bauakademie in Charlottenburg and the polytechnic in Hanover, but later became interested in art history. Following his studies, he taught at the institutes of technology at Heidelberg and Karlsruhe and became rector of the latter in 1919. Oechelhaeuser’s greatest contribution was to merge his professional work with civic service through his work with the Bund Heimatschutz, the Congress for Historic Preservation (Tagung für Denkmalpflege), and the Colonial Society. As chair of the Congress for Historic Preservation, he increased membership levels and popularized the idea of preservation. It was under his leadership that the congress merged with the Bund Heimatschutz in 1922. In fact, he saw this unified approach to cultural heritage management as his greatest accomplishment. Now, with the help of new members across the country, historic monuments could be conserved as part of an inclusive heritage preservation effort.

As chair of the Karlsruhe branch of the Colonial Society, Oechelhaeuser first raised the issue of the poor quality of architecture in the German colonies at a December 1912 meeting. After some debate, society members agreed to forward his proposal to establish building advisory bureaus in the colonies to the Imperial Colonial Office, who promised to implement the new idea. Next, Oechelhaeuser introduced the problem to the Congress for Historic Preservation, who in turn sought advice from professional architecture organizations. Even the organizers of the 1913 International Building Trades Exhibition (IBA) in Leipzig heard about Oechelhaeuser’s critique of colonial architecture. By November 1913 the Colonial Society had agreed to a request from the German Werkbund to cosponsor a model colonial house at its upcoming exhibition in Cologne. Colonial Society leaders believed the Werkbund project would advance Oechelhaeuser’s cause. Additionally, the society decided to host a competition whose winning entries would be displayed inside the model colonial house. The competition took place in July 1914 and Oechelhaeuser served on both the committee that organized the competition and the commission responsible for the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion in Cologne.
How did it come to pass that this academic architect who, as far as we know, had never visited the colonies became the main advocate of colonial architectural reform? By all accounts, Oechelhaeuser was deeply engaged in the pressing issues of his discipline. He developed a personal relationship with Kaiser Wilhelm II built around a friendly dispute about the merits of reviving historic styles versus creating an architectural language that embodied modern times. In opposition to the Kaiser’s efforts to restore the ruined sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German Renaissance castle at Heidelberg that had become an icon of romantic nationalism, Oechelhaeuser declared: “Art is not an arbitrary product but much more the product of specific times, places, climates, and cultural conditions; the artistic act does not spring from the inspiration of a single individual . . . our times have the same right to independent artistic life expressions as earlier periods.”

Oechelhaeuser’s statement condensed many nineteenth-century architectural debates. Like his better-known art history colleague Cornelius Gurlitt, Oechelhaeuser supported reform in the arts at the same time that he promoted Heimatschutz (homeland protection) and historic preservation. As architectural historian Christian Otto and others have pointed out, early German modernism’s ambivalence toward tradition was embodied in Heimatschutz.

Oechelhaeuser’s critique of architecture in the German colonies was quoted in the colonial press and discussed widely in colonial circles. It is worth quoting here in order to assess how it blended colonial ideology with the rhetorics of Heimatschutz and modern architecture: “The Imperial Colonial Office will be asked to ensure that buildings that are constructed in the colonies, both public and private, suit the character of the country more than before in their outward appearance, especially regarding materials and built form, which should be carried out more in view of a contextual [bodenständig] architecture.” In this minimanifesto, Oechelhaeuser called on the Colonial Society to embark on “colonial Heimatschutz,” “protect the colonial home,” and prevent the “shameful treatment of the image of the place and landscape.” The latter formulation, with its emphasis on perceiving places and landscapes holistically and preserving their “image,” was a distinctive Heimatschutz construct.

From its foundation in 1904, the Bund Heimatschutz tried to counteract the negative effects of modern industrial life on traditional German culture. It problematized the relationship between people, culture, and environment by promoting environmental conservation, lobbying for urban development regulations, and promoting folk dress and customs. The league drew its ideological force from the concept of Heimat,
or “homeland.” The concept was developed in the eighteenth century, embraced by the romantics, and revived again at the end of the nineteenth century. As Germanist Celia Applegate posits, Heimat became the locus of a fundamentally modern German discourse about belonging and identity. Attachment to Heimat was a mechanism for the middle class to reconcile modern industrial urban life with familiar rural landscapes and long-established practices, and to create a new understanding of community that bridged local, regional, and national identities.

But Heimat was not just an abstract idea. It had material and physical ramifications: Germans believed that they had a distinctive symbiotic relationship with their landscape that defined who they were as a people. Pursuant of these convictions, the Bund Heimatschutz was at the forefront of discussions about contemporary buildings and cities. It criticized both revivalist and willfully modern buildings, and promoted “technically and practically healthy and thereby aesthetically satisfactory buildings,” created by appropriating “viable elements of contextual [bodenständig] building practices.”

Like Heimat, the term bodenständig is crucial for understanding ideas about culture, the arts, and the built environment in Germany at this moment. Oechelhaeuser used the term in his call for colonial architecture reform. Literally translated, bodenständig means “rooted in the soil.” In late nineteenth-century discussions about the built environment, the term referred to practices and forms whose origins could be traced through the history and the geography of German-speaking peoples. For Heimatschutz proponents like Oechelhaeuser, Bodenständigkeit (the state of being bodenständig) did not require a rigid dedication to the past, but rather implied an architectural sensibility that was in principle continuous with the past. It stands to reason then that Heimatschutzers could also advocate architectural reform: many of the first generation of modernists, from Hermann Muthesius to Theodor Fischer, supported Heimatschutz until it acquired a decidedly retrograde association in the 1920s. Oechelhaeuser and the Colonial Society, however, took the extraordinary step of connecting ideas about Heimat, Bodenständigkeit, and modern architecture to colonialism.

Oechelhaeuser also framed his proposal in terms of another reformist idea, “cultural work” (Kulturarbeit). The term shows up repeatedly in documents, professional journals, and newspapers and magazines from the period. In a critical exegesis on the cultural reform industry, the conservative Austrian Catholic philosopher Richard von Kralik agreed theoretically with the need to discover a modern way of being, but objected vigorously to the “violent means” through which his contemporaries tried to enforce their views. He argued that the entire political, artistic, and
scientific tenor of the German-speaking world had turned to oppressing the public through a negative Kulturarbeit polemic: “Every poster, monument, picture, new architecture, modern drama, new poem, new musical composition,” seems to have the sole purpose of challenging the rest of the world.14 Kralik’s description certainly captures the ambience created by Heimatschutz activity, the Lebensreform (lifestyle reform) movement, the Kunstlererziehung (artist education) movement, and other reform initiatives of the Wilhelmine era. This notion of cultural work as a mandate for the educated classes to “elevate” society was especially attractive to reform-minded architects, including members of the radical Werkbund. Paul Schultze-Naumburg, for example, notoriously named his manifesto, Kulturarbeiten (published 1900–1917), after this concept. Interestingly, colonial lobbyists also used the term Kulturarbeit to describe and justify German colonialism. For them Kulturarbeit was about nurturing the image of Germany as a cultured nation by spreading German culture in the “uncivilized” world.15 This was the German equivalent to the British and French “civilizing mission” and “white man’s burden.”16 As this chapter illustrates, social reform, colonialism, and modern architecture in Germany merged around the concepts of Kulturarbeit and Heimatschutz.

THE MEANING OF COLONIAL HEIMATSCHUTZ

If Heimat was a distinctly German concept connected to ideas of identity and belonging and place, then what could Heimatschutz mean in the context of the German colonies? If Heimatschutz discourse was concerned with nurturing the genius loci, then how did advocates of colonial Heimatschutz reconcile it with the basic premise of colonial ideology, that colonized people were devoid of any culture of their own? Below, I describe four colonial Heimatschutz scenarios and place Oechelhaeuser’s call for reform in colonial architecture in this context.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, German museums and private individuals avidly collected ancient and contemporary artifacts from societies outside Europe. Their impulse to collect was spurred by many factors, including a desire to salvage cultures that seemed to be disappearing under pressure from Westernization. Heimatschutz espoused something quite different from this kind of preservation. Whereas museums accepted the loss of cultural heritage as something inevitable, Heimatschutz implied the possibility of mitigating such losses. To do this, Heimatschutz proposed to reconcile tradition and modernity.
The ethnologist Leo Frobenius was one of few German scholars to advocate something akin to colonial Heimatschutz. His vehement proclamations that Africans rather than Europeans were the original beneficiaries of culture went against the intellectual currents of his time. He claimed that Africa was once home to great civilizations that had declined over time, but argued that some traces remained—for example, in the richness of Yoruba culture. The job of the ethnologist was to cull and preserve these remnants and trace their genealogies. Frobenius documented African cultural practices and objects in order to locate them in a universal taxonomy. Yet Frobenius’s thinking was full of contradiction. He believed in the “white man’s burden” but also decried the deleterious effects of Westernization on these traces of Africa’s greatness: to him, the image of the “trouser-wearing negro” (Hosenneger) in West Africa exemplified the worst aspects of colonial modernity. For this reason and based on his wide knowledge of African material culture, he advocated that colonial governments promote local industries like wood- and metalworking rather than import European consumer goods. His interest in preserving African culture was deeply personal in the sense that he built his entire career on the premise of Africa’s former greatness and on the backs of his own and others’ collections. But his work also encouraged the physical preservation of these objects, their dissemination across the world, and increased knowledge about the cultures to which they belonged. His contributions can still be found in museums in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Leipzig today. However, his opposition to colonial modernity distinguishes his ideas from a Heimatschutz-inspired ideal of preservation.

A 1913 article from *Der Kunstwart*, titled “Heimatschutz in die deutschen Kolonien,” comes closest to Oechelhäusser’s sentiments about reforming colonial architecture. *Der Kunstwart* was one of the best known of a new genre of print journalism that targeted an increasingly reform-conscious bourgeois public. It was in the pages of this periodical that many of the foundational ideas of the Heimatschutz movement were publicized, so the appearance of references to colonialism in this context attests to reformers’ interests in the topic. Elisabeth Krämer-Bannow, the author of the article, was an amateur ethnologist who had accompanied her anthropologist husband, Augustin Krämer, on several expeditions to the Pacific between 1906 and 1910. As a photographer and watercolor artist in her husband’s expedition party, Krämer-Bannow performed one of few roles available to independent, adventurous German women interested in colonial activity. She is also one of few female voices in the discourse of German colonial architecture and her contributions are notable for this reason.
From the outset, Krämer-Bannow firmly links her interest in preserving indigenous cultures in the colonies to ongoing efforts in Germany to protect “antique buildings and historic sites of unspoiled nature” from the corrupting influence of capitalism. She declares that there are two good reasons for pursuing colonial Heimatschutz. The first is a predominantly moral argument that appeals to the superior wisdom and cultural character of the European. Here, preservation hinges on the intrinsic value of the “beautiful, rich, primordial character” of these societies, which only civilized Europeans could appreciate. “Primordial” has a hidden value here, however. This is the “primordial” of Humboldtian universal human history that grants societies outside Europe a place in history. But it bears a close resemblance to the “contemporary ancestor” idea that valued indigenous southern hemisphere cultures only because they allegedly represented the last vestiges of Europe’s own prehistory. Krämer-Bannow’s second justification for Heimatschutz is simple fiscal commonsense: it is in Germany’s best interest to keep indigenous people “in their own living conditions,” and with the “inborn peculiarities” and customs they have developed through the ages, in order to nurture a viable, long-term labor force for Germany. According to Krämer-Bannow, German and American traders, missionaries, and settlers introduced a variety of practices that eroded indigenous lifeways in the South Seas. European collecting, European dress, pidgin English, and architecture were all culprits.

Architecture in particular was tangible evidence of the destruction that Krämer-Bannow witnessed. She lamented the new “board shacks” that Pacific Islanders were building to replace “carefully built” forms inherited from their forefathers. On the island of Ponape (one of the Caroline Islands and part of the German Pacific colony), the “once highly developed weaving has stopped, and the wonderful old houses are seldom. One sees true monstrosities of imitation European houses everywhere.” One wonders if what was at stake for Krämer-Bannow was, as Homi Bhabha has suggested in his work, the fact that indigenous attempts to mimic European cultural codes revealed just how flimsy colonial claims to power were. Luckily, Krämer-Bannow was happy to report that a few “original people” still existed on the distant coral islands of Palau. Here, she saw “graceful homes made from beams and wickerwork that show greatly refined workmanship. . . . Illustrations of sayings and happenings, which cover the interior of the structural beams and exterior of the gable, reveal artistic sensibilities,” like those she painted in plate 6.
acter of South Seas architecture challenges colonial orthodoxy and the assumption that subaltern cultures are inferior. According to Krämer-Bannow, “anyone” who sees the men’s assembly houses on the Palau islands will surely change his or her mind about “culture-less” Pacific Islanders. Nevertheless, her paternalistic tone and the value she attaches to indigenous peoples and cultures because of their imminent loss are deeply indebted to colonial ideology. Given the pernicious nature of German colonial policies, Krämer-Bannow’s arguments are surprisingly aggressive in their apparent alliance with the interests of the colonized. Her arguments become rather commonplace, however, if we consider them in light of actual German policy in the region. In the precolonial period, German representations of Samoa generally conformed to the noble savage trope. As George Steinmetz points out, this early admiration for Samoan culture shaped subsequent colonial government policies aimed at preserving Samoan culture. So Krämer-Bannow’s 1913 comparison of the Samoan male physique to ancient Greek ideals of beauty was actually a holdover from the nineteenth century. In order to stabilize the uncomfortable codeswitching developed by precolonial Samoans who had interacted with early European visitors, the German colonial administration actually fetishized difference and identified and accentuated what, to their minds, defined Samoan culture. Steinmetz writes of a policy of “regulated traditionalism” that selectively protected some customs and quashed others, and was sometimes even hostile toward modernization. For example, the Samoan colonial government tried, in at least one documented case, to discourage the use of corrugated iron roofing in lieu of traditional materials and techniques. Here too the justification for these policies was ostensibly ethical, but, as Steinmetz shows, the colonial state’s self-styling as a protector of tradition also justified German presence and denied Samoans equality. Steinmetz makes one important caveat concerning the multivocality and “multiaccentuality” of colonial ethno-graphic discourses, which were dependent in part on the class affiliations of various German actors and the differing ways in which they filtered precolonial knowledge and responded to colonial realities. In Samoa, German planters (who generally did not come from the German nobility or the educated middle class) understood Samoans as “ignoble savages” and criticized the government for failing to subdue indigenous people and compel them to work on plantations. Unfortunately for these settlers, the colonial administration was led by a series of powerful governors from educated middle-class and elite backgrounds with correspondingly different views of Samoa. Krämer-Bannow’s call to arms can be seen as a window into tensions between these two constituencies. Clearly everyone did not
heed government policy, as shoddy board shacks mushroomed across the cities and villages of the colony. According to architectural scholar Christoph Schnoor, the private sector was not solely responsible for this modernization. Rather, the colonial state itself implemented a program of modern city building even as it emphasized the importance of preserving Samoan culture.29

On the other hand, Krämer-Bannow’s recuperation of the colonial-indigenous-vernacular was indebted to architectural reform in Germany. This is clear from the distinctive phrasing that she uses. For example, she declares that indigenous South Seas architecture is not only superior in its aesthetic and structural qualities but also well suited to the “manner of the people and land,” and is rooted in the soil (bodenständig), and purposive (zweckmässig).30 Perhaps even more than Bodenständigkeit, the idea of “purposiveness” had a long history in cutting-edge German architectural theory. As early as 1709, Immanuel Kant used the term Zweckmässigkeit to signify a “playful locution between teleological purpose and the nature of aesthetic judgments.”31 Its changing meaning is illustrated in August Schlegel’s proposition that architecture escapes the bounds of mere purpose once its idealized methods, which are not modeled directly on nature, are transformed by creative genius. By the time Krämer-Bannow was writing in 1913, the term had come to describe how suitable a building was to its given purpose. It gave reformist architects another way to frame what they sought in the new architecture. Krämer-Bannow’s argumentation technique links this metropolitan reform idea to colonial practice by juxtaposing photographs of good and bad architecture in the South Seas colonies. For example, she contrasts a photograph of a mean little house built of flimsy boards in modern European style in Samoa with an image of the sheltering core of an indigenous house built from massive tree trunks in Yap in the western Caroline Islands (figure 3.1). The Yap house seems rooted in its site. Its massive supports create an interior that simultaneously protects and transcends its putative inhabitants.32 Here, Krämer-Bannow’s graphic strategy mimics Schultze-Naumburg’s didactic Kulturarbeiten series. Schultze-Naumburg used carefully selected images to inculcate an appreciation of good and bad functions, forms, construction materials, siting, and urban design in his readers. He not only chaired the Bund Heimatschutz but formalized and guided the movement in part through his publications. In fact, Schultze-Naumburg’s Kulturarbeiten was initially published in the same journal that Krämer-Bannow published her essay in, Der Kunstwart. Krämer-Bannow likely modeled her arguments and visual presentation on Schultze-Naumburg’s earlier work.
FIGURE 3.1. COMPARISON OF INDIGENOUS HOUSE IN YAP AND BOARDED HOUSE IN SAMOA. FROM ELISABETH KRÄMER-BANNEW, “HEIMATSCHUTZ IN DIE DEUTSCHEN KOLONIEN,” DER KUNSTWART 26, NO. 19 (1913), APPENDIX. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG.
The pedagogical tendency in Heimatschutz resonated with the didactic undertones in colonial thinking. In an unusual expression of this phenomenon, Krämer-Bannow recommended that “whites” could learn something from the colonized. She advised the colonial government to consult colonial artists and ethnographers, like those discussed in chapters 1 and 2, for advice on building settlements for “whites” in the colonies. These experts, she thought, could easily glean ideas from indigenous informants about building inexpensively, contextually, and purposively. This would “enrich” life in the colonies and “dignify” the colonial built environment. Colonial Heimatschutz was therefore not only concerned with preserving indigenous traditions but also with using these traditions as models for German practice. Ethnography and art were to mediate between indigenous premodern and modern European knowledge, and transmit information from one culture to the other. In this sense, Krämer-Bannow’s polemics were not far removed from those of Frobenius, Boerschmann, and other architect-ethnographers.

Missionaries in the German colonies also developed a preservationist discourse. These religious young men from farming and artisanal backgrounds primarily in southern Germany were some of the first Germans to settle on the African continent. Because of their backgrounds and religious convictions, their desire to prevent the rest of the world from succumbing to the evils of modern life, and their commitment to reaching would-be converts, missionaries wrote dictionaries, translated the Bible into indigenous languages, collected fables, and documented rituals and customs. With this work, they laid the foundation for Western appreciation of African and other non-European cultures. Consider Bruno Gutmann (1876–1966), who worked for the Leipzig Mission Society in German East Africa in the 1900s. He argued that indigenous social structures should be saved from European civilizing initiatives, and extended his thinking to include material cultural forms—like buildings. In the 1910s Gutmann focused his missionary activity, which he supplemented with extensive research on language, legends, customs, and social structure, on the Wachagga ethnic group on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in German East Africa. He published descriptions and analyses of Wachagga houses that resisted the impulse to evaluate their structural and aesthetic rationales on European terms. Instead, he discussed Wachagga architecture as a situated practice deeply connected to communal structure; spiritual system; filial relations; important occasions like marriage, death, and birth; and everyday practices such as cooking and socializing. In Gutmann’s view, what differentiated the Wachagga from contemporary Europeans was that they essentially continued to practice an older
Christian mode of being. Here, in the missionary worldview, African societies again provided an instrument with which to imagine Europe’s past and future. On the ground in German East Africa, Gutmann made every effort to integrate the message of the Christian Church with indigenous social structures and customs. In this spirit, he experimented with hybrid architectural form in a chapel-schoolhouse he designed in Sango, near Moshi.66 Instead of the simple hall plan of other Leipzig Mission churches, the “Wachagga-style” chapel was built on a circular plan from thatch and clay. Photographs show a conical exterior with thatch sheathing interrupted by a continuous clerestory glass window about two-thirds of the way up (cf. figure 1.11). The clerestory marks a modern improvement to the reportedly dark and squalid interior of traditional Wachagga houses.37 By appropriating and reinterpreting Wachagga form in modern European and Christian terms, Gutmann aimed to counteract the decline of Wachagga culture. This was a salvage operation enacted through architecture.

Gutmann’s chapel also became connected to architectural reform in Germany itself. First, a model of the building, discussed in chapter 1, was built as part of the colonial and missionary exhibit at Bugra in Leipzig in the summer of 1914.38 Second, former missionary and colonial supporter August W. Schreiber highlighted the Bugra chapel as the answer to colonial architecture reform. Schreiber directed the North German Mission Society in the early 1900s, and in 1913 founded a group to generate interest in Protestant missionary work in the German colonies. Like Oechelhaeuser, Schreiber was a member of the Colonial Society. He saw himself as a liaison between the lay colonial lobby and the missionary community. Schreiber was present when Oechelhaeuser’s proposal to reform colonial architecture was discussed at a general meeting of the Colonial Society in Danzig in June 1914. Speaking as a former missionary, Schreiber challenged the substance of Oechelhaeuser’s call when he opined, “I would like to convey the friendly request to the committee . . . to achieve a building style that does not simply transmit the European model to the colonies but rather has the effect of developing some African or Australian building style.”39 When he returned home from the Danzig meeting, Schreiber wrote to all mission societies to inform them of his activities. He reported that he had reminded the Colonial Society that missionaries had long designed buildings that were “hygienic” and well suited to the architectural and social mores of their host populations. Though he had no training in architecture and was probably not up to date on recent ideas about architectural reform, Schreiber articulated a critique that was similar in spirit to Oechelhaeuser’s. He singled out one example of mis-
visionary architecture for the Colonial Society to consider as it searched for appropriate models for German colonial architecture: the Wachagga-style chapel at Bugra. Schreiber was quite forceful in his arguments and even circulated a photograph of the chapel to competition organizers. Organizers considered displaying the photograph inside the colonial pavilion at the upcoming Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, or publishing it in the colonial newspaper, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung.* Ultimately, Schreiber’s maneuvering did two things: he reclaimed mission societies’ status as authorities on “tropical building”—a position that they lost after the onset of formal German colonial expansion. Even more crucially, Schreiber criticized Oechelhaeuser’s proposal to apply ideas developed in Germany to the colonies.

**OECHELHAEUSER AND THE COLONIAL SOCIETY ON HEIMATSCHUTZ**

In fact, Oechelhaeuser and his comrades at the Colonial Society considered the meaning of contextualism in colonial architecture very carefully. Paul Staudinger, a member of the executive committee of the Colonial Society and of the commission for the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion, distinguished between Heimatschutz strategies for settler and tropical colonies. Because they had a stronger German presence, settler colonies should follow German architecture traditions more closely, while entirely new architectural ideas should be developed for the tropical colonies. According to this logic, it did not make sense, for instance, to build Chinese-style buildings in relatively heavily German-populated Qingdao. Not only would such buildings be unfamiliar to German colonists but they might even undermine the colonial project by deemphasizing racial and cultural difference. Staudinger’s colleague in the executive committee, the agronomist Dr. Richard Hindorf, suggested an even bolder approach: he declared that everything “proven and purposive” from indigenous buildings in the colonies, such as the “beautiful, large houses” in New Guinea and the “beautiful residences of the Malay,” should be appropriated in European houses in the colonies. Though Hindorf’s suggestion about preserving or selectively modernizing indigenous architecture met with opposition, his comments, like Staudinger’s, illustrate how reformers tried to modulate colonial ideology with reformist ideals.

If colonial Heimatschutz was not about advancing local practic-es then what precisely did it mean? In a sense, Oechelhaeuser’s call for colonial Heimatschutz and contextual and purposive architecture in the colonies continued the tradition of finding redemption for European civ-
ilization anywhere but at home. Colonial Heimatschutz was partly about the failure of Heimatschutz proper in Germany. Oechelhaeuser’s pointed questions to the Colonial Society clarify this point: “Why has the whole Heimatschutz movement come up against such difficulties in Germany? Because we began so late, much too late.” The colonies were an opportunity to try again. There, it was not too late to prevent industry and capitalism from ravaging nature. Getting it right in the colonies would light the way for Germany itself.

As an explanation of how colonial architecture came to be in the distressing state that it was, Oechelhaeuser hypothesized that architects in Germany had not been involved enough in the colonies, which consequently lagged behind Germany. When German architects deigned to consider the colonies, they simply replicated the “style architecture” of their homeland, without thought for appropriate form, climate, or materials. In a rather lyrical speech, Oechelhaeuser declared, “One does not want fairytale-like gothic brick churches on the steppes of Southwest [Africa], or in the highlands of Cameroon, or on the slopes of the African mountains. One does not want Berlin Tiergarten villas replicated in the colonies or Black Forest houses smuggled into the image of the tropical landscape.”

For the initiated, Oechelhaeuser’s reference to “style architecture” was ripe with meaning. Werkbund founder, Prussian bureaucrat, and architect Hermann Muthesius popularized the term in his 1902 book, Stilarchitektur und Baukunst. Muthesius transformed a century-long search for a new style into a condemnation of the very idea of style itself, and propagated the concept of Baukunst (building art) in its place. Where “style architecture” was cacophonous and arbitrary, Baukunst was “the systematic investigation of the different needs, conditions and types created by the industrial culture.” In describing the problem with colonial architecture, Oechelhaeuser appropriates Muthesius’s denigration of “style architecture” almost verbatim: “the word ‘style’ must fall completely by the wayside,” he states. Oechelhaeuser’s whipping boys are similar to Muthesius’s: the rabid eclecticism of Berlin’s Tiergarten villas, gothic revival, Jugendstil, and so on. Where Muthesius and other reformers in Germany objected to the slavish imitation of aristocratic taste in the “little gables, diminutive bays, and miniature towers” (Giebelchen, Erkerchen, Türmchen) of Arnold Hartmann’s Max H. Meier House (1897) in the Berlin suburb of Grunewald, for example, Oechelhaeuser was thinking of the picturesque tower and half-timbered façade of buildings like the Finke Residence in Windhoek’s villa district seen in figure 3.2. Where Paul Wallot’s neobaroque Reichstag (1884–1894) in Berlin illustrated the
state’s ill-advised investment in monumental, heavily ornamented, public buildings, the neo-Palladian Government House of Buea showed that the colonial government was similarly predisposed to “architectural Wilhelminism.” Germans were not the only people building in this way in the colonies, though: the “Jugendstil sideboard” and “overstuffed furniture” in the home of German-educated Prince Rudolf Douala Manga Bell in Douala, Cameroon, showed that the colonial elite had absorbed the lessons of German historicism. In fact, Oechelhaeuser felt that the idea of style was more offensive in the colonies, where Germany’s historical styles were completely unmoored, than in Europe, where social and technical developments had simply overtaken architectural tradition. In the colonial context, the problems with German architecture became clearer.

In addition to German architects’ failure to attend to the colonies, reformers postulated that those designing and building in the colonies were also at fault for the state of colonial architecture. Very few trained ar-
architects actually worked in the colonies. Instead, engineers, low-ranking technicians, and private construction companies did the design work. On the other end of the spectrum of colonial architecture were professionals such as Friedrich Gurlitt (1865–1942). Gurlitt, who was born in Germany, was the second director of the German East African building department in Dar es Salaam. He took over the position from August Wiskow in November 1895 and remained until November 1903. During his tenure as director, Gurlitt was promoted from “imperial master builder” (Kaiserlicher Regierungs-Baumeister) to “building advisor” (Baurat). In collaboration with colleagues at the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin, he designed and carried out buildings for the East African government. In addition, Gurlitt’s office in Dar es Salaam reviewed plans for private buildings to ensure that they met building codes (the first of which was already in place in 1891). Gurlitt also established a private practice through which he designed his own house in Dar es Salaam and the city’s two main German churches.

Though Gurlitt was primarily a practitioner, he was also involved in the intellectual life of his profession. He published several articles in professional journals, including a 1899 report on a trip to India to study British colonial architecture, a 1904 article about his two churches in Dar es Salaam, and a 1905 overview of German building practices in East Africa. These publications make it clear that Gurlitt saw himself as a pioneer in an effort to formulate a specific German colonial style. After his retirement from East Africa, he participated in the Colonial Society’s 1914 competition for prototypes for a new colonial architecture.

By emphasizing that engineers and technicians (not architects like Gurlitt) were responsible for the terrible state of the built environment in the colonies, reformers projected a contentious metropolitan issue, the tension between architects and engineers, onto the colonies. In Germany, members of the two professions were educated jointly (eventually within separate specialized faculties) at technical institutes from the 1860s. Despite their common interests, however, the two groups became antagonistic toward each other. Engineers overshadowed architects through much of the nineteenth century because they had a more direct role to play in state modernization and economic reform. Architects, by contrast, had the advantage of being, prior to their recent technical specialization, long-standing members of the classically educated traditional professional elite. As architectural historian Katherine Romba notes, things started to change in the early decades of the twentieth century. By then, architects had managed to appropriate engineering knowledge and its resultant aesthetic. They capitalized on the myth of the engineer...
as an uncultured technician and denied engineers authorship in modern architecture. Following this logic, reformers attributed a fundamental lack to colonial technicians who, they argued, could not be expected to build anything other than intuitively utilitarian or recklessly imitative buildings. To counteract this problem, they proposed to establish a chair in tropical architecture at one of the technical institutes in Germany, and train colonial architects there. This was a revolutionary idea, since no such university programs existed anywhere in the world at the time. Alternately, members of the committee for the competition discussed publishing a book about colonial architecture. At the very least, they proposed to compile a bibliography of existing publications, and make it available to German architects. Knowledge about colonial architecture existed in Germany but was scattered across various scholarly disciplines and integrated into popular culture. To be most effective for design practice, reformers thought it was necessary to collate this knowledge into a single archive. Unfortunately, nothing seems to have come of these proposals.

For Oechelhæuser, the fact that the Werkbund also found fault with colonial architecture strengthened his own position on the subject. In a prospectus for the upcoming Cologne exhibition, Werkbund leaders had condemned architecture in the German colonies for its lack of “functional beauty” (Zweckschönheit). According to the prospectus, Qingdao’s nouveau riche “villa-suburbs” were the most egregious examples of the problem with German colonial architecture. Take the Villa Roland Behn, for instance. It was erected on Bismarckstrasse in 1900 and was one of several elegant residences built by the Qingdao branch of F. H. Schmidt. The firm’s designers created an asymmetrical two-story building marked by a gabled bay on its eastern façade, a polygonal tower to the southeast, and windows of all shapes and sizes. These components would have been at home in any of Berlin’s middle-class suburbs, such as Grunewald or Zehlendorf. An essay in Qingdao’s colonial newspaper even praised the glistening red tile roofs of villas like Roland Behn’s, which transformed Qingdao into “a little piece of Germany . . . transplanted from the homeland and . . . improved in the process.”

Werkbund leaders could not have disagree more with this evaluation. In fact, reform-minded architects had developed a critical attitude toward the domestic forms and settlement patterns of the educated middle classes by the early decades of the twentieth century. Suburbs and the parvenu class that inhabited them show up regularly as objects of derision in the writings of reformers. In the Werkbund prospectus, the colonies became part of this dynamic. Furthermore, the prospectus explicitly com-
pared architecture in the German colonies to its British counterpart and found it lacking: the British had achieved in their “colonial style” the kind of “functional beauty” that was desirable. These statements show that the call to reform colonial architecture was part of a larger effort to make Germany globally competitive.

The contents of the Werkbund prospectus ignited further debate within the Colonial Society, especially around the question of who was qualified to speak about colonial architecture. Oscar von Truppel, former governor of Kiaochow and member of the Colonial Society’s executive committee, was understandably upset by the Werkbund’s critique of architecture in Qingdao. He pointed out that British and other Europeans admired Qingdao and saw it as a European-style garden city and tourist destination. All this talk about reforming colonial architecture, he objected, came from people who had never spent time in the colonies. Oechelhaeuser, in response, emphasized the general theoretical validity of his proposal, and deftly defused Truppel’s “old Africa hand” (alte Afrikaner) argument. His gripe was not with Qingdao per se, nor with any other specific colony or colonial reality. Rather, he was interested in the larger issue applicable to all German architecture in the colonies and at home. Despite the fact that the Colonial Society and Werkbund agreed in principle about the poor quality of architecture in the colonies, the society asked the Werkbund to retract its overly critical statements about Qingdao. The Werkbund refused to publicly change its position, but agreed to exclude its critique from future prints of the prospectus. Truppel and Oechelhaeuser’s disagreement reveals a contradiction between the fundamentally conservative agenda of colonialism and the culturally and sometimes politically progressive goals of architectural reform. How could an understanding of Heimatschutz as an ennobling of local practice coexist with colonialism’s devaluing of indigenous cultures?

COMPETING FOR A NEW COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

The Colonial Society’s architecture competition aimed to resolve the problems identified by Oechelhaeuser and the Werkbund. Reformers believed that publicizing the issue through a competition would generate myriad new ways to deal with climatic, economic, and cultural conditions in the colonies; meet functional requirements; protect the “image of the landscape”; and thereby enhance Germany’s reputation as a colonial power. The planning committee for the competition, which later doubled as a jury, met for the first time on January 6, 1914. Its membership drew widely from the colonial and architectural communities,
revealing the import attached to the project. Oechelhaeuser, of course, chaired the group. Another Colonial Society member, the former diplomat and colonial businessman Ernst Vohsen, together with a representative from the Imperial Colonial Office, the architect Julius Fischer, as well as marine architect K. Bökemann of Kiel and tropical agriculture expert Dr. Hindorf, represented the interests of the colonial lobby. The committee also included representatives from the Bund Deutscher Architekten (Union of German Architects) and the Vereinigung Deutscher Architekten und Ingenieurvereine (Coalition of German Architects and Engineers’ Unions), and from the radical newcomer, the Werkbund. Yet the composition of the committee was deficient in the most critical area—actual colonial architectural experience. Fischer, who worked for the Imperial Colonial Office’s building department in Berlin, was the only colonial architect present, and even his credentials are suspect. It is not clear that he had the colonial field experience some considered so important to the project. Furthermore, all of these men were civil servants. The Colonial Society made no attempt to include private architects in the colonies—like Wilhelm Sander, who built some of the more outrageous historicist villas in Windhoek’s villa district—or architects with experience in Japan, Siam, South Africa, South America, and the Ottoman Empire. This bias in the composition of the committee mirrored tensions within the profession in Germany as well as temporal and spatial discontinuities between policymakers at the center of the empire and administrators and technicians on the colonial periphery. It was this refusal to acknowledge existing colonial architectural knowledge that Schreiber identified as the greatest shortcoming of the project to reform architecture in the colonies.

These metropolitan-colonial tensions distorted the final format of the competition. Like the one-stop shop model of architectural reform imagined by the Werkbund leadership, Oechelhaeuser assumed that a single bodenständig prototype could guide all colonial architecture. All that was necessary was for architects to create it. The old Africa hands in the Colonial Society soon disabused him of this misbegotten notion, however. As they pointed out, the colonies embodied great diversity in climate, topography, ecology, culture, and resources. In some cases, each of the major bioclimatic zones could be found in a single colony! It would be impossible and ill advised to conceive a single design for the muggy, densely forested mangrove ring of the Cameroon estuary and the parched diamond-strewn sands of Keetmanshoop in Southwest Africa. The committee proposed instead to group the colonies according to shared characteristics and design the competition around these categories. Three
categories emerged: the South Seas, German Southwest Africa, and Cameroon. Political considerations, like Governor Truppl’s defense of Qingdao architecture and the governor of East Africa’s enthusiastic response, may have led to Kiaochow’s absence from the competition and the addition of an East African category. The final program included: Program I, a hospital in the South Seas; Program II, a government building in German Southwest Africa; Program III, a house in Cameroon; and Program IV, a home in East Africa. In March 1914 the committee planned to publish its call for submissions in at least 135 professional journals, major newspapers, and colonial press outlets. The committee clearly intended, by disseminating the competition brief far and wide, to make colonial architecture a topic of conversation at every Kaffeeklatsch (coffee hour) and dinner table across the empire.\(^62\)

The brief made it clear that this was an ideas project rather than a commission for a specific building. However, the planning committee reserved the right to purchase winning entries, should an occasion to construct such a building arise. In fact, the brief was remarkably modest in its goals. It mentions the possibility of displaying winning entries in Berlin and at the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, but omits most of the forceful language about reform that characterized internal discussion about the competition. Neither *Heimatschutz*, *Bodenständigkeit*, *Zweckmäßigkeit*, nor *Kulturarbeit* show up in an announcement published in the April 28 issue of the newspaper *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Kamerun*. Instead, the announcement gently encourages would-be participants to exclude anything unnecessary to the stated function of the buildings and to specify appropriate materials. Finally, in order to make up for the much-discussed deficit in colonial knowledge among German architects, the competition brief offers general background information about colonial conditions and norms, as well as suggestions about appropriate materials for each of its four different building programs. For example, program II specifies a small, dry settlement in German Southwest Africa with a large diurnal range. Because winter evenings are cool, the brief recommends mechanical heating for bedrooms.\(^63\)

A closer look at some submissions and jury comments will illustrate how competition participants perceived and responded to the project whose ambitious vision had already become stunted in the course of being transformed into a public announcement. Dominikus Böhm (1880–1955) submitted designs for all four categories of the competition. At the time, Böhm was an enthusiastic thirty-four-year-old embarking on an architectural career in Offenbach am Main. He later worked as a teacher at the state technical school in Offenbach, and then at the Cologne *Werkschule*.
Böhm had studied under Theodor Fischer, the most important southern German architect of his generation and a founding member of the Werkbund, at the technical institute in Stuttgart. Fischer was committed to formulating a modern language of building and city design that retained the best aspects of tradition. Böhm must have digested some of Fischer’s lessons, as he (Böhm) spent much of his career translating early Christian and baroque church design into a contemporary idiom. In the Church of Saint John in Neu-Ulm (1921–1927) and many of his early projects, Böhm recreated the rousing spaces of traditional church interi-
ors by using unadorned concrete vaulting and brick arcades. He became known for his contributions to ecclesiastic reform and his promotion of aisleless, transeptless, and choirless sanctuaries to encourage the Catholic clergy to mingle with congregants. As his work matured, Böhm applied similar strategies to the exteriors of his buildings, as seen in the simultaneously crouching and soaring centripetal form of Saint Engelbert’s in Cologne-Riehl (1930–1932). Despite his association with a seemingly conservative branch of his field, ecclesiastic architecture, Böhm was a reformer deeply concerned with the problem of architecture in the modern era. As an expression of his commitment to transforming architecture, Böhm joined the Werkbund in 1910.64

This background made Böhm an ideal candidate for the Colonial Society’s competition. Like many of his fellow contestants, Böhm had never been to the colonies. Like them, he did not see this as a deterrent.65 Instead, a sense of youthful enthusiasm and curiosity pervades Böhm’s correspondence with the Colonial Society. In a May 1914 postcard to the competition committee, he inquires whether stone aggregate con-
crete (Kiesbeton) and reinforced concrete (Eisenbeton) are suitable for the colonies. Subsequent letters from Böhm show that he was impatient to learn the results of the competition and obtain specific feedback on his submissions.66

Unfortunately for Böhm, his designs did not survive even the first round of reviews. His submission for program I, a “richly appointed hospital complex” for a port city in the South Seas, did not appeal to the jury (figures 3.3 and 3.4).67 They found his floor plan adequate but were not convinced by the formal aspects of his design. Böhm proposed a series of pavilions connected by covered arcades and planned around a core pavilion and grand entry sequence. In this, his design was in line with what architectural historian Jeremy Taylor describes as the global “orthodoxy” of the pavilion-plan hospital until the early twentieth century.68 He followed colonial standards noted in the competition brief, such as the elevation of European spaces above ground level and separation of European and indigenous service areas as a prophylactic against disease. Böhm’s hipped double roofs were also a colonial norm. The most bodenständig elements of Böhm’s design were the verandas that flanked the pavilions on all sides and formed walkways between them.

**FIGURE 3.5. PERSPECTIVE OF SEA FAÇADE, HOSPITAL FOR SOUTH SEAS, DOMINIKUS BÖHM, COLONIAL SOCIETY COMPETITION, 1914. THIS DRAWING CAPTURES BÖHM’S VISION OF THE LANDSCAPE OF SAMOA. COPYRIGHT DEUTSCHES ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM, FRANKFURT AM MAIN.**
This idea of surrounding wards with open space to encourage cross-ventilation was ubiquitous to nineteenth-century pavilion hospitals, but it was also a widely discussed characteristic of colonial life. As early as 1887, Protestant missionary and language researcher Carl Gotthilf Büttner published a newspaper article about building in the colonies in which he discusses verandas as sun-shading devices and a means to control indigenous access to the inner sanctums of European colonial spaces.\(^6\) Böhm’s design overflows with verandas and other unprogrammed open spaces as functional responses to the high temperatures, humidity, and sudden tropical rains of Samoa. German colonists in Samoa had acknowledged the region’s climate and incorporated verandas into colonial buildings like the courthouse in Apia built circa 1902.\(^7\) In fact, the committee for the competition had discussed precisely this notion of learning from existing colonial architecture, and Böhm could have drawn his information from a number of scholarly and popular sources. Finally, Böhm’s verandas were attuned to indigenous building traditions in the region. Verandas can be inferred from the open-walled structures, deep overhangs, and anteroomlike spaces of some traditional buildings in New Guinea and Samoa, including those depicted in Krämer-Bannow’s Heimatschutz article. Böhm’s interest in the specificities of the site is captured in an evocative perspective drawing showing the hospital set amid menacing tropical flora and overlooking jagged cliffs, the ocean, and the carved wood hulls and masts of local boats (figure 3.5). We can read this perspective as an attempt to deduce the genius loci of the site, a task that historian of German architecture Kathleen James-Chakraborty has suggested that Böhm pursued in his Brazilian projects of the 1920s and 1930s.

Yet the jury failed to appreciate these qualities of Böhm’s design. They may have been swayed instead by two unusual elements in the architect's drawings: a small onion dome perched on top of the operating theater and above the centrally planned entrance to the hospital, and exotic ogee concrete arches on the ground floor of Böhm’s connecting walkways. The arches match the profile of the dome but neither motif had any precedent in either German architecture in Samoa or in the lofty, curvilinear, indigenous wood *fale* of the colony.\(^7\) Rather, they were early examples of the orientalizing tendencies that Manfred Speidel identifies in Böhm’s subsequent church designs.\(^7\) Furthermore, Böhm’s proposal paid little attention to economy and the practical realities of colonial life: who exactly would build these arcuated masonry structures in a region known for its woodworking practices? Böhm was not alone in taking this tack; the brief actually specified masonry over “light” construction methods.
But was this building, in its reliance on foreign forms, building materials, and methods, a suitable basis for a new language of colonial architecture? In this proposal for colonial architecture, Böhm, like many of his peers, had not resolved the most pressing architectural question of the day: how to design a building without resorting to historical references and antiquated forms.

Böhm’s entry for program II (a combined government office building and residence in Southwest Africa) was only slightly more inspired (figure 3.6). Per the brief, he separated living and work spaces, and European and indigenous areas in a single-story building. What was unusual was his choice of a water tower to mark the threshold between the publicly accessible administrative wing of the building and its private residential...
zone (figure 3.7). While the tower symbolized the funneling of the power of the colonial state into the home and person of a middling official in this remote colonial outpost, it did so without resorting to style and ornament. In this sense, it was quite different from the Türmchen ofWilhelminian suburban villas and colonial villas in Qingdao and Windhoek, and more akin to the unsung chimney stacks and silos of the light industrial sector where historian Matthew Jefferies finds early stirrings of a modern, ahistorical, abstract architectural language in Germany. Böhm maintains this astylistic approach through most of the building. Instead of the domes and arches of his South Seas submission, he relies on a play of simple rectilinear projecting columns and receding windows to create visual interest. He once again appropriates standard colonial
features like the hipped double roof and long, narrow bungalow *parti* so crucial for cross-ventilation. One grievous mistake reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of colonial architecture, however. Böhm fails to grasp that the tropical veranda combines circulation, ventilation, and inhabitation functions in a single space. Instead of replacing hallways with verandas, he includes both in his government office building. This faux pas certainly did not meet basic requirements for financial and functional economy. Jury comments point to this flaw in an otherwise satisfactory design.74

In his third submission (a home for a “wealthy director of a large trading company” in Cameroon), Böhm returned to the overstated gestures of his South Seas design. He produced a symmetrical single-story building connected by covered walkways to service spaces in a rear annex. The entire building was elevated high above the ground on regularly spaced square columns (figure 3.8). Unlike the South Seas design, much
of this ground level is unused and left as a dark, desolate landscape. In this design, Böhm ignored committee members’ instructions that fully encircling verandas were unnecessary in Cameroon, and surrounded all of his spaces with ogee-arched verandas. By choosing arches, Böhm may have stumbled on a bodenständig motif that reflected the long-standing Islamization of northern and central Cameroon. These arches were not appropriate for the coastal site for the project, however, which had long been exposed to Christianity and whose dominant architectural traditions involved small-scale buildings in clay and wood. For this or other unknown reasons, the jury eliminated Böhm’s design.

One item in the competition brief for the Cameroonian house bears further discussion. Strangely, the brief recommended “villa” design in Germany as a model for the new Cameroonian house. Specifically, it pointed to the “open design” of villas in Germany and implied that the most suitable European houses in coastal Cameroon already followed this tendency. This recommendation appears to contradict several of the premises of the competition and the movement for colonial architecture reform that inspired it. For one, this was the first time that committee members acknowledged that architecture in Cameroon was already evolving in an appropriate direction. Second, the brief’s emphasis on existing villa design in Germany contradicts Oechelhaeuser’s condemnation of “Berlin Tiergarten villas” in the colonies. How did reformers reconcile these seemingly contradictory ideas? One answer may lie in the reference to “open” villa design. As architectural historian John Maciuika explains, Wilhelmine architects did not always differentiate strictly between villas and their later and progressive suburban equivalent, the Landhaus. What distinguished the “style architecture” of the villa from the “building art” of the Landhaus was the openness of the latter’s floor plan, which provided direct access to the garden. Along with close contact with nature, the Landhaus emphasized functional room placement, solar orientation, and domestic comfort, and embodied the rise of the middle class to a position of national leadership. These qualities all conformed to the ideas initially posited in Oechelhaeuser’s proposal to reform colonial architecture. But they conflicted with some of the norms of colonial life, like the practice of elevating European buildings approximately three feet above ground. Böhm’s Cameroon design sits heavily above the ground, and, in its relationship to nature, bears little similarity to the reformed suburban country houses of Hermann Muthesius and other reform-minded architects. On the other hand, Böhm’s design is relatively devoid of extraneous motifs and spaces, and its axial layout could easily capitalize on the midday sea
breeze mentioned in the competition brief. Contradictions like these bolster my hypothesis that the call to reform colonial architecture lost some of its force as reformers negotiated competing colonial and metropolitan agendas.

Program IV was Böhm’s most provocative submission: a simple house for one of the “larger developing coastal areas in East Africa,” in which “the separation of European and indigenous districts is to be taken as already implemented.” Perspective drawings depict three identical houses separated only by narrow walkways and a low chain-link fence. Each house consists of a single-story rectangular block surrounded on all sides by a shading veranda—an arrangement that he borrows from the well-known tropical bungalow (figure 3.9). Böhm maintains a close relationship to nature by keeping the veranda at ground level while raising the body of the house on a low socle (per the competition brief). Luckily, Böhm does not duplicate the veranda with a hallway in this design. A row of simple, slender columns braces a wide, low, hipped double roof.

**FIGURE 3.9. HOUSE IN EAST AFRICA, DOMINIKUS BÖHM, COLONIAL SOCIETY COMPETITION, 1914. THE DESIGN FOR THIS SMALL HOUSE WITH AN ENCIRCLING VERANDA IS BORROWED FROM A LARGE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE ON THE TROPICAL BUNGALOW. COPYRIGHT DEUTSCHES ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM, FRANKFURT AM MAIN.**
The roof shades a generous veranda that circles the house on all four sides. This veranda would have easily accommodated the planter’s chair, “Bombay table,” hunting trophies, and other typical accoutrements of comfortable colonial living. At the center of the house, the veranda dips in to carve out a three-walled living area open to the outdoors on one side. Doors lead from this “veranda room” to the main entry into the house and to the dining room. This was Böhm’s interpretation of the “living veranda” mentioned in German colonial literature. In fact, the competition brief recommended that designers include a “veranda-type space of the same size as a room” in the East Africa house as well as in the Southwest Africa and Cameroon projects. But, since so much social life happened on the veranda anyway, Böhm eliminated the formal living room entirely. Behind the living veranda, the façade of each house alternates between equal sections of window and wall. This creates visual interest that has nothing to do with traditional concepts of ornament and style. The clean, simple lines, lightweight massing, and antimonumental scale of these houses might have captured reformers’ interest. Böhm grouped two bedrooms and a bathroom on one side and a dining room, kitchen, pantry, and utility room on either side of the living veranda and thus readily met the requirement of separating colonists and colonized servants. With these adaptations, Böhm’s design arguably met reformers’ requirement that the “enclosed space [of the house] be utilized to the best advantage, to the extent permitted by the purpose of the house and the hygiene conditions.”

The most interesting aspect of Böhm’s East Africa design is the way he invited his audience to imagine a landscape covered in hundreds of identical structures. He rightly seized on the suggestion that the East African government and private enterprise needed many such houses, and that a modest single-family type should be developed for this purpose. At the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, Muthesius famously pronounced _Typisierung_ (the making of types) as a means to nurture universal good taste, recover the lost harmony of German architecture with life, and thereby make German goods more competitive abroad. Muthesius’s proposition met opposition from Henry van de Velde and others who were concerned about the autonomy and individuality of designers in a system where industry determined art. As John Maciuika eloquently explains, however, van de Velde and his supporters misunderstood Muthesius’s proposal, which was equally invested in anchoring new forms of expression in German traditions. Böhm’s teacher, Theodor Fischer, had been designing types for workers’ housing since at least 1903. Likewise, Muthesius and Richard Riemerschmid, another reformist applied arts designer and
architect (and student of Fischer’s) who aimed to merge German vernacular traditions with machine production, had actually been thinking about house types since the turn of the century.85

The idea of type is implicit in all four programs in the Colonial Society’s competition, which were conceived as standard arrangements of form and organization of space in response to various colonial climates, topographies, and demographics. This emphasis on type reaffirms the competition’s reformist foundation. Böhm and some other competition participants understood the message that reformers were trying to convey. Böhm’s design for East Africa was simple enough that it could be produced in quantity at a reasonable expense. And, like any good type, it articulated a suitable aesthetic expression for the unquestionably modern problem of German life in the colonies. When combined with the coral stone masonry, coral mortar, local and European wood and iron beams, and site-fired roof tiles suggested by the brief, Böhm’s East Africa type seemed well placed to win a prize, but this was not to be.

Apart from Böhm’s entries, the only other extant submission for the Colonial Society’s competition comes from Hermann Leitenstorfer. Leitenstorfer (1886–1972) was an instructor in architecture at the technical institute in Munich when he submitted designs for program I (South Seas hospital) and program II (a house in German Southwest Africa) of the competition. Earlier, he had studied architecture at the institute and become enthralled by Munich’s rich artistic life. He returned to his alma mater in 1912 after working in a number of well-known ateliers. At the institute, he became Theodor Fischer’s assistant and protégé. His name appears on some of Fischer’s entries for the 1916 competition for a German-Turkish House of Friendship in Istanbul and on some of Fischer’s other well-known projects of the period. Like his mentor, Leitenstorfer also became a Werkbund member. The Colonial Society competition was one of several projects that he pursued independently during this period. After military service in 1916, he entered civil service for the city of Munich, but later returned to teaching at the institute.86

Leitenstorfer’s contributions to Fischer’s House of Friendship entry offer an entrée to a project similar to the Colonial Society’s competition. The House of Friendship was a competition hosted jointly by the recently founded German-Turkish Union and the Werkbund in 1916. Consonant with the ongoing political and military alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire during the Great War, the union aimed to nurture German-Turkish relations. But rather than working through official state channels, it built partnerships between private interests in Germany and Ottoman Turkey.87 Journalist and Werkbund supporter Theodor Heuss
described the goals of the organization thus: “The Orient has since time immemorial been a zone of French intellectual authority. To counterbalance this, enable knowledge about German nature, accumulate trust, and at the same time bring an understanding of Turkish ways to the German people—these are the tasks of a German-Turkish cultural politics.”

There could be no clearer articulation of a German imperialist agenda than Heuss’s statement: Germans wanted to tip the scales of French imperial power in the Orient. What Heuss described was a version of Kulturarbeit adapted to the specificities of a 1910s world order. But Heuss’s comments also capture the complexities of German imperialist practice: the House of Friendship was about teaching Turks about German ways but it also paid lip service to the idea that Germans could learn something from Turkey. In fact, the German-Turkish Union felt strongly about the role of the state versus nonstate actors in foreign policy: “It [German-Turkish cultural politics] cannot be legislated or created by the state but it requires single individuals’ belief, devotion, and willingness to sacrifice. . . . States that are politically befriended would be well served to not interfere in well-defined cultural questions, otherwise mistrust registers itself all to quickly.”

This was not a condemnation of imperialism in toto but only of its more problematic cultural dimensions. According to Heuss, German architects had been forced to choose between artistic and political approaches when building in foreign countries in the past. This was because representing the state was often confused with representing the nation. By contrast, because it eschewed state funding and preexisting institutional structures for cooperation, the German-Turkish Union’s project would serve the more comprehensive goal of representing the German nation. But it could do this and still support the German and Ottoman states’ political and military interests. As architectural historian Didem Ekici has written, the House of Friendship was still very much an imperialist project. Implicit in Heuss’s distinction between the representational needs of the state and the nation is a sense of greater freedom in the latter. Arguably, this sense of freedom was amplified in the context of building in the allegedly once great but now declining Orient. Competition participants could ask themselves the question that had been debated in Germany for several decades: “Do we have a building art that completely expresses the German essence?” Heuss mentions the failure of French architects to create a modern language for secular architecture in the Islamic Orient. With the House of Friendship, German architects could show their Turkish friends (and, by implication, the French) the best way to reconcile history with “new functions and tasks.”
The House of Friendship brief called for a variety of large and small rooms for theater and orchestral productions, lectures, exhibitions, a library, and a café. Some spaces were to be accessible to and actually draw in the local population, while others were restricted to members. Desiring a rapid and high-quality resolution, the German-Turkish Union consulted with the Werkbund, and together they determined to run a restricted competition open only to twelve Werkbund architects. The fact that no Turkish architects were invited to participate suggests the limits of the union’s reciprocal vision. A somewhat classicizing design relieved by select Ottoman references such as bracketed roof overhangs, by architect German Bestelmeyer, was awarded the first prize over designs by Bruno Taut and Hans Poelzig that arguably brought Turkish and German practices into actual conversation with each other. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in April 1917 but war conditions prevented the completion of the building. However, the mutually beneficial vision that inspired the project was indirectly realized in subsequent years when Turkey’s republican government invited four of the twelve architects who had participated in the competition to help formulate the planning and architectural framework of the new state. Though it differed in important ways from the Colonial Society’s 1914 competition, the House of Friendship project was another case in which modernist reform mingled with colonial-imperial imperatives. Indeed, Leitenstorfer’s designs for the Colonial Society competition may have inflected his contributions to Fischer’s Istanbul proposal.

Most of Leitenstorfer’s built works, which date primarily from after World War I, were in the fields of industry, religion, education, and urban redevelopment. The Technisches Rathaus in Munich (1925–1929), home to the technical offices of the municipality, is one of his best-known buildings. For this early high-rise, Leitenstorfer mounted eight main brick stories and four recessed attic floors on a massive stone entry plinth. With its frameless punched window openings and severe wall planes, the building suggested a new architectural language for the city. However, as scholars have pointed out, this architectural language engaged directly with the city’s heritage: the polygonal corner towers and pilasters of the final stories of Leitenstorfer’s building reference the adjacent fifteenth-century gothic hall church, the Frauenkirche, while the fortresslike base of the office tower alludes to the old medieval city gate that had been on the site. 93 In the Technisches Rathaus and in his ecclesiastical and industrial projects, Leitenstorfer’s work exemplified the balance between tradition and modernity promoted by Heimatschutz.
All that remains of Leitenstorfer’s two submissions to the Colonial Society is a single perspective drawing of his South Seas hospital titled “Luft” (air) and jury comments (figure 3.10). To form the complex, he arranged three two-story pavilions in the staggered configuration of late nineteenth-century pavilion hospital design. Walkways connect the larger central pavilion (possibly containing a main ward and doctor’s office on its upper level and a storage area below), to two wings (likely containing the required isolation ward, nurses’ residence, and utility spaces). Per the brief, Leitenstorfer used scale to visually differentiate the primary components of the hospital. However, the internal organization of space is not registered on the exterior. His design uses many typical colonial-tropical elements. All three pavilions are surrounded by verandas supported on slightly arched masonry columns on both levels. Beyond this screen of columns was a wall of regularly spaced windows and doors. Competition organizers recommended “solid” (i.e., masonry) over “light” (i.e., wood-framed) construction methods as a way to avoid the pervasive termite problem on the islands. Leitenstorfer appears to have followed their advice by designing a thoroughly “solid” grouping of structures. The jury found Leitenstorfer’s entry promising and only eliminated it in the final round. How could a design that rejected the region’s highly developed
woodworking traditions out of hand be understood as bodenständig? Clearly the notion of reform that had come to dominate the competition differed in spirit from the ideas that originally inspired Oechelhaeuser and his supporters.

Jury members were also impressed by Leitenstorfer’s design for program II, the house in German Southwest Africa. They commented on the high aesthetic quality of his design and resolved to send it along with other prizewinning entries to be displayed at the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion in Cologne.96 One wonders if Leitenstorfer’s Southwest Africa proposal was infused with the same careful balance between modern needs, materials, and methods and historical context that characterized his later Technisches Rathaus. Unfortunately, Leitenstorfer’s design has not been retained either in his papers at the technical institute in Munich or at the archive of the Colonial Society in Berlin.

Indeed, most of the 375 entries to the competition have been lost.97 Many entries came from Berlin, but others came from all over the empire, including a surprising number from the underdeveloped eastern Prussian province of Posen (itself subject to “internal colonization” by the German state). Only nine to ten entries emanated from the colonies themselves. The colonial building company F. H. Schmidt of Altona-Hamburg participated in the competition. Current and former colonial architects, administrators, and settlers including Friedrich Gurlitt of East Africa and Ernst Tappenbeck, formerly of New Guinea, also took part in the event. Gurlitt submitted designs in all four categories of the competition but did not win any prizes. Archival records nevertheless show that the jury paid significant attention to his designs. They found his design for a home in Cameroon problematic because he unwisely sited bedrooms in an attic. But they praised his design for a hospital in the South Seas because it ensured extensive cross-ventilation. His submissions for a government office building in German Southwest Africa met all requirements of the competition brief but did not transcend them. On the other hand, his plan for a colonial residence in East Africa not only met all requirements but was “building ready.” Despite this positive reception, it appears that Gurlitt’s designs fell short of reformers’ hopes for a new colonial architecture. Apart from entries like Gurlitt’s, the colonies were underrepresented in the competition. With such little input from the colonies, wondered the secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, could this competition for new models for architecture in the German colonies be effective?98

Yet the range of participants in the competition suggests a relatively high level of interest in the topic. Architects, engineers, building techni-
cians, draftsmen, master builders, architecture teachers, architectural students, students at building trade schools, and contractors across Germany contributed. Among these were aspiring young architects like Böhm and Leitenstorfer as well as architects like Hans Eitel, Hermann Dernburg, Ernst Leistner, Otto Völckers, and Carl Winand, whose careers would soon blossom. Submissions also came from people in cognate disciplines. For example, Hans Martin Lemme, an artist who accompanied Leo Frobenius on his 1904 expedition to the Congo and later published on his travels through the continent and on African art, submitted several designs to the competition.99

Contributors were most interested in the South Seas or German Southwest Africa categories of the competition, which were associated with the largest monetary prizes and whose contexts were likely most familiar to German audiences from scholarly and popular representations. As George Steinmetz has explained, Samoa and New Guinea had become part of the popular imagination in Germany through the writings of Georg Forster, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others. Meanwhile, the war against the Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa had ended only seven years earlier and had been widely discussed in the press. Some of the designers who participated in the competition may have recently visited colonial displays around the country and compared, for example, the “semi-spherical pelt huts” of the Herero to the “rather comfortably outfitted planter’s house,” both shown at the recent (1913) International Building Trades Exhibition in Leipzig.100
What was most surprising about competition participants was the presence of women architects and designers. In 1914 German women were only just starting to break into the profession and become visible as designers, patrons, and users of the built environment. At least four women participated in the Colonial Society’s competition, however. Their names are difficult to decipher in the handwritten records of the project, but two names stand out: Margarete Knüppelholz-Roeser (1886–1949) and Grete Schröder-Zimmermann (1887–1955). We know little about these two women and about other members of the first generation of professional women architects in Germany. Knüppelholz’s biography places her at various venues of architectural reform, such as the applied arts schools in Magdeburg, Stuttgart, and Breslau between 1905 and 1910. She married Erich Knüppelholz, an architect and former student from Magdeburg, who had taken part in the momentous 1906 Dresden Applied Arts Exhibition where “art crafts” and “art industry” merged for the first time in Germany. Margarete must have been finalizing construction administration at her award-winning women’s pavilion, the “Haus der Frau,” at the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne at the same time that she and her husband submitted a design to the South Seas hospital category of the Colonial Society’s competition (figure 3.11). In her analysis of women in German architecture, Despina Stratigakos argues that Knüppelholz’s long, low, rigidly “cubic,” tripartite women’s pavilion in Cologne, much to the surprise of some male critics, materialized Werkbund aspirations for honesty in the use of materials. Knüppelholz’s only concessions to ornament were the blue mosaic tile surrounds that framed the two monumental portals on its largely blank front façade, and the band molding that highlighted its highly fenestrated river façade. Many commentators agreed that the building’s exterior clearly expressed its interior, which was arranged as a circuit of exhibition spaces surrounding a social core. It was precisely this bold Sachlichkeit that colored the building’s mixed reception: while some reformers praised Knüppelholz for transcending a purportedly natural female propensity for decorative excess, the majority of commentators disparaged her for falsely adopting what they took to be innately masculine signifiers of modernity.

Given Margarete and Erich Knüppelholz’s links to important places, people, and events in design reform during this period, we can assume that their design for the South Seas would have captured something of this revolutionary spirit. By following the competition brief’s exhortation to elevate parts of the building and encourage through-ventilation by way of open-air circulatory systems, the Knüppelholzes might even
have created something entirely new. Whatever its actual form, however, the jury saw nothing to recommend in the Knüppelholz proposal for the South Seas.

Grete Schröder was the second young female architect in the competition. Like her better-known peer Emilie Winkelmann, Schröder came from a family of carpenters. After studying at the applied arts school in Breslau under the reform-oriented architect and Werkbund pioneer Hans Poelzig, she worked in Poelzig’s atelier until 1914. At the Breslau applied arts school, Schröder probably crossed paths with Knüppelholz, with whom she shared the dubious honor of being a pioneering female architect. Schröder met and married a Breslau architect and drawing teacher that same year and entered the civil service under Poelzig. In 1916 she moved with Poelzig to the building department in Dresden, where she stayed until the government fired all married female professionals in order to make room for returning veterans after World War I. After her stint at Poelzig’s atelier, she completed all requirements to become a state architect (Regierungsbaumeister, government master-builder) but was told that she could not designate herself as such or work in the same capacity as her male peers unless she became a certified engineer (Diplom-Ingenieur). She studied for and received this certification but again encountered a glass ceiling. Schröder’s career trajectory exemplifies the hardships that women architects of her generation faced. In the final phase of her career, she held junior positions at the Technische Hochschule Berlin-Charlottenburg (Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg and the Hochschule für bildende Künste (Institute for the Fine Arts) in Berlin. Kerstin Dörhöfer, who has studied the first generation of women architects in Germany, suggests that Schröder was a pioneer here as well: she was the first member of her generation of female architects to become involved in teaching.

Much of Schröder’s professional life took place in the orbit of her former professor and employer, Hans Poelzig. At the applied arts school in Breslau, Poelzig had worked tirelessly to translate abstract reformist ideals into reality. Together with the youthful group of teachers that he employed, and through a workshop-based curriculum and teacher-student-client collaborations, Poelzig unified fine, applied, and industrial arts. He combined his reform agenda with a commitment to national and regional modes of cultural expression, as his involvement in historic preservation projects and the Heimatschutz movement illustrates. Yet Poelzig interpreted “tradition” flexibly as a general and updated consideration of climate, social organization, religion, and other factors. Schröder collaborated on several projects that exemplified Poelzig’s liberal attitudes. We
know, for example, that she was at Poelzig’s atelier when he designed the Chemical Factory and Workers’ Housing at Luban in Posen (1911–1912). But we don’t know the scope of her contribution. Through her work with Poelzig, Schröder would have been familiar with the competing mandates of architectural reform captured in the Colonial Society’s competition: the call for an architecture that resisted historical style in lieu of context, climate, and purpose, but also protected the “image of the Heimat.” Unfortunately, there are no extant traces of Schröder’s actual submission. It is clear, however, that her design did not win over the jury.

Neither Böhm, Leitenstorfer, Knüppelholz, nor Schröder was among the nine contestants who received awards. Berlin-based architect and Japan and China “old hand” Richard Seel won the grand prize of one thousand marks for his South Seas hospital, “Seeluft” (sea breeze). Seel was born in Elberfeld (Nordrhein-Westfalen) in 1854. He apparently received no advanced formal training in architecture, but instead learned his craft through apprenticeships with local architecture firms. He must have had significant talent, as the leading Berlin firm, Ende and Böckmann, soon hired him (1875–1890). The firm is remembered for designing country houses and villas in a range of historicist styles, especially in the Tiergarten district of Berlin. In addition to its residential work, Ende and Böckmann shaped Berlin’s late nineteenth-century built landscape through numerous commercial and office buildings, and by participating in important competitions like the Reichstag contest (1882). The firm’s best-known buildings in Berlin include the Villa von der Heydt (1860); the home of Berlin Society of Architects, the Architektenhaus zu Berlin (1875–1876); a number of pavilions in the Berlin Zoological Garden (1873); and the Museum of Ethnology (1881).

Seel administered Ende and Böckmann projects in Danzig until 1888, when he was sent (along with his better-known colleague Hermann Muthesius) to represent the firm in Japan. Ende and Böckmann had recently won an important commission for a large complex of government buildings in Tokyo that were meant as a spatial and visual complement to the Meiji government’s political and economic reforms. The most symbolic building in the complex was to be the House of Parliament, which the firm designed in a florid neobaroque style reminiscent of their earlier proposal for the Reichstag. The Japanese government found their proposal shockingly over budget, however, and asked for it to be scaled down. The firm resubmitted a design with a hip-gable tiled roof and pagodalike central hall, but this did not meet the government’s modern aspirations. This design, too, was rejected and the project put into
the hands of the Japanese architect Tatsuno Kingo. Ende and Böckmann returned to Berlin with a handful of Japanese trainees who later played a role in Japan’s architectural development. Eventually, the only two Ende and Böckmann buildings to be realized in Tokyo were those for the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice (completed 1895 and 1896).

Seel, however, stayed on in Japan as an independent practitioner until 1904. He worked in both Japan and China during this period, where he designed schools and churches for the American mission to Tokyo and Sendai, and houses for the Russo-Chinese bank in Yokohama, Kobe, Hakodate, Shanghai, Port Arthur, Peking, and Tientsin. Through his initial work with Ende and Böckmann and subsequent practice in East Asia, Seel exemplified the emerging phenomenon of the German engineer as global technical expert. He returned to Berlin in 1904 and partnered with another prominent Berlin architect, Heinrich Seeling, then founded an independent practice in Berlin in 1907. He contributed to the life of his profession by serving on the boards of the Verband Deutsche Architekten und Ingenieur-Vereine (Union of German Architects and Engineers) and the Vereinigung Berliner Architekten (Union of Berlin Architects), and as a city and regional council member in Berlin. Seel’s most accomplished building in Germany was the town hall in Königsberg, in East Prussia (built circa 1912). A few years later, he won the grand prize in the Colonial Society’s architecture competition. He died unexpectedly in Berlin on September 9, 1922.

Seel had recently completed the Königsberg town hall when he designed his South Seas hospital in 1914. The Königsberg design was based on his earlier competition entry for an opera house in Königsplatz in Berlin. Like the opera house, the Königsberg building had a “practical and clear floor plan,” designed around a 1,600-person auditorium surrounded by two smaller halls, and extruded into a series of interconnected pyramidal volumes. Though he drew on historical vocabulary—including a mansard roof, dentils, tympanums, and pilasters—Seel used a steel frame to achieve large spans and create an unexpected lightness in a rather weighty building. Strong vertical lines that break up windows and wall surfaces, and frame doors throughout the building further accentuate this sense of lightness. Seel’s hospital for the South Seas may have used a similar language to blend sensitivity toward Heimat with modern materials, methods, and functions. But how did he interpret Heimat in the colonial context? Only ten years earlier, Seel had collaborated with Heinrich Becker on the Russo-Chinese Bank
in Shanghai. Though technologically advanced in its steel frame and granite curtain wall, the building’s heavy tripartite neo-Renaissance façade and detailing instantiated (in the neoimperial context of German presence in Shanghai) everything that Oechelhaußer had disparaged about German architecture in the colonies (figure 3.12). Nothing in the exterior form of this building connected it to its East Asian context. Nothing revealed a concern for economy. Based on his oeuvre, it seems clear that Seel was relatively conservative in his craft and would have approached the idea of reforming colonial architecture with moderation.110

Apart from Richard Seel’s first-place prize, a team from Nürnberg consisting of a senior building inspector named Freyschmidt and an en-
engineer named Graf were given the second-place award for the South Seas hospital. For the second category (a government building in Southwest Africa), the jury awarded three equal prizes: government master builder Emil Brünesholz of Nürnberg, architect Otto Völckers of Munich, and architect Ernst Leistner of Stuttgart. In the third category (a house in Cameroon), another team from Posen—a teacher and engineer named Nagl and building advisor named Schütz—was awarded first place. Second place went to the reputable Berlin firm Giesecke & Wenzke. In the final category, a house in East Africa, architect Max Krampe of Dresden won first place while Brünesholz came in second.

Of these prize winners, Völckers had come under the influence of Muthesius’s brand of reform during a stint at his Berlin atelier in 1911. Völckers soon became a Werkbund member and later gained notoriety for efforts to formulate an answer to the “small dwelling” problem between and after the World Wars—much of which he conducted through incisive writing and publication and in reference to his reportedly extensive knowledge of architectural history. His competition submission may actually have managed to balance forward-looking ideas about Zweckmäßigkeit with colonial ideology. Regrettably, very little information about his or other prizewinners’ submissions is available.

Once prizes were awarded, the next step was to disseminate the results of the competition. Dissemination and the notion of changing public opinion were crucial to reformist thinking in general and to Oechelhaeuser’s project in particular. If the point was to change actual architecture in the colonies, then it was not sufficient to merely discuss the issue among Colonial Society members in Berlin. Oechelhaeuser had already made attempts to involve architects in his project by sending his critique to professional organizations and recruiting members to serve on the organizing committee and jury for the competition. Hosting an exhibition of winning competition entries at the headquarters of the Berlin Society of Architects was the next step: news reports note that the exhibition took place from July 27 to August 2, 1914. The committee for the competition planned a second exhibition—of winning entries as well as submissions that survived a first and second round of reviews—to be held within the rooms of the proposed colonial pavilion at the upcoming Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne. There is no evidence, however, that this second exhibit took place as planned.

World War I brought the exhibition, competition, and many of the debates that inspired the project to reform colonial architecture to an abrupt halt. Architects, engineers, and technicians fought in the trenches and many never returned home. By 1920 all that remained of the competi-
tion were unanswered letters, delayed inquires, and returned postcards. All, that is, apart from the idea of modern architecture as a common thread connecting colony and metropole.

READING THE COMPETITION

In reflecting on the effectiveness of the Colonial Society’s reform project, several points become salient. First, the idea of reform became diluted over the course of the two years or so between Oechelhaeuser’s original condemnation of architecture in the colonies and the announcement of the winners of the Colonial Society’s competition. The moderated wording of the competition brief illustrates this point, as do contradictory comments within the jury, and extant competition entries. Given this situation, the competition could not have broken much new ground in colonial architecture. Rather, it reproduced and reinforced existing ideas and practices. Colonialism prevailed in the tug-of-war between the desire for architectural reform and long-standing colonial ideology.

Second, as Schreiber pointed out, the Colonial Society’s project was flawed from the beginning because reformers did not appreciate existing knowledge in the colonies. Schreiber was thinking about what the various mission societies had accomplished through trial and error and by learning from local populations, but reformers did not emphasize learning from indigenous and colonial vernaculars. Led by Oechelhaeuser, they may have found it difficult to envision the work of mission builders and indigenous builders as “Architecture” with a big A or a discipline taught at building academies and technical institutes and practiced in the atelier. Their failure to value ideas generated in the colonies was arguably a function of their own entrenchment in the racialized structures of thought and action that justified colonialism in the first place.

Nevertheless, as Colonial Society leaders Paul Staudinger and Richard Hindorf speculated, there were contextual, objective, purposive practices and forms in the colonies that reformers might have investigated. For example, August Wiskow, former director of the building department in East Africa, had posed the question of architectural training for the colonies as early as 1896 in his Schinkel Festival Lecture to the Architekten-Verein zu Berlin (Architects’ Union of Berlin). He admitted that German know-how was inadequate to meet the challenges posed by extreme climates and terrain. Wiskow emphasized that importing labor and materials was impractical and financially unsustainable. The only way forward was to train indigenous workers in construction and craftsmanship. He went so far as to posit a first ground rule for colonial
architecture: “That the available means, in terms of building materials and labor that the country itself offers, must first be taken into account, and foreign building materials and labor only be supplied where these are not enough.”

Wiskow’s words from 1896 sound remarkably like what Oechelhäuser called for in 1913. In fact, Wiskow’s lecture, titled “Bautechnische Aufgaben in unseren Colonieen” (Technical-building exercises in our colonies), seems far removed from questions about style and preoccupied, almost to the exclusion of other concerns, with developing an approach to architecture based on relevant materials, structural method, and climate. But even his clear-headed, practical approach was tainted by entrenched ideas about hierarchy in architectural practice compounded by notions of racial and cultural superiority. For example, Wiskow remained committed to the idea that because of their allegedly lower intellectual capacity, local laborers must work under the guidance of German technician-overseers. In Wiskow’s thinking, we see a contradiction that arises over and over again in the project to reform colonial architecture, between the search for Bodenständigkeit and the conviction that colonized societies lacked culture. How could colonial Heimatschutz be implemented if the “rule of colonial difference” justified colonialism on the basis

FIGURE 3.13. GOVERNMENT OFFICE, OR “TINTENPALAST,” WINDHOEK, SOUTHWEST AFRICA, BUILT 1913. APART FROM ITS MILDLY CLASSICIZING ENTRANCE, THE “INK PALACE” WAS A STRONGLY PURPOSED BUILDING WELL-SUITED TO ITS CONTEXT. COURTESY OF NAMIBIA SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY PHOTO ARCHIVE.
of civilizing the uncivilized even as it asserted that they were inherently uncivilizable.\footnote{117}

In fact, reformers were so closed-minded about actual colonial developments that they also ignored the achievements of the building officials in the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin. This seems to have been the case even though an architect from the imperial office, Julius Fischer, was a member of the committee for the competition. For example, the committee failed to consider the case of Windhoek’s new government office building, known satirically as the Tintenpalast, or Ink Palace (figure 3.13). In 1909, after decades of operating from provisional spaces across the city, the Southwest African colonial administration proposed a centralized secretariat building to the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin. What ensued was a complex negotiation between colonial and metropolitan priorities, desires, and principles that sheds light on the actual protocols and logistics of colonial architecture. Officials in Windhoek produced two neobaroque designs, each with symmetrical, rusticated, mansard-roofed wings flanking a domed monumental core, as well as a much simpler scheme that eschewed rustication and arcuated elements in favor of verandas and a central “saddle roof.” They sent the three designs to Berlin for review. Berlin responded with questions about expense, the degree to which each component of the building met its intended purpose, the suitability of construction materials, adequate ventilation, and siting. Per request, the Building Office in Windhoek sent back a fourth design together with specifications and a budget. Gottlieb Redecker, head of the building department in Windhoek, described the new design in words that could have come right from Oechelhaeuser: “The architecture suits the purpose of the building and the materials, and has been kept as simple as possible. The main [architectural] effect will result from the detailing of individual building elements and of the siting of the building.”\footnote{118} Built from local materials with a mildly classicizing entrance and an encircling veranda supported on simple piers, the building would arguably have met reformers’ goals. In its final form, the Ink Palace merged metropolitan and colonial cutting-edge rhetoric with empirical experience. With this said, it is important to underscore that this building, which was described by some observers as modern, \textit{zweckmässig}, and \textit{sachlich}, was a product of its colonial time and place. It was built in the short span of nineteen months using Herero laborers who had been brutalized during the recent genocidal war conducted by the Germans, and were interned in a nearby prisoner-of-war camp.\footnote{119}

Another aspect of reformist architectural thinking that emerged independently in the colonies was a tendency toward \textit{Typisierung} after
the turn of the century. In the early years when military and trading company engineers designed shelter and defensive structures, they dealt with architectural questions on a case-by-case basis. When relations with indigenous people were normalized (that is, when indigenous people were pacified through military force), Germany’s various colonial administrations established building departments and codes and made an effort to rationalize the design process and streamline building construction. In East Africa and Kiaochow, for example, locally built structures replaced the earliest and prohibitively expensive prefabricated buildings that had been imported for government use. It is likely that the ideas and methods behind these prefabricated buildings (themselves premised on rationalization and standardization, as discussed in chapter 5) shaped subsequent efforts to develop colonial building type designs. In other words, the notion that it was possible to design buildings that were easy to put together, economical, and could respond to a particular category of use in a variety of locations, seemed viable even after initial failures with imported prefabricated buildings. To achieve this goal, colonial building officials developed an archive of type designs that, like the types associated with international expositions, contained the “genetic” information necessary for new versions of past forms. Archival records for Togo, Cameroon, German Southwest Africa, and especially German East Africa are replete with buildings that were conceived as types rather than as custom-designed solutions. They are invariably represented in plan, elevation, and section on a single drawing sheet. Almost without exception, these buildings are simple and utilitarian. They contain little ornament but accommodate the unique climatic and demographic requirements of each colony. An example built in Windhoek in 1901 shows that type buildings were more understated and practical than their custom-designed counterparts. “House G” was a duplex for two unmarried upper-level civil servants. It consisted of a long block of rooms that opened onto verandas on either side. Because of the availability of suitable soil for brickmaking in the vicinity of Windhoek, many local buildings, including this one, were constructed from brick. According to Walter Peters, House G’s severe form was only relieved by the decorative brick elements on its side gables and around its arched windows and doors. House G poses quite a contrast to custom-built structures and public buildings that shouldered more of the burden of broadcasting German power.

Type-based design was also beneficial in the task of administering the colonies. It seems likely that technicians at centralized colonial building departments took these designs with them when they traveled to remote
rural areas to conduct business. If they were not used as actual plans for new buildings, then these type designs served, at the very least, as precedents in the design process. A letter from the government of Togo to the East African administration requesting advice on designing homes for middle-level officials in Lome suggests that types may have been shared not only within a single colony but across the entire German colonial empire. By employing this strategy, German colonial administrators followed the lead of other colonial empires. In his writings on British architecture in India, Peter Scriver argues, for instance, that “standard plans” and “type designs” were crucial. They provided the Public Works Department with a means to handle the extraordinary logistics of building the immense empire. In fact, these standard plans became an object of critique and reform. As Scriver shows, standard plans in India were perceived as evidence of the Public Works Department’s resistance to innovation. In actuality, he argues, they were tools in a carefully tuned balance between technical innovation and a “critical pragmatism” built on actual colonial experience.

Type making in the German colonies was both similar to and different from Typisierung in Germany. Colonial Typisierung did not have the overt vernacular German flavor of Riemerschmid’s steeply tiled and gable-ended types at Hellerau Garden City (est. 1910). After all, it was not clear that any indigenous traditions were worth nurturing in the colonies. Furthermore, type making in the colonies, as befitted colonial labor and infrastructure conditions, was also only marginally linked to the idea of industrializing the building process. But type making in the colonies coincided with the timeframe of metropolitan Typisierung. And they both shared a commitment to reforming architecture by rationalizing the design process in response to context and use. Typisierung, like Bodenständigkeit and Zweckmäßigkeit, was already part of the vocabulary of colonial architecture, and colonial architects were already on the path to achieving some of the goals that Oechelhaeuser and his associates had conceptualized in 1914.

Competition organizers had also claimed that one of the problems with colonial architecture was that architects in Germany had little interest in and little access to it. My discussions in chapters 1 and 2 and reformers’ own comments about curating a library or archive of sources and establishing a university chair reveal, however, that there was a trove of material—visual, textual, and otherwise—available to architects and the general public. Instead of embracing this phenomenon, competition organizers fell back on the well-established trope of colonial lack: the colonies could only really be understood as a tabula rasa or as a dystopia.
waiting for redemption. Beneath their concern for architecture in the colonies, then, reformers were committed to maintaining the status quo of colonial ideology. Nevertheless, the Colonial Society’s competition for prototypes for colonial architecture provided an opportunity for architects to reconsider the goals and means of reform in Germany.
The Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in the summer of 1914 holds pride of place in the historiography of modern architecture in Germany. It was here that reform-minded architects collectively presented ideas that had been percolating in their minds for some time about how to design appropriately in the age of industry. One of the most memorable moments of the exhibition was the public disagreement between Werkbund members about the future of the discipline and profession. Their dispute revealed deep fissures that would haunt the subsequent evolution of the organization and architectural developments in Germany for years to come. Our understanding of what transpired in Cologne has become more nuanced in recent years, however. Scholars including Frederic Schwartz and John Maciuika have highlighted the complex interplay between personal interests, a changing domestic economy, regional and national politics, global trade, and geopolitics that shaped Werkbund development. Similarly, architectural historians Despina Stratigakos and Mary Pepchinski take the exhibition as an entrée to an analysis of gender politics in avant-garde culture. My reading of the Cologne exhibition as a colonial site complements this expanded view of Werkbund history. The storied exhibition becomes a site in which modernism and colonialism’s interactions are momentarily revealed. A pavilion that reenvisioned colonial architecture in light of reformist ideas about objectivity (Sachlichkeit), purposiveness (Zweckmäßigkeit), and contextualism (Bodenständigkeit) in design takes center stage in the new story. In fact, the colonial pavilion was just one among several world’s fair types at the exhibition. Their presence suggests new avenues for inquiry into the history of the Werkbund and the origins and development of modern architecture in Germany.
In a prospectus for the 1914 Cologne exhibition, Werkbund member, architect, Cologne city official, advocate for Heimatschutz, and local organizer of the exhibition Carl Rehorst proposed to erect a colonial pavilion in order to stimulate architectural reform in Germany’s “daughter lands.” His concern was national pride: “When one sees the purposive beauty to which the English have developed their colonial style, one can look at illustrations of the buildings that we have erected in our colonies with a certain mild shame, only mitigated through our youth as a colonial people.”

Rehorst was probably not aware that some factions of the German colonial administration saw the British model as something to selectively emulate and transcend: Friedrich Gurlitt, director of the Building Office in East Africa, had sailed to India in 1899 for precisely this reason, and came back convinced that the British themselves had not entirely solved the problem of purposive colonial architecture. By highlighting mistakes made by the British and using them as a baseline for German colonial policy, Gurlitt enacted the “learning from” response that characterized Germany’s late entrance into colonial scramble.

Rehorst, it seems, was not attuned to the finer points of German colonial rhetoric and instead viewed Germany’s immaturity as a liability. To explain the problem in architectural terms, he invoked the words of the literary personality and former secretary of the Werkbund Alfons Paquet. In a 1912 travel report-cum-journalistic satire about his trip to China and Japan, Paquet dismissed the countless “Tiergarten villas” of Qingdao for their un-Asian character. Mimicking the language of reform familiar to him from his work as secretary of the Werkbund, Paquet likened the city, which had been destroyed, planned, and rebuilt by the German navy, to the “bad villa-suburb of a parvenu large city” in Germany. He was disappointed to find the despised “gables, bays, and towers” that plagued historicist architecture in Germany all over this alien landscape. This was precisely the kind of architecture that the Werkbund was working so hard to eradicate at home through exhibitions, publications, courses, and workshops designed to reform middle-class taste.

Here again, in Rehorst’s statements, the reformist critique was transposed to the colonies, and became much clearer in the process.

Rehorst was critical not only of temperate Qingdao but also of architecture in the tropical colonies. He admonished that it ought to be possible to create better “types” for colonial interiors than what was currently
exported from Germany, which were “of completely miserable form.” Designing and building a colonial pavilion and developing new types for its interior was tantamount to a national service. Good architecture would meet colonial functions, achieve formal harmony, and improve Germany’s international stature. Just as in colonial Heimatschutz, in the proposal for the colonial pavilion ideas about reform and Kulturarbeiten brought Germany and its colonies into the same architectural orbit.

Seeking support for their project, Werkbund organizers approached the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin in January 1913. The state accepted the invitation and sent two representatives from the Colonial Building Department to join the organizing committee for the colonial pavilion. Of course, the country’s premier colonial lobby, the German Colonial Society, had just declared its own concerns about the quality of colonial architecture. Colonial architecture, it argued, did not perform adequately because it was not purposive, economical, or grounded in local context. As avid supporters of Heimatschutz and members of the Congress for Historic Preservation, Oechelhau users, leader of the Colonial Society’s initiative, and Rehorst, organizer of the Werkbund Exhibition, moved in the same professional circles. The two men may even have bumped into each other at the end of 1912, right before Oechelhau users first raised the issue of colonial architecture with the Colonial Society. What is clear is that the Werkbund and the Colonial Society communicated and became allies in this issue. Oechelhau users used Rehorst’s critique of the colonial status quo to justify his own proposal to the Colonial Society, while the Werkbund, aware of a common interest, invited the Colonial Society to participate in planning the colonial pavilion. At some point, the Cologne branch of the Colonial Society took up the Werkbund’s cause by raising funds among its members in Cologne to support the construction of the pavilion.

Once again, the question of colonial architecture became an occasion for intense debate within the ranks of the society. At first there was no consensus on the goals, parameters, format, and content of the proposed pavilion in relation to the work of the society. In fact, the pavilion became a stage on which to contest conflicting ideas about empire and debate the proper institutional site for colonial architectural reform. Under whose auspices would reform be most effective—individual colonial administrations, the Colonial Society, or the Werkbund? Then there was the issue of overstretched the finances of the society: as one Colonial Society member suggested, perhaps the society could recoup its investment by shipping the entire building to the colonies after exhibition.
Oechelhaeuser understood the colonies as an extension of the Heimat, in need—along with the rest of Germany—of Kulturarbeit. It therefore made perfect sense to initiate colonial architectural reform at home in Germany. By contrast, other members of the board of the Colonial Society believed in the alterity—geographic, political, economic, and cultural—of the colonies. A lawyer and bank director named Dr. von Waldthausen, for instance, argued passionately that it would be more productive to build a model house at the forthcoming (1914) colonial exhibition in Dar es Salaam, where settlers and colonial architects could view it in person. Constructing a model colonial house in Cologne might benefit architects in Germany, he argued, but the majority of them would never work in the colonies. It was difficult for him to understand how a model building in Cologne would reinvigorate architecture in Dar es Salaam, Cameroon, or Kiaochow.12

After inviting Rehorst to personally make the case for a colonial pavilion in Cologne, the society finally voted to support its construction. As a result, the pavilion became an intensely collaborative project. Like the Werkbund itself, the commission that planned the pavilion was an admixture of public and private interests. The commission included Werkbund members, employees of the colonial administration, Colonial Society members (including members of the society’s women’s committee), and representatives from colonial firms. Membership also overlapped somewhat with the committee for the Colonial Society’s competition. Architects Oechelhaeuser and Julius Fischer, and former colonial businessman, media tycoon, and Colonial Society board member Vohsen, were on both committees. Colonial and Werkbund interests became so intertwined that the commission for the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion met regularly, in the summer and fall of 1913, at the Imperial Colonial Office in Berlin.13

The commission’s task was to translate abstract ideals into concrete design solutions. Determining the building program proved extremely complicated. Dr. Walter Busse, a scholar of agriculture and forestry and a civil servant at the Imperial Colonial Office, envisioned the pavilion as a marketing tool for colonial machinery and raw materials, and proposed to seek input from the Permanent Exhibition Commission for German Industry (Ständige Ausstellungskommission für die deutsche Industrie), a high-profile group that aimed to promote German manufacture and trade through participation in international and local exhibitions.14 A member of the Colonial Economic Committee, Dr. Matthiesen, showed lukewarm support for the idea. He could not envision what the colonial economy stood to gain from the entire endeavor. There was, however,
a genealogy behind Busse and Matthiesen’s coupling of the colonial pavilion with the promotion of colonial industry, agriculture, and economics. There had been an entire hall dedicated to colonial machines at the 1896 colonial exhibition in Berlin, and machines and agricultural products were the foci of the German East African exhibit at the Saint Louis fair. Meanwhile, Rehorst, in his commitment to Werkbund ideals, emphasized that the goal of making colonial architecture more purposive, agreeable, and economical should be kept in sight. But he argued—again in line with emerging Werkbund thinking—that it was also desirable to promote the “technical achievements” of German industry. For him, a display of manufactured colonial goods in various stages of production would be advantageous, but a mere agricultural exhibit was completely out of the question.

Both the Werkbund commission for the colonial pavilion and the board of the Colonial Society discussed building programs at length. They agreed that a single building was unsuitable given the diversity of colonies. Clearly, multiple structures would be ideal if finances allowed. Perhaps they could include different types—like a tropical hospital, a factory building, and a stereotypical prefabricated wood house. Dr. Kliemke, a lawyer and the director of the East African Railway Company, suggested that the buildings should be smaller than life-size so that visitors could walk around them and peek into their windows. Ultimately, the commission decided on two full-scale model structures: a single-family house based on the homes of high-ranking officials in German East Africa and a second house illustrating the home of a humble settler. Organizers conceived of the first house as a Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) with fully furnished rooms illustrating a collaboration between building design and applied and fine arts. This was another case where, in the rhetoric of the Werkbund, a “complete domestic interior” could combat parvenu taste. The second house was to be a more conventional exhibition space. Inside, its walls would be mounted with photographs, drawings, and scale models illustrating “model-worthy” colonial architecture.

A COLONIAL PAVILION IN COLOGNE

An obscure photograph shows the colonial pavilion sitting majestically on a grassy knoll (figure 4.1). A wide staircase, framed by two large dwarf palm trees, leads to a tetrastyle portico and deep “living veranda.” Simplified classical columns support an entablature and frieze with the words Das Kolonial Gehöft (The colonial compound). Above, a flat roof rises to a moderately pitched hip. Beyond the veranda, three rooms—bedroom,
living room, and dining room—are arranged longitudinally to form a single core (figure 4.2). The veranda encircles this core and separates it from some auxiliary spaces: bathroom, toilet, and laundry on one side, and kitchen and servants’ quarters on the other. Separate entrances to these service areas illustrate the paradoxical colonial practice of “keeping the black personnel as far away from the house as possible” despite the fact that their labor was necessary. The resulting building conveyed a modest monumentality that would have performed the required task of broadcasting German cultural superiority and economic power in the colonies. Experiential strategies common in world’s fairs were also used here: visitors were meant to walk into the house, marvel at the exotic animal trophies on its dining room wall, sit on the edge of its simple metal bed, mingle on its veranda, imagine themselves as colonial overlords, and absorb the lessons of modern architecture at the same time.

Paul Pott, a Cologne-based architect, designed both structures in the colonial compound in collaboration with Rehorst, Fischer, and other
members of the commission. Pott was born in 1882 in Cologne. His father was an architect and he attended the Baugewerkschule (building trades school) in his home city before studying at the technical institute in Munich. It was during his time in Munich that he came under the influence of the artist, architect, and reformer Paul Schultze-Naumburg. By 1914 Pott was an established architect with a practice that specialized in English Arts and Crafts–style suburban country houses (Landhäuser) in the Cologne. He had acquired a patron, Dr. Herwy Cotton Merrill, who introduced him to society in the Marienburg villa suburb of Cologne and sent him to England to study the latest developments in residential architecture. Pott’s name first appears on Werkbund membership lists in 1910 and continues to show up sporadically until 1926. He was also a member of one of the three largest professional organizations for architects, the Bund Deutscher Architekten (BDA). Pott’s oeuvre primarily includes residential projects with a small number of commercial buildings, but there is no indication that he completed any projects in the colonies. It is likely that he ended up working on the pavilion by default and as part of Rehorst’s controversial attempt to give Cologne’s most important architects commissions at the exhibition. Even though archival records show that Pott was only minimally involved in discussions leading up to the construction of the pavilion, he is listed as its originator in all official publications. Several articles published in the prestigious Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst describe Pott as a versatile designer, at ease equally with ultramodern and traditional trends: “If sometimes something in the floor plan leaves you
wanting,” his buildings still have “something of the spirit of the master builder, who composes from ‘cubes and pyramids,’ values order, and has the ability to hold back.”20 Pott’s most memorable contribution was his application of English Arts and Crafts principles to the problem of middle-class architecture in Germany. His work in this vein was repeatedly compared to that of Hermann Muthesius and was considered highly innovative. Pott died in 1966 in the very same suburb, Marienburg, whose built environment he had helped shape.21

Unlike their peers on the committee for the competition, Pott and the commission for the pavilion actually sought expertise from the colonies. They wrote to the governments of East Africa and Togo asking about characteristic fittings for colonial interiors and requesting plans for a typical house. A spate of correspondence between Dar es Salaam and Berlin, from July 1913 until May 1914, is evidence of their efforts. In this correspondence, the debate about the need for reform, its ideal institutional site, and the contours of a new colonial architecture is again played out as a power struggle between armchair colonizers and old Africa hands, and metropolitan and colonial protagonists.22 Indeed, Pott’s final plan for the model East African house at the Werkbund Exhibition is similar to a drawing for a new residence sent from Togo. They differ only in the arrangement of the veranda and the use of an open central hall in the Togolese house (figure 4.3).23

The interior of the model house was also a collaborative effort. A letter from Dar es Salaam lists the typical elements of a colonial inte-
rior: Maasai shields, leopard pelts, an elephant foot wastepaper basket, a painting of a lion by colonial artist Wilhelm Kuhnert, mosquito nets for the bedroom, iron objects for the kitchen, a flagpole, and tropical plants. But the commission incorporated only a few of these elements in the Cologne house, in an effort to create a simpler, more purposive interior. In the bedroom, the requisite tropical mosquito netting was draped gracefully over a lightweight metal bed of simple rectilinear bars, painted light gray (figure 4.4). A light-colored painted wood dressing table with a mirror and a matching armoire emphasized straight lines and symmetry. A few chairs stood casually around the room. Their light-colored simple wood bases and horsehair seats contrasted with their multilobed top rails and dark latticed splats. Several long, narrow, dark woven runners covered high-traffic floor areas. Their parallel and crisscrossing placement and contrast with the light-colored painted wood floor created an abstract,

**FIGURE 4.4. BEDROOM, COLONIAL PAVILION, DESIGNED BY PAUL POTT, GERMAN WERKBUND EXHIBITION, COLOGNE, 1914. NOTE THE SIMPLE WOOD FURNITURE AND MOSQUITO-NET DRAPED METAL BED ON CASTERS. FROM EUGEN KALKSCHMIDT, “DIE MÖBEL UND RAUMKUNST AUF DER WERKBUND-AUSSTELLUNG,” MODERNE BAUFORMEN 13, NO. 2 (1914): 472–73.**
nonrepresentational effect unlike the more naturally patterned floor covering seen in the homes of high-ranking officials such as Kurt von Schleinitz in German East Africa.  

The dining room furniture in the model colonial house was much heavier in form than what was seen in the bedroom (figure 4.5). In the dining room, a heavy dark buffet and ponderous dining table on turned legs dominated. Pine dining room chairs had wavy back rails that detracted somewhat from their simple, straight legs and leather seats. Despite the buffet’s abstract composition as a series of consecutive rectangles, the dainty teacups hanging from a curtained china display at its center produced an overall impression of tradition-bound middle-class taste. Additionally, the hunting trophies mounted on the dining room wall—the only direct visual references to the colonies in the room—had no place in a space governed by a reformist sensibility. Overall, as one critic noted, Pott did not achieve a true Sachlichkeit in his dining room. His design did not compare favorably, for example, with the uncluttered modernist ethos of Margarete Knüppelholz-Roeser’s “Haus der Frau” dining room across the plaza.
Most interesting—but frustratingly absent from archival records—was the interior of the living room. The Women’s League of the Colonial Society was given responsibility for this room. In their work for the colonial pavilion, these women followed an agenda distinct from Rehorst and Oechelhauer’s. Their tactics were shaped by the league’s long-standing promotion of women as vital participants in German colonialism. They framed their intervention in terms of the habitual shortage of wood suitable for carpentry and construction in Southwest Africa, and therewith asserted themselves as bearers of a specialized female colonial knowledge. The league worked with Gertrud Claire Holstein, one of the first professional female interior architects in Germany, a self-designated “applied arts designer” of “utilitarian furniture,” proprietor of an independent atelier, and early member of the Werkbund. Holstein, like the few women designers of her generation, saw herself as part of the design reform movement, so Rehorst and Oechelhauer’s motivations would have required no explanation. The Women’s League specifically asked her to repurpose beer crates of the kind commonly exported to the colonies into furniture, using her own “‘Utilis-Möbel’ type” as a foundation. Holstein must have created her design for the colonial pavilion’s living room around the same time that she worked on another notable showcase of women’s design—the interior of Emilie Winkelmann’s “Haus der Frau” at Bugra in Leipzig (1914). A few years earlier, Holstein had designed and executed a youth activities room at the momentous “Die Frau in Haus und Beruf” exhibition (1912) in Berlin. One reviewer described this design as “ingeniously conceived” in its multifunctionality. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about Holstein’s actual designs for the colonial dining room, which must have come close to realizing the goals of reformers. Her invention of colonial “type furniture” is particularly significant in light of commission members’ earlier dispute about the financial and ideological drawbacks of commissioning German-trained indigenous artisans in the colonies to build furniture for the pavilion. For this reason and because they surely represented a novel approach, it is surprising that Holstein’s designs were not widely discussed. Stratigakos offers one explanation when she points out, in another context, that the male-dominated ranks of early twentieth-century architectural reform in Germany were extraordinarily ambivalent about modernizing work by women. This was certainly true of Holstein’s contribution to the 1912 “Die Frau in Haus und Beruf” exhibition, the success of which was attributed to “female intuition about the childhood soul.”

No scholarly analysis of the Werkbund Exhibition discusses the unexpected presence of the colonial pavilion and the organization’s col-
laboration with colonial interests in any detail. Indeed, the building was almost unnoticed even in period commentaries. Perhaps it got lost in the sea of classicizing edifices that flooded the exhibition grounds. It was certainly overshadowed by the handful of buildings—Bruno Taut’s Glashaus, Henry van de Velde’s theater, and Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer’s factory—that made their mark. Though it did not trumpet its reformist credentials through overt visual or formal markers, Pott’s pavilion did in part meet the goals outlined by Rehorst and Oechelhaeuser. They envisioned the two structures that made up the pavilion as types that could be built by unskilled labor using any materials available in any colonial region. This type making was not of the mass-produced variety being discussed by the Werkbund but was homegrown, bound to local conditions, and modern by dint of its translation of everyday practice into reproducible format. Since types were to be based on forms and methods that had proven themselves repeatedly, typification already implied purposiveness. The spacious living veranda, large number of window and door openings, and separate-but-connected service spaces of the colonial pavilion all met the unique climatic conditions of East Africa and functional needs of a middling- to senior-level official in the colonial administration. The pavilion also met the mandate for contextualism. When built of the dark volcanic rock of Buea (southwestern Cameroon) or the locally sourced lime and site-fired brick of Windhoek (Southwest Africa), the model house would harmonize with the “image of the tropical landscape” in ways that imported wallboard, corrugated iron, and “roof felt” never could.

A rare review of the model colonial house described it, despite its classicizing façade, as “strongly sachlich [objective] in layout and construction.” As defined by Muthesius and other reform-minded designers, Sachlichkeit could and did embrace ornament—as long as it was rationally derived rather than blindly imitative in the parvenu fashion of the bourgeoisie. Pott’s stripped columns and minimal frieze fit this model. By the standards of the official Werkbund catalog, the colonial pavilion actually “forgoes all architectural decoration.” It is here that the choice of Pott, Landhaus architect extraordinaire and disciple of the Arts and Crafts, as architect of the pavilion begins to make sense. Maciuika and others have shown that the English house was attractive to Muthesius, Paul Mebes, and other architects rethinking residential architecture in Germany because it suggested an architectural strategy that was free from stylistic precedent but still linked to tradition. “At its most influential, [the Landhaus] combined the comfort and convenience of the English domestic plan with the propriety and order of German Neoclassicism.”
Opening directly to the garden with verandas for receiving unwanted natives or dallying after work on a tropical evening, and a kitchen connected by walkways for the convenience of the enthusiastic colonial homemaker, Pott’s pavilion was the equivalent of a Landhaus designed for the colonial official—perhaps newly promoted to bourgeois status through colonial service.

In fact, Pott’s model colonial house would not have been an unusual sight across the colonial world in the early twentieth century. Neoclassical bungalows, with their characteristic low-slung profiles, wide verandas, and classicizing façades, were recorded in the civil lines, cantonments, and hill stations of British India as early as 1810 but really started to dominate the Indian scene after 1857. German East African building director Friedrich Gurlitt would certainly have encountered such buildings during his 1899 trip to India. But the bungalow and veranda as tropical and colonial forms entered the German imagination through a variety of other routes—from Rudyard Kipling’s alluring tales of India to Margarethe von Eckenbrecher’s narrative of life in Southwest Africa, and representations in exhibitions and advertisements for tropical goods. The irony here is that reformers wanted to develop a uniquely German language of colonial architecture. Pott’s building clearly leaned heavily on a variety of non-German sources and looked remarkably like many “veranda houses” dotting the cities and German farms of Cameroon, Togo, East Africa, Southwest Africa, and even of more temperate Qingdao. Colonial administrations built versions of these houses to shelter their many functionaries. A doctor’s residence in Tanga (German East Africa), built before 1905 as a single-loaded core surrounded by verandas on two sides, illustrates this point. Trading companies, plantations, and individuals also built veranda houses. Had the commission for the colonial pavilion been even more attentive to developments in the colonies, they might have discovered the answer to the problem of colonial architecture in plain view.

Moreover, the idea of erecting model colonial buildings in order to sway public and professional opinion was a world’s fair invention. These earlier demonstration buildings were usually built to illustrate the successes of colonialism rather than to improve colonial architecture. Berlin’s Tropical House at the 1896 exhibition is the best-known example in Germany. Other model colonial buildings such as the Doecker Building at the 1911 International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden, were meant to promote a particular metropolitan product. A model tropical house at the International Building Trades Exhibition in Leipzig (1913) might have been the immediate predecessor to the Werkbund pavilion. These three examples shared a common trait: they were all prefabricated structures—
Prefabricated buildings were some of the earliest architectural responses to colonialism. Early examples responded directly to the needs of colonial governments trying to establish order and courageous settlers striking out for unknown territory. The Werkbund commission invited both Christoph & Unmack and F. H. Schmidt to bid on the construction of the colonial pavilion in Cologne but did not specifically promote prefabricated systems as an ideal solution to the problem of a modern colonial architecture. Strangely, there is no record of Christoph & Unmack’s reply to the invitation, but F. H. Schmidt responded with enthusiasm, sent a representative to the October 21, 1913, meeting of the commission on the Werkbund colonial pavilion, and advised the committee on the project. In the end, the commission rejected the firm’s proposal due to expense. With this, it may have missed an opportunity to build on an existing purposeful, contextual approach to colonial architecture. Whatever the case, it is clear that Pott’s colonial pavilion built on precedents provided by prefabricated and other model colonial structures in Germany.

DISSEMINATING REFORM: AN EXHIBITION OF “MODEL-WORTHY” COLONIAL BUILDINGS

If the East African model house is rarely mentioned in discussions of the Werkbund Exhibition, the second colonial structure, a house for a humble settler, is completely invisible. Only traces remain in archival documents (figures 4.6 and 4.7). They show a building dominated by an immense double roof. Eyebrow dormers in an early sketch do not appear in the final building but hint at Pott’s Arts and Crafts proclivities. Beneath the roof, a row of columns with simple capitals devoid of classical pretensions define a “living gallery” and protect the core of the house from rain and sun. A simple projecting pediment centered longitudinally on the façade creates a porch entry. Beyond, symmetrical openings line both the long and short walls of the four-roomed core. The official catalog of the exhibition tells us to imagine furniture and fittings similar to those of the East African model home, but befitting the plebeian status of the farmers, missionaries, or colonial army veterans who accounted for a large number of German settlers.

Its modest appearance notwithstanding, the home for a settler was pivotal for the effort to reform colonial architecture. Through its contents—an archive of photographs, drawings, and models of “worthy” colonial buildings—more than through its design, reformers imagined
they could shape the imaginations of architects and the general public. This approach complemented the immersive experiential mode of the model house for a high-ranking East African official. Dr. Paul Mahlberg, architect, Werkbund member, and “scientific official” for the exhibition, conceived of the photographic display in a manner that recalls Schultz-Naumburg’s didactic photography in Kulturarbeiten: the committee de-
scribed the display as an “exhibition of models and counter-models of state and private buildings.” At least three hundred items were included. Most came from the Imperial Colonial Office’s own collections, but individual colonial administrations, colonial trading companies, and private colonial firms also contributed. This was a serious commitment of resources and show of support for the project to reform colonial architecture.

Two additional exhibitors bear mentioning: missionary societies and foreign colonial governments. The Basel Missionary Society, one of several foreign and German missions invited to participate, provided photographs of its stations in Cameroon, the Gold Coast, and China. Though based in Switzerland, the Basel Mission had a special relationship with southern Germany, where most of its members originated. These missionaries had worked in west Africa since the 1820s, and had become known among locals and the wider missionary and colonial communities alike, for creating comfortable, attractive, and finely crafted buildings and training new converts in furniture making, brickmaking, and other hands-on trades. Another world-renowned institution, the London Missionary Society, sent photographs from German Samoa, including images of the society’s mission house in Apia, the residence of the director of the Mission’s German school also in Apia, and a mission school in Leulumoega, but also photographs of indigenous girls in a mission physical education class in Papanta, and, most interestingly, of a “church for natives” in Apia. Had the hybrid Wachagga chapel that missionary August W. Schreiber extolled to members of the committee for the competition for colonial architecture been displayed not only at Bugra in Leipzig but also at the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, it would have presented an interesting parallel to the Samoan “native” church. Indeed, the very presence of these mission societies at the exhibition may be attributable to Schreiber’s presence in the project to reform colonial architecture and the arguments he made for missionary expertise. For their part, both the Basel Mission and the London Missionary Society were well versed in the exhibition medium. Art historian Annie Coombes points out that missionaries developed a distinct variation on the colonial exhibition that enabled them to inform the public about their work, stimulate financial and moral support, and negotiate a space for themselves within but separate from the formal colonial order. So, the appearance of mission societies in a display of “model-worthy” colonial architecture at the Werkbund Exhibition follows this logic.

Images of secular colonial architecture from India, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and the Dutch East Indies also appeared in the photography exhibit. Colored floor plans of dwellings in Madras, photographs of Admiralty House in Bombay, a proposed bungalow for the manager of the
Singapore & Johore Rubber Company, a large private house in Batavia, and many other examples were shown. The Imperial Colonial Office procured these images through German consular offices, who either commissioned them from local architects directly or obtained them from the appropriate authorities in their host countries.50 The commission for the colonial pavilion perceived illustrations of buildings from more “mature” colonial powers as positive models for the German colonies. Architecture in some of these places had even developed to the point that “old” and “new” colonial styles could be discerned. In Batavia, for example, the old style could be found in the sprawling, marble-floored mansions set in large gardens on the leafy streets around Koningsplein in Weltevreden (Jakarta). By contrast, the new style was found on smaller lots, and was much more economical in its choice of materials. These images from Batavia, Singapore, Colombo, and Calcutta accomplished one feat that no other display at the Werkbund Exhibition did: they were the only instance in which foreign governments were permitted to participate at the exhibition. They thus endowed the exhibition with an international character reminiscent of universal expositions.51

Nevertheless, most of the photography exhibit in the model house for a settler was dedicated to the German colonies. Every colony was included, but Southwest Africa stole the show with a display of over one hundred items. Rather than focusing exclusively on buildings, the exhibit of “models and counter-models” became as encyclopedic as a typical world’s fair. It included seven categories of images: urban streetscapes, landscapes, public works, construction photographs, standard colonial types, ethnographic portraits, and the architecture of the colonized. One trend stands out in the distribution of items in these categories: homes, farms, and other structures belonging to colonized populations were only rarely portrayed. Here as well as in the Colonial Society’s competition, colonial architecture was “whites only.” When this architecture was portrayed at all, the exhibit presented it through archaeological and ethnographic frameworks that highlighted racial and cultural difference. For example, the Great Mosque at Kilwa Kisiwani, which was built in the tenth or eleventh century, was one of few non-European buildings named in the exhibit. It may have been included because its antique origin seemed to support assumptions about the dismal state of contemporary East African culture and society. References to nameless, placeless “indigenous huts” were more typical. Even named examples like “New Hannover Hut and Women’s Group in Baogung (New Guinea)” emphasized ethnic identity over architecture.52 Two exceptions may have shown colonized people engaging in modern life: the palaces of Rudolf Manga Bell of
Douala (figure 4.8) and Ibrahim Njoya of Bamum, both in Cameroon. Manga Bell represented the cosmopolitan elite class of Cameroon who had traded with Europeans for centuries, spoke their languages, adopted aspects of their behaviors, and controlled significant wealth. Europeans, especially after the onset of formal colonization, alternately admired and reviled this class of so-called middlemen who had access to a useful but potentially dangerous hybrid subjectivity. Colonial commentators made much of Manga Bell’s preference for European dress, monogamous Christian marriage, and his European-influenced “pagoda” palace. Hybridity proved fatal for Manga Bell when he was executed in August 1914 for fighting against the government’s expropriation of Douala land and rights.53 In the deliberations leading to the Colonial Society’s decision to hold a competition, Oechelhaeuser had invoked Manga Bell’s architecture as proof of the low quality of architecture in the colonies. Oechelhaeuser’s critique resonated with racist undertones: style architecture becomes all the more tragic in the hands of the uncivilized hordes.
Ibrahim Njoya of Bamum also had a high profile in the German colonial imagination. Colonial administrators admired his physical stature, cultivated demeanor, orderly kingdom, and openness to European ways of doing things. His soaring, structurally complex, and ornately decorated palace complex became a destination for European visitors traveling to the grasslands of western Cameroon. But Njoya too adopted elements of German clothing and slowly began to transform parts of his palace to reflect new, modern, German-influenced standards: he used corrugated iron sheets instead of thatch for roofs, arched instead of squared-off openings, and masonry instead of woven walls in some of his newer buildings. German visitors found these buildings problematic, because, like the “Hosenneger” of German colonialism and mimic men of Anglo-Indian discourse, they were “almost the same but not quite.”

Without any photographic evidence of the exhibit, it is difficult to say which part of Njoya’s palace was on display and which message was being conveyed: the traditional palace as an ethnographic specimen, or Njoya’s hybrid palace buildings as models or countermodels for the new colonial architecture.
Another category in the photography exhibit, drawings of standard colonial types, deserves mention as well. Colonial architects created some of these drawings specifically for the Werkbund exhibit. An architect identified only as Lieb not only provided the commission with information about typical East African colonial layouts and interiors but also drew several types for display inside the pavilion, including the three-room residence in figure 4.9. Lieb, who was based in Dar es Salaam, was particularly enthusiastic about the project and planned to visit the Werkbund Exhibition to see the completed product.55 Type drawings, commissioned for the exhibition and otherwise, also came in from Southwest Africa, Togo, New Guinea, and Samoa. These types were defined by a combination of functional (residential or administrative) and demographic categories like race, class, and marriage status. In the Togo section of the exhibit, for instance, visitors were shown ten variations of a house for a civil servant. These types met a wide variety of needs and conditions within a single functional category. Types enabled a kit-of-parts approach that must have greatly eased the pressure on colonial building administrations to service their vast territories with limited staff. In the process, types maximized the efficiency and economy of buildings in the colonies. Of all the images shown on the walls of the colonial pavilion, these type drawings might have been the most useful for the purposes of reform.

Oechelhaeuser and members of the committee for the Colonial Society’s competition also planned to send some of the best submissions to be displayed in the “House for Pictures from the Colonies” at the Werkbund Exhibition. But these drawings may never have made it to Cologne: sixteen days after Germany declared war on Russia and the Werkbund Exhibition precipitously closed, internal memos show that Julius Fischer was still debating which submissions to send to Cologne.56 Had they been shown, Richard Seel’s South Seas hospital, Ernst Leistner’s government office in Southwest Africa, and other winning competition submissions would have materialized reformers’ vision for a purposive, contextual colonial architecture. Visitors could have triangulated their experience of standing inside the model East African house with the “models and countermodes” pictured in the “House for Colonial Pictures.” Architects, engineers, artists, and others trained to visualize three-dimensional space and interpolate orthographic representations with photographic images and empirical observation would have benefited most from this exercise. For the general public, however, the “little gables, diminutive bays, and miniature towers” that appeared in photographs of Swakopmund’s railway station (Southwest Africa) and the Governor’s Palace in Buea (Cameroon) might have evoked a sense of connection to the Heimat abroad rather than a desire for reform.
Amid the type drawings, photographs of public works, prominent colonial structures, and anonymous indigenous buildings actually shown at the colonial pavilion were ethnographic images, like “Samoa: A Young Man Being Tattooed on the Arm,” that seem out of place. What inspired the organizers of the pavilion to expand the scope of the exhibit to include subjects so far removed from the original mandate? There is no evidence that Mahlberg, who curated the show, rejected any submissions as unsuitable for display. Rather, with the exception of items like the drawings from East Africa and Batavia that were procured specifically to demonstrate good design, the exhibit showed colonial life from a variety of perspectives. The original goals of the exhibit seem to have merged with long-established approaches to representing colonialism, and the contents of the exhibit changed accordingly. The urge to document and collect everything related to colonialism, and the emphasis on markers of cultural difference such as the long, ochre-dyed locks depicted in a portrait of a Maasai warrior recall world’s fair practices. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that the colonial pavilion was not an aberration at the exhibition in Cologne. Rather, it was part of a larger constellation of practices and spatial, visual, and architectural types linking the Werkbund and the discourse on architectural reform to global currents.

Like most buildings at the Werkbund Exhibition, the colonial pavilion and its photographic display became a casualty of the war. On August 1, 1914, exhibition buildings were converted into accommodations for homeless families and infantry battalions, and the plazas and gardens that had so recently hosted public amusements and cultural pursuits now saw military exercises. Pott’s building proved its flexibility when it was transformed into a military hospital. After the war, the colonial pavilion, like van de Velde’s theater and other exhibition buildings, would have been demolished had it not been auctioned and rebuilt in Blankenberg on the outskirts of Cologne. With this, the effort to reform colonial architecture came to an abrupt and unceremonious end, but the alliance between modern architecture and German colonialism would endure.

**THE WORLD COMES TO COLOGNE**

It has been readily and widely observed that our exhibition does not concern one of those numerous exhibition undertakings that is at pains to lure enormous masses of undiscriminating visitors through an abundance of exhibits and through the immense dimensions of the exhibition complex itself. Rather, we want and will achieve something unique: an overview of the best of German work.
On opening day, Carl Rehorst applauded the Werkbund Exhibition as a strong showing of “German work.” What did it mean to celebrate “German work” in 1914, and how exactly did the Werkbund intend to accomplish this goal? Sebastian Conrad traces the efflorescence of the concept of German work around the turn of the century to internal and external factors: a new positive connotation associated with work, a narrative of Germany as a country of work, and an overtly judgmental qualitative distinction between German and foreign ways of working. Conrad claims, very convincingly, that this new topos of German work reflected an attempt not only to formulate a cultural identity that transcended the pre-industrial and modern eras but also to overcome a loss of national character brought about by the opening up of national territory through labor migration, international trade, and colonialism. In this sense, the idea of German work was undoubtedly a product of fin-de-siècle globalization.60

The Werkbund offers a case study in the evolution of this topos of German work. From the beginning, the organization oriented itself toward the contradictory impulses of industrial capitalism and its attendant internationalism, and a longing for the harmony of past eras and attempt to retain national characteristics. German work bridged these two poles: it was the unique moral authority of work in Germany that would allow the country to conquer the global aesthetic market without losing its self-identity.61 Among a variety of media (public lectures, publications), the Werkbund narrowed in on exhibitions as an ideal way to implement its agenda. Exhibitions had long played a role in architecture but their usage and format changed drastically around the turn of the century. In order to capture the imagination of a mass public, architects and curators now tried to recreate the three-dimensional experience of a building using building fragments and even full-scale structures within architecture’s display spaces.62 The Werkbund continued to develop these practices in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Though not yet formalized under a single umbrella, Werkbund protagonists and principles were already in evidence at the Third Applied Arts Exhibition in Dresden in 1906. At this exhibition, applied arts were reorganized along national rather than state and regional lines and put into the service of industrial and commercial interests in ways that preempted Werkbund thinking. Dresden’s emphasis on harmoniously designed complete interiors also makes it a Werkbund exhibition avant la lettre.63 The groundswell of change continued a few years later at the 1908 Munich Applied Arts Exhibition. As a consequence of its growing prominence (fed in part by Muthesius’s ties to the Prussian state), the Werkbund was invited to coordinate the German section at the 1910 Brussels World’s Fair. This
led to subsequent involvement at the international expositions in Liège (1911) and Ghent (1913), and national and trade exhibitions in Mannheim (1912) and Leipzig (1913). All of these appearances were prefigured, however, by the individual and collective contributions of soon-to-be Werkbund members at the expositions in Paris (1900), Turin (1902), and Saint Louis (1904). It was at these expositions that German applied artists decisively illustrated Germany’s new leadership over France and England in art and industry. The point of this litany of Werkbund activities is to emphasize the degree to which the exhibition medium, especially in its world’s fair incarnation, was part of the genetic profile of the Werkbund. If the international exposition was a venue par excellence for modern international trade and nationalist posturing, as German commentators like Alfons Paquet argued, then it was through this means that “German work” could be best showcased. Even foreign observers like Le Corbusier identified the Werkbund with a new turn toward exhibitions.

The idea that this prehistory shaped subsequent Werkbund developments, and perhaps even led directly to the desire to host a large independent exhibition in Cologne, is not new. Reform is by definition predicated on the rejection of what has come before, and on perpetual reinvention and progress. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Werkbund had an ambivalent relationship to earlier exhibitions and fairs. Just as organizers of the 1906 Dresden fair had claimed eight years earlier, so too did the Werkbund aim to create a “completely new exhibition form” at the Cologne exhibition in 1914. With the Cologne exhibition, exhibition-planning responsibilities passed from Theodor Fischer to Peter Behrens—who had now, through his collaboration with the Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG), become a poster child for Werkbund principles. In his initial proposal for the Cologne event, Behrens tried to translate the Werkbund charter directly into built form but, according to museum director Angelika Thiekötter, failed to account for the independent life that the exhibition genre had acquired. For example, there was no place within Behrens’s proposed tripartite display taxonomy (production, market, and form) for the event’s financiers—primarily the government and businessmen of Cologne who had no prior links to the Werkbund—to promote themselves and their fair city. The organizing committee soon gave up Behrens’s plan and adopted the more comprehensive exhibition configuration sanctioned by the recently established Permanent Exhibition Commission for German Industry. The tensions that emerged during the planning phases of the event cement the link I am postulating between the Cologne event and the world’s fair tradition. In the section below, I identify characteristic spatial, material, and vi-
sual types associated with expositions within the Werkbund Exhibition in order to uncover how this link worked in practice. Expanding on my analysis of the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion as the product of a merger of modernist reform and colonial ideology, I reinsert colonialism into the discussion of modern architecture in Germany.

On first glance, the Cologne fair bears little resemblance to a conventional world’s fair. After all, this was a highly specialized professional event. But the fair’s siting and spatial organization mimicked long-established practices. The event was held on a long, narrow, twenty-hectare site on the undeveloped right bank of the Rhine (figure 4.10). As was typical for world’s fairs, this site was chosen for strategic reasons: Rehorst and city leaders saw the exhibition as an opportunity to expand Cologne’s physical limits and develop its transport infrastructure. Unlike its more worldly counterparts and to the disappointment of a reviewer writing in the prominent journal *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, the site was not graced with a grand portal building: “One does not cross a portal building, but must first go under a footbridge, through a narrow passage in a sober utility structure, and then traverse a distance of 300 m, to reach the Administration Building.” In the opinion of this reviewer, the four neo-Egyptian columns and flanking faceted towers of the Administration Building would have been more successful at the actual entrance to the site. But he seems to have missed the point. This was not a generic exposition but one hosted by the most radical architects of the land. On the occasion of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in Saint Louis in 1904, Friedrich von Thiersch, a representative of the transitional generation between historicism and modernism, had already disparaged the arch-and-colonnade-encrusted grand portals common at world’s fairs. Not marking the exposition’s entrance with a grand portal, or at least defamiliarizing the location of the grand portal, was much more in keeping with Werkbund goals.

Beyond the underpass and Administration Building, the site gradually resolved into a dominant northeast-southwest axis parallel to the Rhine. A “Street of Shops” (*Ladenstrasse*), café, Austrian Pavilion, beer restaurant, wine restaurant, and Behrens’s Festival Hall (*Festhaus*) all flanked this central axis. A subsidiary axis leading from the entrance past Hermann Muthesius’s Pavilion for Color Display (*Farbenschau*) terminated at Wilhelm Kreis’s Tea House. The entire site was brought into balance by a cross-axis marked on one end by Theodor Fischer’s Main Exhibition Hall (*Haupthalle*), which faced a large cross-shaped plaza, and culminated at the Rhine. This combination of axis, cross-axis, subsidiary axis, and terminal vista established a Beaux-Arts-like hierarchy of buildings and spaces often seen at international expositions.
Despite such calculated strategies, the Cologne exposition, in good world’s fair tradition, remained difficult to grasp. Our reviewer confirms this point: “Only those who reach the exhibition by steamboat can achieve an unobstructed view . . . and it is from the steamboat that [the exhibition’s] overall picture is best observed.” Here, the reviewer holds the Werkbund Exhibition to a standard defined by world’s fairs—the idea that their scope and organization must be immediately and fully legible to visitors—and raises Simmelesque questions about urban modernity. To counter this problem, the architect of record in Cologne, Rehorst, adopted another typical exposition strategy—the use of natural topographic features such as rivers as unifying elements in site design.

The Cologne fair also reproduced the binary site plan type. One part of the site was dedicated to the lofty goal of educating the public and the other given over to populist entertainment and the profit motive. A physical barrier separated the serious business of the official exhibition to the north from the amusement park to the south. Between them lay a stadium that hosted Olympic trials—a direct inheritance from world’s fairs and evidence of the hidden internationalism of the Werkbund event. Different roles translated into contrasting planning strategies. On one hand was the hierarchical planning model already mentioned, which was used in the professional section of the exhibition. Having perused the aisles of Fischer’s Main Hall, for example, visitors might sample any of four major buildings arranged around the main plaza and designed in the stripped-down classicizing language that Rehorst and Muthesius seemed to favor. Only then might they reach van de Velde’s theater, Knüppelholz’s Haus der Frau, and Gropius and Meyer’s model factory in a small plaza to the north. Showing an understanding of the hierarchical workings of the site, designers seemed to jockey for position around the central plaza. Site location may have become an index of how closely each building conveyed the messages that the exhibition’s leadership wished to convey. At some point, Knüppelholz’s women’s pavilion and Pott’s colonial pavilion switched places. Pott’s building ended up in a marginal location tucked into a gap beside Fischer’s Main Hall. It is possible that this metamorphosis also indexed the decreasing potency of the colonial pavilion’s reform message under pressure from colonial ideology.

On the other hand, the entertainment zone displayed a decidedly less formal character in the placement and design of individual buildings. Its buildings, illustrated in the postcard in figure 4.11, were smaller, non-monumental, and even tongue-in-cheek—as in the exaggerated skyward tilt of the façade of the Futurist Pub. Here were some of the most characteristic world’s fair types, including elevated viewpoint structures like
the mountain railroad (*Bergbahn*) and planetarium ride (*Planetenbahn*). The foundational tension in the planning of the exhibition—between the original principles of the Werkbund and those imposed by the exposition medium—played out in the amusement park as well. Rehorst made it clear that the Werkbund only agreed to include an amusement park out of concern for the financial viability of the fair. The park was an “unwelcome addition” that the Werkbund would attempt to endow with a “mantle of beauty” without compromising its “kitschy” ability to attract the masses.72 As if to reinforce this conceptual dissonance, the amusement park was excluded from many photographs of the event and marginalized in subsequent histories.

Rehorst and Werkbund leaders were especially vehement about excluding another exposition type, the *clou*: “We do not have and do not want to have any other ‘clou’ for our exhibition than the quality of our exhibition wares: quality as a result of material, technique, and form.”73 The clou was the central feature of an exposition around which the event’s identity could be fashioned. By creating a structure with a strong physical
presence (often manifested as exceptional height, as in the case of the Eiffel Tower), the clou functioned as an indexical sign encapsulating all aspects of the exhibition into a single representative object. It was the consummate means through which designers made a fair legible to the public. Because it was meant to fulfill these functions, the clou was built with more care than the largely temporary structures of an exposition. Clous often remained in place long after the brief lifetime of their associated expositions. As such, they became one of the means through which each exposition nurtured its own memory and guaranteed its own reproduction. The organizers of the Werkbund Exhibition did plan some permanent buildings: George Metzendorf’s New Lower Rhine Village was designed for future use as an artists’ colony. Instead, it became a military encampment during the war, and housing for the unemployed thereafter. Until its demolition in 1957 it was incorporated into various exhibitions on the site. Likewise, colonial architecture reformers had discussed reassembling the colonial pavilion in the colonies. Circumstances intervened and Pott’s building served military functions before it was relocated to the suburbs of Cologne. The exhibition did end up with several unintentional clous, however. Streetlamps and other ephemera from the exhibition were reused throughout the city. Furthermore, the memories of Taut’s Glashaus, Gropius and Meyer’s factory, and van de Velde’s theater now stand for the exhibition in ways that Rehorst and Muthesius could never have imagined.74

Fischer’s Main Hall was another example of the propagation of exposition types at the Werkbund Exhibition. Its winged, domed form was a version of the standard exposition hall parti that dates back at least to the Crystal Palace. Fischer transformed the conventional rectangular footprint into a square by extending the “nave” and adding three “transepts.” But even this makeover reenacted the development of the “herringbone”-type hall, which first appeared at the Viennese exposition in 1873.75 Though disparaged by some critics for failing to make an impression, Fischer’s exterior showed remarkable restraint in comparison to its predecessors. Unlike the encrusted surfaces of Paris’s 1878 Trocadéro, for example, large sections of Fischer’s façade remained unadorned. Only majolica panels and arches carved in relief in the architrave of the building interrupted the exterior walls. Inside, twelve wall paintings in the controversial, new, “mystical,” non-subject-oriented, abstract manner promoted by artist and teacher Adolf Hölzel were an attempt to realize a synthesis between architecture and the fine arts.76

By some estimates, however, Fischer’s Main Hall failed to meet expectations. As one critic lamented, “Fischer’s main building disappoints. It
functions as a terminus only in the least meaningful way. No uninitiated person could guess at the mammoth arrangement of halls within.” If the essence of the exposition hall was to function as an iconic sign of its own contents and a key for the entire exhibition, then Fischer’s building fell short. Part of the problem was that the building failed to make its functional and structural logic intelligible in the manner that reform-minded architects were advocating. Here the issue of legibility linked exposition discourse to the ideals of architectural reform. Other reverberations of world’s fair types could be found at the Cologne event. The women’s pavilion, machine hall, old Europe, and model workers’ housing types all made their appearance. Most crucial to the arguments I put forward in this chapter, however, is the appearance of the two most prevalent representations of colonialism at world’s fairs—the colonial pavilion and the native village—at the Werkbund Exhibition. We have already linked Pott’s colonial pavilion to its predecessors at previous German and foreign fairs. Its presence should also be interpreted in relation to a “Congo Village” built in the amusement park across from the main exhibition. Again, this physical distancing was a typical international exposition strategy. Usually, the opposition between representations of the primitive state of non-European culture (the native village) and the new, improved colony (the colonial pavilion) was illustrated within a single colonial section. Though they were not presented together as part of a colonial exhibition, I read a similar dichotomy in the siting and function of Cologne’s colonial pavilion and its Congo Village.

In its planning, the Congo Village reflected the complicated history of the native village type in Germany. Its management, like the organizers of the German East Africa exhibit at the world’s fair in Saint Louis, sidestepped the 1901 ban on displaying German colonial subjects by recruiting people from the French Congo (which shared a border with German Cameroon). These people were probably urbanized professionals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, who, for the purpose of the Werkbund fair, were presented as bearers of a singular, premodern, rural, Congolese culture. Newspaper reports allow us to envision the physical environment and daily lives of the Congolese performers in Cologne. The village was a walled group of “huts” built to be “as truthful an imitation as possible” of those in the Congo. In addition to living quarters, a stage and building for dancing, “harem of the chief,” and small mosque complete with Mullah created the exotic atmosphere that was necessary to entice the public. The inhabitants of the village were required to pursue their daily tasks in public view in order to simultaneously entertain and educate
visitors. Every day became an occasion for dances, parades, and games, and the Werkbund management took full advantage to attract visitors to the official exhibition, as a two-for-the-price-of-one advertisement in the *Rheinische Zeitung* of July 21, 1914, announced. As was wont to happen, the line between performance and reality became rather blurred. At least one visitor recognized the artificial character of the Congo Village in an incisive report about the baptism of a child born into captivity: “The somewhat noisy preparations for the baptism are probably more exhibition customs than folk customs from home.” Timothy Mitchell describes such paradoxical claims to truth premised on the apparent realism of representation as something unique to the exposition genre and its function in colonialism: “the world is conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition.”

An absence of archival evidence makes it difficult to speak definitively about the material impact of the Congo Village. Given the tendency that the managers of these shows had toward plagiarizing each other’s
constructions, it is entirely possible that Cologne’s “huts” had the squat, thick masonry walls, pointed, bushy, thatched roof and deep eaves, and low, sculpted, arched door opening of a dwelling from the Chari (Shari) region in Congo that had been included fourteen years earlier in the French Congo display at the 1900 Paris Exposition (figure 4.12).83

Whichever form its buildings took, it is highly likely that the Congo Village, like its counterparts at the 1896 Berlin fair, presented a deliberate contrast in form, materials, structure, and interior design and décor, to the model colonial house and thus advanced colonial ideology. In the Congo Village, ethnographic objects that were used only sparingly in the model East African house or depicted in the photographic exhibit next door might have been seen in context, resting casually against the walls of a “hut” or donned by village members for a dance number. Even with the adjustments exhibition designers inevitably made to indigenous forms to adapt them to exposition settings, an architect studying the “Chari hut” might have been struck by the strong correspondence between its pliable masonry, curvilinear walls, and insulating, water-shedding functions. But he or she would have to be knowledgeable about Congolese climate and culture and less susceptible to the lure of racializing discourses to appreciate this architecture as contextual and purposive, as Hermann Frobenius did in his 1894 architectural ethnography. We can only speculate about how the Congo Village in Cologne actually colored the perceptions of architects and designers visiting the exhibition.

Only a short walk away from the Congo Village, visitors could perform the ultimate fantasy of colonial conquest by shooting a “resisting Kaffir” in the leg at a “cinematographic shooting range.”84 Only newspaper reports remain as traces of this violent installation that likely evolved from the immense lantern slides, and cyclical panorama and diorama paintings that had been so crucial for generating colonial fervor across class and regional lines in Germany in the 1880s.85 Like these visual technologies, the cinematographic shooting range probably depicted a colonial environment teeming with action. It might have been similar to a version that appeared at the 1920 Oktoberfest in Munich, which involved a slide projector, colorful African heads, a moving frame, electromagnetically operated flaps, and a red pinpoint of light.86 The combination of exotic landscape and animated figures must have created an impressive reality effect that not only represented existing but also invented new forms of colonial knowledge and experience. These colonial shooting ranges—relics from exhibitions long past—can still be found in cities like Munich today.87

Meanwhile, across the grounds in the Main Hall, the display by the J. Feinhals tobacco company produced a different kind of colonial knowl-
edge. As a long-standing tobacco distributor, the Cologne-based Feinhals family had ties to tobacco-growing regions around the world. Joseph Feinhals Jr., the son of the founder of the firm, was also an art enthusiast who had started a small museum in his home that included Indian and African sculptures, wood carvings, engravings, and rare books, as well as a collection of paintings and sculptures by cutting-edge visual artists. Feinhals, who was also a prominent Werkbund member in Cologne, displayed some of these items in his exhibit “Art in the Tobacco Trades,” in the Main Hall. They were arranged in cabinets underneath a large-scale textile wall hanging commissioned from the emerging expressionist artist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Sewn in light-colored appliqué on the dark fabric were vignettes alluding to the origins and evolution of tobacco products: in the center, a Native American feathered chief smokes a pipe surrounded by his animal-like warriors, a group of half-naked people smoke pipes on the left, and Europeans sample and purchase tobacco on the right (figure 4.13). According to art historian Jill Lloyd, the radiating and hierarchical
placement and feathered anthropomorphic motifs of the Native American grouping suggest that Kirchner appropriated Tlingit or Kwakiutl artifacts at ethnographic museums for this painting. But his visual language is much more angular, nonrepresentational, and monochromatic. As Lloyd points out, the suggestion of a friendly trade in tobacco between Europeans, Native Americans, and African slaves (perhaps represented by the African sculptures in the display) was disingenuous, and the apolitical adoption of “primitive” artifacts as models for a new, modern reintegration of art and society, entirely contradictory. Nevertheless, in the Feinhals exhibit, Kirchner and his patron also demonstrated how colonialism and its documentary project could serve the cause of aesthetic reform. Because of the layered nature of expositions, it seems likely that in addition to the colonial pavilion, Congo Village, cinematographic shooting range, and tobacco exhibit, the Werkbund Exhibition might have hosted some other as-yet-unidentified colonial moments and spaces.

Modernist reform and colonial architecture met and inflected each other on the occasion of the Werkbund Exhibition. The dangers of “style architecture” and the incredible possibilities of “type” as a heuristic for a modern architectural language became even clearer in the context of designing a model house for the colonies. Colonial architecture provided an opportunity to test the nature and limits of concepts like objectivity, purposiveness, and contextualism. But there is more to the story. Rather than simply merging architectural reform and colonial interests, the colonial pavilion was overcome by colonial ideology and the exhibition acquired some of the many trappings of colonial representation.
At barely ten thousand people, Niesky is one of the smallest towns in the state of Saxony in eastern Germany. The wide, tree-lined main streets and cobblestone sidewalks that converge at the town square evoke a sense of past glory now carefully preserved. But no one would ever guess that this town was once the headquarters of a building firm whose products reached every continent except Antarctica, and whose rise and fall was tied to Germany’s colonial projects and ambition for global economic and political influence. This firm, Christoph & Unmack, conquered overseas territories with its industrialized methods and modular and standardized forms, and in the process, became an agent of infrastructural imperialism. The firm became a darling of reformist architects when they discovered, in prefabrication, the long-sought architectural expression of modern life. In their collaborations with Christoph & Unmack, these architects appropriated architectural technologies and forms that had been perfected in the colonial field, and connected the modernist rhetoric of purposiveness (Zweckmäßigkeit), objectivity (Sachlichkeit), and contextualism (Bodenständigkeit) with an existing discourse on building efficiently and contextually in the tropics. In this way, the history of prefabrication in Germany is a case study in the complex imbrications between colonialism and modernism.

WHAT IS PREFABRICATION?

Prefabrication is one of the most loaded terms in modern and contemporary architecture discourse. In general, prefabrication refers to the process by which buildings are planned and produced in their entirety ahead of
actual installation. Terms like demountable, modular, and portable are often used interchangeably with prefabrication. Indeed, there is considerable overlap: if a building is fabricated ahead of its installation on site then it likely has the ability to be moved, assembled, and disassembled at will. Prefabrication therefore marks a shift away from traditional site-based, real-time approaches to building. Philosopher Jürgen Habermas, for example, identifies prefabrication as a defining characteristic of architectural modernity brought on by the “subjugation of architecture to new functional, above all economic, imperatives” in the industrial era. The definition of prefabrication therefore implies a certain philosophical position—one that embraces the emancipatory potential of industrialization, modernization, modernism, and modernity.

**PREFABRICATION AND COLONIALISM: A MISUNDERSTOOD PAIRING**

On 27 and 28 January the male convicts and the rest of the marines landed. Some cleared the ground for the different encampments; some pitched tents; some landed the stores; a party of convicts erected the portable house brought from England for the Governor on the east side of the cove. So, as Collins puts it, the spot which had so lately been the abode of silence and tranquility was now changed to that of noise, clamor, and confusion, though after a time order gradually prevailed everywhere.

This excerpt describes the establishment of Botany Bay, the first British settlement in Australia. Variations of this scene show up repeatedly in histories of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European colonization projects. This makes it all the more surprising that prefabrication does not feature more prominently in histories of colonial architecture and urbanism. Gilbert Herbert’s now-canonical study, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century*, remains the only major scholarly work on the topic. Herbert dates the origins of a self-conscious philosophy of mass producing buildings to the London carpenter John Manning. To support his son’s planned emigration to Australia around 1829, Manning designed a precut wood house that could be deployed in a few hours without a specialized labor force. His house consisted of grooved timber posts that bolted into floor and wall plates, and were filled in with interchangeable wall, window, and door panels. Simple wood trusses supported tarpaulin covers that could later be replaced with permanent roofing. Manning’s innovation was to pare the house down to its most elemental components and thereby minimize
packing weight and shipping costs. Manning also standardized and coordinated all components dimensionally so that they could be produced at lower cost and in large quantities. Manning and his competitors in England and Ireland designed houses, churches, schools, markets, exhibition halls, and other structures, and distributed them across the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Declining British immigration to Australia, the establishment of construction industries in the colonies themselves, competition from non-British manufacturers, the development of cast and corrugated iron prefabrication technologies, changing tastes and expectations, and a world economic downturn obliterated the British wood prefabrication industry by the 1880s.4

Herbert followed up his earlier book with another groundbreaking study in 1984—this time about German modernists’ rediscovery of prefabrication in the 1920s and their interminable efforts to realize a fully factory-built house.5 What is missing in this scholarship is an analysis of the originary link between prefabrication and colonization. The fact that prefabrication appears again and again in stories of European territorial expansion points to its importance as a tool—like steamboats, rifles, quinine, and the telegraph—of empire.6 Prefabrication therefore belongs as much to British, French, and German histories as it does to Australian, South African, Sierra Leonean and “other” histories.

Toward the end of the era of wood prefabrication in Britain, a Danish army officer, Johan Gerhard Clemens Döcker, filed patents for a transportable wood barrack in central Europe, Russia, and the United States. Döcker’s invention consisted of hinged wall panels covered on the outside with a felt waterproofing area. As Döcker noted in his patent application, his waterproofing efforts differentiated his from existing systems: “I am not aware that structures of this class, composed of sections covered each with an impermeable covering, have heretofore been known or used.”7 A German company eventually acquired Döcker’s patent, which formed the basis for a new, globally recognized prefabrication industry in Germany.8 As the Royal British Commission on the 1880s Boer Wars in South Africa noted, “In the German army, in time of peace, they provided huts on well-known, well-studied systems, capable of being packed into boxes and carried, and put up anywhere. England had not one of those, and there was the very greatest want of them.”9

**EARLY GERMAN PREFAB: THE RELIGIOUS ORIGINS**

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the history of prefabrication in Germany is its connection to religious proselytization, and especially to the
work of the Moravian Church among the Inuit of Labrador. The Moravians are a German-speaking reformist Protestant denomination. They fled persecution in Bohemia in 1722 and found refuge on an aristocratic estate in Saxony. Here they established a new town, Herrnhut, in which they could practice their religion freely. Religion was built into every element of daily life at Herrnhut and into the physical layout of the town,
which became a model for subsequent Moravian towns. From their base in Herrnhut, the Moravians launched a campaign to spread the gospel to all corners of the world. The first missionary work took place in the West Indies in 1732, followed by missions to Greenland and Labrador, Suriname, southern Africa, and North America.10

Learning from the extraordinary effort it took to provide basic shelter for the Labrador missions of 1752 and 1771, the Danish carpenter-turned-missionary Jens Haven organized to have all the necessary boards for the new mission to Hopedale (northern Labrador) “cut, planed, and grooved” at the existing mission station in Nain in 1782. Clearly, what he created was not a “kit of parts” in the sense of a fully industrialized building product. Rather, the importance of the Labrador story lies in the fact that these missionaries imagined that they could minimize human labor and maximize well-being by designing and constructing buildings in advance of installation and inhabitation. This first prefabricated building had to be replaced in 1833—this time with a structure imported from

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**FIGURE 5.2. DOECKER BUILDING, BY CHRISTOPH & UNMACK, RUTENGAPIO, GERMAN EAST AFRICA, 1894. THE PREFABRICATED BUILDING IS ELEVATED ON A GROUND FLOOR STRUCTURE MADE FROM LOCAL MATERIALS. THE PHOTOGRAPH DATES FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE MORAVIAN MISSION STATION IN RUTENGAPIO. COURTESY OF MORAVIAN ARCHIVES, HERRNHUT.**
distant Germany. The pattern continued at later Moravian missions in Labrador: prefabricated churches and mission houses were created in Germany, then shipped along with several carpenters to Hebron in the 1830s and Makkovik in 1896 (figure 5.1).11

The Labrador case is also important because it highlights prefabrication as a colonial technology. The British were struggling for dominance in the region when Moravians embarked on their campaign to convert the Inuit. In fact, the British believed it would be much easier to control the Inuit and their resources if the Moravians could persuade them to desist from “murderous” behavior, polygamy, alcohol, and sloth.12 Thus, colonialism and missionary work enabled each other.13 This was the case with the Moravians in eighteenth-century Labrador, in the Caribbean, southern Africa, West Africa, and India; but it was also true of Moravian and other German missionary societies working in the official German colonies after 1884. Thus, the geographies of colonization and German Protestant proselytization became part of the geography of German prefabrication: at least three one-room prefabricated buildings marked the founding of the Moravian mission to Rutenganio just north of Lake Nyassa (now Lake Malawi) in German East Africa in 1894 (figure 5.2).14

PREFABRICATION IN THE GERMAN COLONIES

Once Germany gained a foothold in the colonial scramble, prefabricated structures became an important means of consolidating the country’s new role. Official colonization started in 1884 but was preceded by decades of trade along Africa’s coasts. In East Africa, the explorer Carl Peters imported portable buildings to house his trading company, the German East Africa Society. The German government continued this policy after it took control of the colony. Five buildings erected along the coast of Dar es Salaam were purchased from the firm F. H. Schmidt and delivered from Germany around 1891 (figure 5.3). Elsewhere in the colonial empire, the imposing first governor’s palace in Qingdao, China, and early government buildings in Cameroon, Togo, and New Guinea were also imported.15

Colonial expansion was also, of course, primarily a military project. In the German-speaking world, prefabrication itself was closely tied to military developments. Portable field hospitals were used in the Austro-Turkish, Austro-Prussian, and Franco-German Wars. The International Red Cross stimulated innovation by organizing a competition for field hospital design during its 1885 conference in Antwerp. The firm that purchased the right to manufacture Johan Döcker’s patented buildings,
Christoph & Unmack, gained worldwide recognition by winning this competition. In fact, prefabrication, in the guise of the “pavilion plan” for field hospitals, transformed the entire field of hospital design and medical knowledge in Germany and the world toward the end of the nineteenth century. German colonial and military officials likely brought this knowledge to the colonies. They deployed portable buildings during major military operations like the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900–1901 and the Herero genocide in Southwest Africa in 1904–1908. It is difficult to reconstruct the degree to which these buildings contributed to German military dominance. But the mythology that surrounded them suggests some belief in their efficacy.

The colonial civil and military administrations were not the only clientele for prefabricated buildings, however. Private companies like the

![Figure 5.3: Houses I–III, by F. H. Schmidt, Dar es Salaam, German East Africa, 1891. These buildings consisted of iron frames with gypsum board infill. They were prefabricated in Hamburg and sent to the colony. Courtesy of Colonial Picture Archive, Frankfurt University Library.](image-url)
East Africa Railroad Company used composite concrete-clad wood-frame workers’ housing during the difficult construction of the Morogoro-Tabora railway in 1908. A photograph in an undated Christoph & Unmack catalog depicts three of the firm’s classic Doecker “barracks” in a plantationlike setting in Cameroon (figure 5.4). Each portable building was approximately thirteen feet long, thirteen feet wide, and eleven feet high (figure 5.5). Each was elevated on a framed substructure to prevent moisture, pests, and disease from penetrating the building. According to the catalog, these frames could be purchased from Christoph & Unmack or cobbled together by clients with materials available on site. They could be left open to the elements or enclosed to form a ground story as seen in the examples erected in Rutenganio in 1894. Walls were sandwich panels, each with its own internal wood frame covered by a layer of patented Doecker insulating millboard, then sheathed on the exterior and interior. This was Christoph & Unmack’s improvement on Johan Döcker’s original patented hinged waterproof wall panel. Windows and doors were preinstalled per client instructions. Single- or double-layered wood floors
could be ordered or created on site using boards from the cases in which the house was packed. To accommodate tropical climates, Doecker buildings like the Cameroon examples were provided with double roofs—an upper roof formed an insulating first layer for the roof below. Beneath was a vented airspace whose characteristic latticed or screened profile is seen in the gable ends of the Cameroon photograph. A second roof provided a final insulating layer and a ceiling for the living space below. The upper roof projected so far beyond the walls of the house that it appeared to float like a sail. Its deep overhang sometimes had to be supported with diagonal stays. The overall effect was so distinctive that it acquired the moniker “flying Doecker.” In the Cameroon photograph, the builders have extended the “flying roof” with a thatched veranda, beneath which European overseers sit on chairs and African workers stand or crouch.20
Photographs like this one illustrate that prefabricated buildings were an important part of colonial life.

It is easy to trace the institutional and commercial use of prefabricated structures through archival records and publications. Evaluating their use in the private sector is more difficult. It is clear, however, that manufacturers tried to reach the private market through print media. For example, Christoph & Unmack advertised “tropical houses of every size in the easily demountable, portable Doecker system” in Carl Pauli’s 1911 building manual for colonists.21 The advertisement includes a photograph of two Doecker pavilions elevated on pilings and entirely surrounded by verandas and deep overhangs. The image testifies to the firm’s actual tropical experience—a possible selling point for would-be settlers. The same marketing tactic appears in a full-page advertisement in a guide to the German colonies published in 1901. Here, a photograph shows a long building raised slightly off the ground with a narrow veranda along the longitudinal façade. Europeans mingle in front of the building. The caption identifies the building as a “demountable, portable tropical barrack,” but several other Christoph & Unmack catalogs identify the same building as Kaiser Wilhelm II and Queen Augusta Victoria’s residence during their 1898 pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This suggests that the firm imagined that its products were suitable for a generic tropical and colonial condition. In fact, there were good reasons to group Jerusalem with the colonial tropics. German officials and the press had vigorously debated the economic merits and political ramifications of the Kaiser’s visit to the Ottoman Empire. Some even believed that Germany’s imperial ambitions in the region were finally bearing fruit.22 A prefabricated building in Jerusalem could therefore readily be understood in colonial-tropical terms.

German prefabrication firms also displayed their wares at colonial exhibitions where business people and private citizens could view and even inhabit them, and from where they could enter the archives of colonial and architectural knowledge. The most memorable of these was F. H. Schmidt’s two-story wood demonstration house in the colonial section of the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition discussed in chapter 1. Architects and engineers visiting the fair might have been intrigued by the building’s unusual technical specifications. Remarkably, prefabricated buildings as complex as this example could only be found in the colonies. Another firm, Drenchkahn & Sudhop of Braunschweig, built what one critic described as a “peculiar”- looking portable “Africa house” entirely of corrugated iron at the Berlin exhibition, but nothing else is known about the building or the firm.23 Prefabricated structures were also advertised at the International Art Exhibition in Munich (1898), the German section of the 1904 Louisi-
ana Purchase Exhibition in Saint Louis, the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden (1911), and the International Building Trades Exhibition (1913) in Leipzig. In each of these cases, exhibitors emphasized that their buildings could serve a variety of purposes, but were especially relevant to colonial and tropical conditions. Figure 5.6 illustrates the striking aspect of two Christoph & Unmack buildings at an unknown exhibition.

Manufacturers’ marketing efforts must have been somewhat successful since several published reports comment on the widespread use of prefabricated structures in the colonies. As early as 1896, however, retired director of the East African Building Office August Wiskow declared that such buildings were entirely unsuitable for long-term use in the colonies. Not only were they expensive to import, their thin walls did not adequately insulate European inhabitants from the tropical sun. To his mind, “pine’s poor resistance to tropical weather and the ensuing costly maintenance especially due to the need to repaint annually, complete lack of resistance to termite attacks, [and] rapid deterioration to the point of
putrefaction,” highlighted the need to expand local construction capacity and develop a distinctive colonial architectural language. This sentiment was repeated by Wiskow’s successor in German East Africa, Friedrich Gurlitt, in 1905 and by Franz Baltzer (who had previously published architectural ethnographies on Japan) in 1910.25 Despite German colonial architects’ dire predictions, however, some colonial officials still saw prefabricated buildings as a viable option in the second decade of the twentieth century. When it came to building in the colonial interior, portability may have trumped all other factors. This might explain why government master builder Hans Höpfner ordered a Christoph & Unmack house for the district agricultural office in Towe (Togo) as late as 1913.26 Nevertheless, colonial interest in prefabricated buildings had waned by the time Germany lost its colonies in 1919.

THE EVOLUTION OF AN INDUSTRIAL BEHEMOTH: CHRISTOPH & UNMACK, NIESKY

In the beginning, only a few firms specialized in prefabrication. Christoph & Unmack was the largest and most successful of these companies. It was based in the Moravian stronghold of Niesky, only twenty kilometers north of Herrnhut.27 The founders of Christoph & Unmack came from an illustrious Moravian family. The firm’s history started when the young Danish-born Moravian Johannes Ehregott Christoph relocated to Niesky to take over a coppersmith’s workshop in 1835. Christoph gradually transformed his artisanal workshop into one of the region’s leading industrial enterprises. He initially supplied copper utensils and brewery equipment but soon installed the region’s first steam engine, and started to produce steam boilers and iron components. In 1869 he built a new and technically advanced factory with a network of narrow-gauge rail lines connecting a large factory yard to various workshops. This was a decisive transformation from making consumer products to making machines for producing said goods, and from handwork to sequenced mass production. Business boomed. Christoph’s stepbrother and son joined the firm in the 1880s. In keeping with his Moravian ethics, Christoph paid fair wages and was interested in his employees’ education and welfare. He was at the cutting edge of managerial thinking when he, like the industrial magnate Alfred Krupp in the Ruhr region to the west, built housing for his workers in the 1860s. As the four extant workers’ housing neighborhoods in Niesky illustrate, the firm maintained this social welfare practice into the twentieth century. Christoph almost singlehandedly brought Niesky into the industrial era even as he remained committed to the town’s Moravian
roots and way of life. The “machine factory” was so successful that Kaiser Wilhelm I awarded Christoph the honorary title *Kommerzienrat* (commercial counselor) in 1882. Christoph’s rags-to-riches story exemplifies the experience of industrialization in Germany—with a Moravian twist. It captures the conditions and character of the 1830s–1870s when entrepreneurs from petit bourgeois artisanal Protestant families ignited a flame that spread throughout German economy and society.\(^{28}\)

In 1887, after successfully bidding on a Prussian government commission for fifty-nine Doecker buildings, Christoph’s cousin in Copenhagen, Christian Ferdinand Christoph, moved his prefabricated wood construction firm to Niesky. Christian Ferdinand had learned cabinetmaking from his father. Together with his architect partner, Christian Rudolf Unmack, he had purchased the Döcker patent and started to produce prefabricated buildings on a small scale in Copenhagen before the move to Niesky. Though Christian Ferdinand Christoph came from a Moravian family, he was not a member of the church. Niesky histories describe him as more reserved than his cousin Johannes Ehregott Christoph and more bureaucratic in his approach to business. He excelled at marketing and spent most of his time traveling for that purpose. After several months in Constantinople with the reform-minded Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in 1892 and possibly out of a dislike for small-town life, Christian Ferdinand moved from Niesky to Berlin. He lived there for the rest of his life.\(^{29}\)

Despite these differences in character between the cousins, the prefabricated building company thrived in its Moravian setting. From a production level of fifty-nine buildings in 1887, it expanded to one thousand in 1893. From fifty workers in 1887, it grew to four to five hundred employees in 1907, and became even larger when it merged with the J. E. Christoph Machine Factory in 1922. At the same time and following patterns in German industrialization, the leaders of the firm converted it into a limited liability company that separated company and family interests.\(^{30}\) The Moravian Church owned neither of the original firms nor the merged company, but the firms embodied some distinctive Moravian qualities. As William J. Danker and others have shown, the Moravian Church was exceptional among religious institutions for successfully implementing a moderate form of capitalism as a condition for “winning souls for the Lamb.”\(^{31}\)

Christoph & Unmack’s success should be understood in this light. I have already described the first stirrings of the prefabrication phenomenon in the eighteenth-century Moravian mission to Labrador. These early efforts did not occur on an industrial scale, however, and they should not be interpreted teleologically as causal factors in the emergence of
Christoph & Unmack a century later. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that prefabrication appears again and again in Moravian history. Clearly, there were practical reasons for using prefabricated buildings. But there may have been a more fundamental connection between prefabrication and Moravian beliefs: Moravian communities in Germany and the United States have been described as innovators who used design to engineer specific social realities. Anthropologist Birgit Meyer has written about a “visual ideology” in which lithographs like Der breite und der schmale Weg (The broad and narrow path) and other visual cues taught Pietist-inspired groups like the Moravians how to navigate the material world in accordance with their religious faith. Meyer’s argument applies equally to Moravian architecture and spatial planning. For example, the Moravian Church rejected late eighteenth-century ecclesiastic architecture. In its place, it developed an antimonumental style embodied in the subdued
baroque exteriors and simple, unornamented interiors of Moravian prayer halls. In a literal application of the object-based educational principles promoted by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (which were also adopted in Moravian schools), designers oriented their communities around each prayer hall and town square. Thus, the centrality of religion was a daily lesson. Alongside these measures, the church also advocated labor as a means to individual salvation. Craft and handwork were ideal occupations. This attitude toward the material environment, preference for order and efficiency, and facility with making things created the conditions that enabled industrialized building to develop in Niesky.

Making portable buildings was an advanced industrial process. To begin with, construction took place on the factory floor across the tracks from the J. E. Christoph Machine Factory instead of at the client’s building site. Christoph & Unmack’s factory became a complex of over sixty thousand square meters designed to facilitate the flow of production (figure 5.7). The entire factory was lit by electric and gas lights so that it glowed at night like a small city. A clock on the entrance portal regulated workers’
lives “to the hour and minute” in the uniquely modern temporal regime that political scientist Benedict Anderson and others have discussed.\(^3\)

Construction was serialized according to task and component. There were no generalists; workers were trained specifically for their assigned tasks. After air drying under a large shed, wood was dried further in a modern high-temperature installation, cut into boards and beams in the cutting workshop, formed into framed wall panels in the joinery studio, covered in the patented Doecker material in the impregnation workshop, coated with oil paint in the painting studio, then sent to smithy, plumber, and glazier. Once it had passed through these workshops, the new building was erected in a large assembly hall. Buildings were verified in this manner, according to a 1908 report, at least one to two times before they left the factory. Once tested, a building was either sent to the client who had purchased it, or, if it were one of the more popular models and had been built for speculation, was shipped to a warehouse to await purchase.

![CHRISTOPH & UNMACK ASSEMBLY HALL, NIESKY, CA. 1930S. BUILDINGS WERE ASSEMBLED AND DISASSEMBLED MULTIPLE TIMES BEFORE THEY WERE SENT TO THEIR DESTINATIONS. COURTESY OF DEUTSCHES MUSEUM, BILDSTELLE.](image_url)
Building an inventory in this manner was a radical departure from the time-honored commission-design-construction sequence in architecture. Like the J. E. Christoph Machine Factory, Christoph & Unmack also paid close attention to transportation needs within the factory: rail lines crisscrossed the factory grounds, and the factory and town were connected to rail and shipping networks.34

In Christoph & Unmack’s hands, buildings became industrialized consumer products complete with instruction manuals and customization options. A model tropical house displayed at an exhibition in 1908 included seven hundred carefully numbered and organized pieces (figure 5.8).35 The firm paid close attention to weight and shipping costs and offered clients opportunities to decrease these costs. Depending on the client’s wishes, Christoph & Unmack could send a technician to assist with assembling the building on site. In this way, some factory workers from the small town of Niesky were able to travel the world.

Using its extensive catalogs, price lists, and client questionnaires, Christoph & Unmack tried to train the public to appreciate its revolutionary approach to building. Photographs of its factory, assembly hall, and process appear repeatedly in this publicity material (figure 5.9). These illustrations glorified the industrial process and transformed the factory and its products into permanent advertisements. In October 1895, the Makkovik church and mission house were assembled in Niesky and opened to the public before they were shipped to their final destinations.36 This strategy of creating spectacle—in printed catalogs, in test buildings at the factory, and formal displays at exhibitions—had been used by British manufacturers of prefabricated iron buildings only a few decades earlier. It was, according to Paul Dobraszczyk, part of a new visual culture of display associated with industrial capitalism.37

Christoph & Unmack also nurtured an internal culture of innovation based on what we might now call research and development. A brochure published before the move from Copenhagen to Niesky shows that even the earliest Christoph & Unmack buildings improved on the patented design. Whereas Johan Döcker’s wall panels were light wood frames covered in weatherproofed felt, Christoph & Unmack’s were clad in “specially manufactured board . . . impregnated to make it watertight” and fireproofed with a “type of salt.”38 One gets the sense that the firm was now thinking in terms of trade secrets that had to be kept in order to maintain a competitive edge. Later catalogs regularly highlighted “improvements” in the firm’s products. According to a circa-1903 catalog, this quality was what distinguished Christoph & Unmack from its competitors: “Practice makes perfect. Only decades-long, far-reaching, rich expe-
rience, in short, a stage-by-stage advance from one experience to another, could lead to the perfection of the problem of the portable building.”

Participating in exhibitions was also part of this culture of innovation because it offered insight on the latest developments by regional and foreign companies.

Even more than the process or venue of their manufacture, Christoph & Unmack’s buildings themselves were epitomes of modernization. Though Johan Döcker was prescient about the flexibility of his invention, he could never have imagined just how many formal and functional spinoffs Christoph & Unmack would concoct. Firm catalogs, which were produced irregularly prior to 1912 but almost annually thereafter, show a steady elaboration on Döcker’s system. Over time, Christoph & Unmack developed a profusion of product categories whose descriptive nomenclature signals the firm’s receptiveness to client needs and social, political, and economic conditions. Climate and geographic location were crucial categories. A brochure published around 1886 offered alterations for extremely hot and cold climates. Examples had been sold to clients in Egypt and Sudan—though these regions were not yet identified as colonial or tropical. By 1907–1908, however, these alterations had hardened into a distinct colonial-tropical category. This classification simultaneously signaled and equated two variables: climate (tropical) and location (the tropics, the colonies). By using this terminology, Christoph & Unmack located itself squarely in contemporary culture, science, and geopolitics. The discourse on tropicality had reached a crescendo with the scientific voyages of mid-eighteenth-century Europeans. Scholars like Alexander von Humboldt developed a discourse on tropicality that articulated essential differences between cultures and natures and legitimized specific kinds (aesthetic, emotional, self-realizing) of European experiences.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, tropicality was institutionalized into specialized subfields such as tropical medicine, tropical geography, and tropical architecture. So the trope of the tropical was nothing new by the time it appeared in Christoph & Unmack catalogs.

Similarly, colonialism was part of Christoph & Unmack’s classificatory schema. Colonialism’s economic and ideological logic, which was debated in the Reichstag and widely discussed in the media especially in 1907 following a series of colonial scandals and a colonial budget crisis, was translated into six add-on features to the standard Doecker building. The “sun sail,” for example, was crucial for maintaining manageable interior temperatures for European inhabitants. It could project three feet or more from the walls of the building on every side and its distinctive “flying” form came to stand for all Doecker buildings and for the en-
tire Christoph & Unmack enterprise. By the 1920s the company could
say with pride that it had delivered “several hundred” of these buildings
to the Congo Territory and to colonial governments, plantations, and
railroad companies across the colonial tropics.43 Regardless of the actual
statistical significance of the firm’s colonial sales (which are difficult to
reconstruct because firm records have been lost), the colonial and tropical
gained a deep hold in Christoph & Unmack’s identity.

Verandas were another colonial-tropical supplement to Christoph &
Unmack’s buildings. The firm was not alone in fetishizing the veranda.
Since at least the 1880s German missionaries, travelers, colonial officials,
and colonial wives had written about how important verandas were for
survival in the colonies. For example, an 1895 Basel Mission Society memo
about building in Africa recommends that the most hygienic approach is
to elevate wood buildings on pilings and surround them completely with
airy, roomy verandas.44 The lore of the colonial veranda would also have
been familiar to the growing population of working-class readers of colo-
nial fiction in Germany. British colonial authors, like Rudyard Kipling,
were especially popular, and would have exposed readers to detailed de-
scriptions of life in the bungalows and verandas of British India.45 There
existed therefore a stockpile of knowledge that Christoph & Unmack
could mine as it conceptualized its tropical house.

But verandas also appear in some Christoph & Unmack models that
were not designed for the tropics. A 1903 catalog includes two examples.
The first is a small summerhouse consisting of three rooms in enfilade
with a veranda running along the main façade. In the catalog, the house
nestles in the parklike landscape of Biesdorf—one of many “villa colo-
nies” that mushroomed around Berlin in 1900. The second example is a
more substantial but still moderately sized bourgeois Landhaus set in a
large isolated lot in an unidentified location.46 Villa colony development
marked a turn toward domesticity, cultural activities, and contact with
nature among Germany’s educated middle class at the end of the nine-
teenth century. Typically, this turn was manifested in picturesque gar-
den city planning, and a new kind of house (the Landhaus) with rooms
that opened directly to terraces, lawns, and gardens.47 However, the two
Christoph & Unmack houses described here use verandas, which were
not part of German architectural patrimony, to accomplish the same
goals. Indeed, the word veranda only entered the German language in the
mid-nineteenth century when it was appropriated from the British, who
borrowed it from India.48 In the verandaed Landhaus and villa colony
summerhouse, we get our first hint of how colonial prefabrication inter-
sected with architectural reform in Germany.
In addition to the veranda and the sun sail, several other elements transformed a standard Doecker building into a tropical house. Double roofs, for example, were essential. They kept the core of the house cool by trapping heat. Additionally, elevating tropical houses above ground level not only kept them cool but also protected the house from termites and other ground pests, and was thought to minimize the transmission of the ghastly miasmas believed to cause tropical fevers. Christoph & Unmack offered clients these options through its substructure kit. This substructure gave some prefabricated tropical houses their distinctive storklike character.

Two smaller-scale interventions were also crucial to the tropical house. The first was mosquito netting that the firm preinstalled over all windows, doors, and openings. Like missionary builders, colonial officials, and colonial housewives, the firm was vehement in its advocacy of mosquito netting. This attitude was based on a visceral fear of mosquitoes that saturated European colonial discourse. Once mosquitoes were identified as the vector through which humans contracted malaria, a debate ensued over the most effective prophylactic against the deadly disease. Like their colleagues in India, Italy, and elsewhere, German doctors disagreed about how to deal with the problem. Depending on their specific location, some officials found mosquito netting highly effective. According to malaria researcher Dr. Peter Mühlens, “in fever-prone areas, one never sleeps without a properly installed mosquito net. The net (mesh size 1.5–2 mm) may not have any holes. It must always hang on a frame and must, in the evenings, be carefully tucked under the mattress on all sides.” Others researchers agreed with renowned scientist Robert Koch’s view that treating people periodically with quinine was more practical and effective than preventing bites. Regardless of the lack of scientific consensus, an architectural solution—mandatory, preinstalled mosquito netting—was clearly in Christoph & Unmack’s interest.

Christoph & Unmack also created a line of folding furniture in order to meet colonial-tropical needs. Together with mosquito netting and portable buildings, this product gave the firm an entrée to the large and lucrative colonial outfitting industry. Explorers, soldiers, and settlers had long required specific gear that, they hoped, would improve their probability of surviving the tropics. Tropical outfitters produced everything from pith helmets to tropical underwear, traveling bathtubs and lavatories, and tents. The British were the first to recognize tropical outfitting as a commercial opportunity but, as a 1900 German colonial advice column boasted, German industry soon rose to the challenge. An entire section was devoted to the tropical outfitting industry at the 1907 German Army,
Marine, and Colonial Exhibition in Berlin. The tropical outfitter Tippelskirch, of Berlin, exhibited its products at this and other exhibitions and advertised in many colonial publications. Its tents were well known in colonial circles but the company sold many other products, including its own portable tropical dwelling. A stop at Tippelskirch was a crucial step when preparing for an expedition, colonial service, or migration. A 1920 Christoph & Unmack catalog pointed out, however, that some tropical goods could also be useful at home in Germany. Walking and hiking had been part of upper middle-class German identity since the late eighteenth century, and had become even more popular at the end of the nineteenth century with the appearance of printed travel guides. Christoph & Unmack saw the legions of families and youth embarking on vigorous strolls (Wandern) in the clean country air as a market ripe for tapping. They too might find portable furniture useful.

Christoph & Unmack created the “Harmonika” furniture line to capture these markets. The line included chairs, benches, beds, wardrobes, washstands, and other pieces (figure 5.10). Each piece folded into a small size, and could be placed in a carrying case supplied by the firm, and transported along with a Christoph & Unmack tropical house. Advertisements from the 1920s and 1930s show simple dark-wood-and-canvas pieces with clean lines and few details. Earlier images of Harmonika furniture are not available but we can assume that they too followed scientific recommendations that good tropical furniture should be of “open and airy construction” and devoid of overstuffed upholstery. The Harmonika line also included larger items such as a “Harmonika tent with sun sail.” This was a portent of things to come; the firm eventually subsumed the entire tropical house category into the Harmonika line as the colonies lost their political and economic sway in the 1930s.

The sun sail, veranda, double roof, substructure, mosquito netting, and folding furniture were defining formal elements of Christoph & Unmack’s colonial-tropical house. But the colonial-tropical was not merely a formal category. It also signaled function. To generate interest in its unfamiliar products, the firm turned sales data into taxonomies of use that it shared in its catalogs and brochures. Photographs of actual examples augmented by customer testimonials showed the variety of uses to which the buildings could be applied. Of course, function in architecture encompasses a building’s ability to satisfy both the basic material needs it was commissioned to meet and larger symbolic and ideological requirements of its society. The colonial-tropical portable house illustrates this phenomenon. On one hand, its layout and architectural features sheltered colonists from the sun, protected them from disease, and improved their
FIGURE 5.10. ADVERTISEMENT FOR HARMONIKA LINE OF FURNITURE BY CHRISTOPH & UNMACK, CA. 1930S. LIKE THE FIRM'S PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS, ITS FURNITURE COULD BE DISASSEMBLED AND RELOCATED. COURTESY OF DEUTSCHES MUSEUM, BILDSTELLE.
ability to defend themselves from marauding locals. But the house also performed more subtle functions. Take a 1908 description of a model Christoph & Unmack house erected at an exhibition: “The tropical house is ready-made with glass and shuttered doors and windows, with mosquito nets in front of windows and air openings, and it comes equipped with three coats of oil paint, and it can be installed, with the assistance of building instructions, by blacks under the direction of a white carpenter or cabinetmaker in the colonies.”

In this description, Christoph & Unmack has embraced the popular social Darwinist idea that Germany’s dark-skinned subjects were intellectually deficient and in need of guidance. In fact, working as a laborer on a construction project was believed to be just the kind of activity needed to “educate” the African worker “into” a strong work ethic and integrate him (or her) into the colonial economy.

A 1926 catalog goes one step further by portraying explicitly racialized imagery. On the cover is a typical tropical house elevated on pilings and surrounded by verandas. In the foreground is a crouching African whose race is communicated through by-then well-known graphic conventions like short, woolly hair; a flat broad nose; bare feet; naked body; and dark skin. He or she is engaged in some kind of menial task. A large cluster of bushes grows next to him/her, and its physical proximity implies some deeper link to fecund, uncontrollable nature. Three figures stand on the veranda above and behind the African. Their upright posture and elevated position project authority over the diminutive and submissive African. This catalog was published long after Germany lost its colonies, but, as David Ciarlo notes, the “imagery of colonial mastery and racialized stereotypes of blackness” that first emerged in Germany in the 1890s continued to circulate even in the Weimar period and after.

Through its catalogs and buildings, Christoph & Unmack helped to nurture colonialism and its memory.

Beyond such explicitly racialized images and prose, the entire idea of the tropical and the outfitting industry (including the tropical house) that it spawned performed ideological functions. Wearing tropical helmets or installing mosquito netting became a ritual in the German colonies much like it was in the British Empire. The immediate purpose of the ritual was to protect colonists from the climate. But anxieties about tropical climates and the fevers and elusive “tropical madness” (Tropenkoller) that they could cause reflected deep-seated concerns about colonists’ ability to maintain their racial and cultural identity. Thus, outfitting oneself with a tropical house was equally about meeting the basic need for shelter and policing the social, cultural, and racial boundaries between colonists and their subjects.
The colonial-tropical was just one element in Christoph & Unmack’s schema. The firm also classified its products according to morphological types, standardized or custom-designed models, and construction materials and structural systems. The firm’s twenty-fifth anniversary publication spelled out a fine-grained taxonomy that included at least nine varieties. Together with the company’s streamlined process and plant, visual culture of spectacle, and unrelenting pursuit of innovation, this profusion of methods, materials, and products demonstrates Christoph & Unmack’s modernity.

**BUILDER FOR THE COLONIAL ESTABLISHMENT:**
**F. H. SCHMIDT, ALTONA-HAMBURG**

Christoph & Unmack was an important firm but it did not have a monopoly on prefabrication in Germany. Several competitors emerged, including F. H. Schmidt (Altona-Hamburg), Philipp Holzmann AG (Frankfurt), Drenckhahn & Sudhop (Braunschweig), and the Deutsche Barackenbaugesellschaft (Cologne). Most firms developed their own proprietary systems based on the patented Doecker building. But they were all careful to explain how their systems differed from Christoph & Unmack’s, which suggests that authorship and intellectual property rights were crucial concerns in the industry.

Like Christoph & Unmack, F. H. Schmidt was established before Germany became a colonial power. In both cases, however, colonial annexation created unprecedented opportunities for the firms to expand. To fully understand the evolution of these two industrial leviathans, we must take account of their colonial entanglements. In 1845, the master carpenter Franz Heinrich Schmidt founded a construction firm in the Danish-ruled town of Altona on the banks of the Elbe River near Hamburg. At this point, Altona was a booming industrial town, which, because of its status as part of the Danish free trade zone and its openness to industry, competed successfully with neighboring Hamburg. The firm started as a small workshop in which the founder himself worked on the shop floor. But business went so well that Schmidt erected a larger factory complex with a sawmill, cabinetmaking workshop, and smithy in 1867. Thinking strategically, he then built a branch facility devoted to iron construction at the confluence of water and rail links at the left bank of the Elbe across from Hamburg. From this location, Schmidt built villas, suburban residences (Landhäuser), high-rises, and wharves and warehouses for merchants in Hamburg and the region. In the meantime, trade and industry in Hamburg grew exponentially, especially after German unification in 1871.
became Europe’s leading port for English industrial imports, raw materials from the Americas and Africa, and (eventually) for German-made exports. A thriving shipbuilding industry supported these activities. By the 1880s Hamburg had built an additional harbor, offices, and extensive storage facilities to accommodate the city’s escalating ship traffic.

German imperial ambitions contributed in no small measure to Hamburg’s efflorescence. Hamburg too had slave traders and explorers. It too sent out missionaries to save unfortunate “primitive” peoples from sin and corruption brought on by their exposure to Western civilization. From the 1840s onward, Hamburg politicians and merchants like Adolph Woermann and Karl Sieveking agitated for German colonies. As a member of the Reichstag, Woermann influenced Chancellor Bismarck’s decision to underwrite German business interests in Africa with military and political support. Through colonial annexation, Woermann was able to consolidate his leading position in transnational shipping and expand his plantation and trade enterprise in Cameroon. Additionally, it was from Hamburg that the phenomenon of the commercial living ethnological exhibit, perfected by Hamburgian Carl Hagenbeck, spread throughout Germany. Finally, because of the city’s far-ranging trade connections, wealth, and civic pride, Hamburg’s ethnological museum became one of the empire’s preeminent institutions and helped to shape German ideas about the cultures of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.63

This was a fertile environment for an entrepreneur like Schmidt. He won commissions to build some of the city’s new marine infrastructure and storage facilities. Business was so robust that he established a new branch in Hamburg in 1884, and his sons joined the firm. Like Christoph & Unmack, F. H. Schmidt followed the traditional model of using the family as a labor pool in the transition to industrial production. Prefabricated buildings “for export” first appear in the records of the firm in the 1880s. These records are vague about the origins and structural and architectural details of the buildings except to explain that they were created at the request of Hamburg merchants. This timeframe, of course, corresponds with the onset of German colonial expansion. Five buildings erected along the coast of Dar es Salaam are the first confirmed prefabricated buildings erected by the firm.64 Structurally, they consisted of two-story iron frames on masonry plinths. Within these iron frames stood wood frames with gypsum board infill. Ground-level floors were barrel-vaulted decks constructed of Monier reinforced concrete. Second floors were framed conventionally with wood beams. Roofs were framed in pine and sheathed in corrugated iron. It is difficult to conceptualize the method of construction of these buildings as a system in the manner
of Christoph & Unmack’s modular, interchangeable Doecker buildings. Unlike the Doecker buildings, the complex materials and technologies of F. H. Schmidt buildings likely required expert labor during installation: one C. Backhaus, for example, was sent to Dar es Salaam in 1891 to assist with the assembly of the new buildings for the colonial administration. 65 These buildings are therefore best understood as composite structures that combined prefabricated and conventional components.

The complexity of the Dar es Salaam buildings suggests that they may have been the result of a process of experimentation the details of which have been lost in the mists of time. 66 A “Planter’s House for the tropical climate—demountable and transportable wood house for export (own system)” illustrated in a 1925 firm retrospective hints at what early models might have looked like. This building follows the general form embodied in Christoph & Unmack’s tropical Doeckers. Its projecting gable roof extends far beyond the walls of the rectangular structure underneath to shade an encircling veranda. A secondary roof beneath the main roof on the gable end is low enough to directly shade the front veranda. Stout, unadorned, bracketed columns support the roof. A lightly colored carved wood balustrade spans the columns. Its simple geometric carved patterns appear machine-made but also evoke traditional southern German cutout balustrade patterns. Doors and windows open onto the veranda in typical bungalow fashion. The outlines of a chaise longue and several wicker chairs are also visible. If readers could not decode the veranda and wide roof as colonial signs, then the figure standing on the veranda might have been familiar. The man’s light-colored trousers, jacket, and hat are the typical garb of a colonist. He stands with his feet spread apart and arms akimbo. Hidden in the shadows on a side veranda is another figure—perhaps a servant. The house itself is nestled under a soaring palm tree on one side and under the canopy of a large tree on the other. A large sky and distant horizon communicate the myth of unoccupied land waiting to be claimed. 67

This house is quite different from the buildings that F. H. Schmidt actually erected in Dar es Salaam. House I, the Government Service Building, was a rectangle indented at three corners (figure 5.11). 68 Five steps led through a centered main entrance to a slightly elevated finished floor in the interior. From the door, a long, spacious hallway opened onto four offices and culminated in a large inner courtyard. Apart from four offices at the front of the building, all other rooms opened to the courtyard. To encourage cross-ventilation, these door openings faced two or more exterior windows. Jalousie shutters allowed inhabitants to control light and ventilation. These rooms housed offices for the governor, the
registrar, and various bureaucrats and clerks. Tucked into a corner of the courtyard were the main stairs, while an auxiliary stair and back entrance were hidden in a rear bay. The second floor was also oriented around the inner court but was dedicated primarily to residential space for single and married employees. The most distinctive feature of this floor was the veranda that encircled its exterior. Partition walls divided the veranda into private sections. With this exterior veranda and the open gallery around the courtyard, the second floor consisted of almost equal parts open and enclosed space. Photographs depict a smooth exterior on ground level while the second-floor walls are divided vertically, horizontally, and diagonally by narrow strips. The result resembles the distinctive patterning and contrasting colors of German half-timbered construction.69

Next door, House II had a regular rectilinear footprint and was also arranged around an inner court, but this was smaller than the courtyard of House I and was not open to the sky (figure 5.11). It had a three-sided cantilevered second-floor veranda. Rolf Hasse has speculated that the approximately three-meter-deep (ten feet) and very long verandas on this building and other contemporaneous F. H. Schmidt buildings in Dar es Salaam were not supported adequately during initial construction and had to be reinforced later with masonry piers. If this was indeed the case then that change must have occurred quite early, as these piers already appear in a circa-1900 photograph. House II also had smooth exterior walls on the ground floor and half-timber-style walls above. This house originally had a similar function to House I but was later converted into a courthouse.70

Down the street, Houses III, IV, and V were also prefabricated by F. H. Schmidt.71 Houses III and IV were combined to form an eighty-meter-long (263 feet), one-room-deep, T-shaped mess hall (figure 5.11). A wide veranda ran along its length. The veranda was slightly recessed at its center to form a focal point. Eight Tuscan columns supported this section in contrast to the fourteen blocky piers on either end. Simple crisscrossed wood balustrades spanned the piers. A 1906 photograph shows that these balustrades were later rebuilt in masonry. Wicker-backed planter’s chairs stood around on the veranda in small groupings. Centered on the long façade and approached via a wide stair and five double glass doors was a large ballroom. The ballroom hosted parties and public lectures that consolidated German colonial power by bringing together its agents to enact rituals of rule. Such venues and activities helped to maintain what Africanist scholar Heike Schmidt has described as a façade of racial unity that defied reality. According to George Steinmetz, intra-German class distinctions produced disparate positions on native policy among
German colonial officials’ in German Samoa, Qingdao, and Southwest Africa. That such class distinctions played a role in East Africa is suggested by the spatial arrangement of the mess hall that separated the officer corps from colonial bureaucrats. Another long veranda ran along the back of the building and was connected, via a covered walkway, to a courtyard with a well and service buildings. Like Houses I and II, the mess hall had residential space on its second floor. A veranda shaded by a shed roof ran the length of the second floor protecting the exterior walls from solar radiation and extending the living area into the outdoors. Here, too, second-floor exterior walls resembled traditional half-timbered construction. Photographs from the 1910s show an interior with high ceilings and walls decorated with picture frames, flags, heroic busts, and hunting trophies (figure 5.12).
Many of the tendencies evident in the five government buildings along the coast were consolidated in the most important building of the early colonial period, the governor’s villa in Dar es Salaam (figures 5.11 and 5.13). Like Houses I to V, the governor’s house also consisted of a cantilevered second-story veranda over a recessed ground floor. Its siting on sloping ground created two distinct façades: a sea façade seen from the lower vantage point of the beach and approached via a palm-lined drive, up a grand flight of stairs, and through a projecting colonnaded entrance bay; and a land façade level with the garden and facing inland. Secondary spaces including workrooms, offices, and a guestroom were on the ground floor. A large switchback stair led to public spaces on the second floor on land-side and private rooms on the sea façade, all encircled by wraparound verandas with adjustable shades. Strangely, only...
one bedroom is identified in published floor plans. While it was common for colonial governments to leave their families in Germany during the early years, women and children gradually became part of colonial life and needed to be housed.\textsuperscript{73} Downstairs, a supplementary courtyard held accessory buildings including stables and apartments for the “European service staff.” But where did the African staff who presumably outnumbered European employees live? Antonie Brandeis, the wife of a colonial official in the Pacific colonies, criticized settlers’ general tendency to avoid making provisions for the African personnel because of the assumption that “negroes or whatever natives there are do everything without ceremony.”\textsuperscript{74} It is possible that such accommodations existed but were not represented in published plans because they were considered insignificant.
In its construction technology and formal organization, the governor’s house was a practical solution to the urgent need to house the first governor of the colony, Julius von Soden. But photographs show that the house had started to acquire a new visage by 1898. Simple masonry columns were added on the ground floor to support the sagging second-story veranda. Next, the wood posts and balustrade above were rebuilt in masonry. The Building Office introduced a third set of changes to the governor’s villa sometime before 1914. They converted the existing simple masonry supports of the ground-floor gallery into Moorish arches by creating stucco spandrels between existing piers (figure 5.14). In contrast to the heavy horseshoes on the ground level, they transformed the existing second-story supports into delicate colonnettes joined together by filigreed spandrels. The resulting exotic vision was a far cry from the clean, utilitarian lines of the original building. Its designers deliberately appropriated motifs like the Moorish arch from the large coral stone houses of Arab planters around Dar es Salaam, the dense urban residences of...
Zanzibar, and the much admired medieval stone ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani. This was a blatant bid to usurp the power that the Arab elite seemed to wield by manipulating its visual and material symbols. The British employed a similar strategy when they brought together elements of Mughal, Hindu, and classical architecture to form the Indo-Saracenic style in late nineteenth-century India. With the third set of alterations, the governor's house in Dar es Salaam had finally started to serve the “representational” purpose that some colonial officials argued that prefabricated buildings could never fulfill.

Unfortunately, this exotic palace became a victim of escalating global tensions. British ships bombarded the building in November 1914. The second floor was completely destroyed and the ground floor severely damaged. Once the British took over the colony in 1919, they continued the tradition of radically altering the governor’s villa. They commissioned the Zanzibar-based British architect John Houston Sinclair to turn the ruined building into the seat of the new government. Sinclair had been trained in classical architecture but had fallen in love with and become a practitioner of Indo-Saracenic style since his arrival in British-ruled Zanzibar in 1899. He designed a number of buildings for British, Arab, and Indian clients around Stone Town and its environs, including the very ornate British Residency of 1903. Sinclair used this building as a model for the new state house in Dar es Salaam (figure 5.15). He rebuilt it using his signature crenellated parapet walls, corner and entrance towers, multilobed and Moorish arches, and stucco ornament. Despite all of these changes, the building remained a two-story core surrounded by verandas. The final episode in the evolution of the governor’s villa was the postcolonial government’s appropriation of the building upon independence, and the building’s restoration in 2000.

F. H. Schmidt’s colonial business expanded significantly after Germany declared a protectorate at Kiaochow Bay in eastern China in 1898. If colonies did not function as laboratories of German modernity in the same way that they did for France and Britain, then Kiaochow was an exception: here, the colonial authorities implemented cutting-edge approaches to land use planning that were only later applied to Germany. The policy prevented rampant land speculation by levying an incremental tax on European landowners. With this tax, the colonial government ensured that profits from the extractive colonial economy would be reinvested into the protectorate. A building code was established within the first year, a public works office created, and a private European-style building industry quickly emerged. Qingdao was hailed as a garden spot worthy of emulation.
Before all of this could happen, however, it was necessary to estab-
lish a foothold in the new colony. When the German navy arrived in
Qingdao in 1897, there were, not surprisingly, few buildings considered
suitable for European inhabitation. So, as was the case in East Africa,
the colonial administrators of Kiaochow ordered three wood houses from
F. H. Schmidt. They arrived in March 1899. By 1900, seven F. H. Schmidt
houses had been delivered to the colony. Little is known about the first
houses. However, an album compiled by a German family who lived
in Qingdao depicts three F. H. Schmidt “export houses” (also dated to
1899), one of which is seen in figure 5.16. All three are two-storied and
of simple cubical form. Their roofs are hipped with a low, almost flat
slope. Simple wood verandas project from both floors. Some verandas are
glassed-in with almost full-height windows set in a band and separated
only by narrow mullions. In one case, these windows wrap around the

FIGURE 5.16. EXPORT HOUSE, F. H. SCHMIDT, QINGDAO, CHINA, 1899. THE SIMPLE CUBICAL
FORM, FLAT ROOF, AND STRIP OF WINDOWS OF THIS PREFABRICATED HOUSE PREFIGURE THE
FORMAL LANGUAGE OF GERMAN MODERNISM. COURTESY OF BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK
MÜNCHEN, BILDARCHIV.
corner and transforms the veranda into a glass box. The houses are elevated slightly off the ground and clad with simple wood boards that appear so lightweight that they look like a skin stretched over a volume. Tall masonry chimneys anchor the houses to the ground. Unfortunately, there are no available archival records explaining the layout and structure of these buildings. Overall, however, they evince a formal simplicity that was different from the other prefabricated buildings discussed so far and from any known conventional construction in the German colonies. It was this aesthetic that would soon attract reform-minded architects in Germany to prefabrication.82

These three houses were also quite different from the governor’s residence that arrived in Qingdao in 1899 (figure 5.17). This house was built east of the commercial area in the emerging European villa neighborhood. To rapidly achieve the scale appropriate for such an important building, the administration combined two prefabricated structures on a
masonry platform. Spacious wood verandas supported by bracketed posts projected from the main façade and ran partway down each of two floors. Double glass doors with transoms and shutters opened onto each veranda. Some photographs show striped roll-down shades attached to the fascia along the length of the veranda. A three-story masonry-and-wood tower capped with a lantern dome projected from one façade. Oriel windows protruded from the sides of the tower to create a passable imitation of the picturesque historicist ensembles so popular in the suburbs of Germany’s major cities. A pedimented entrance bay with a carved tympanum decorated with swags, flags, and a coat of arms marked the main façade. An interior photograph shows a dining room decorated richly with wainscoted walls, a large fireplace with an art nouveau overmantel, a coffered ceiling, and a sunburst lunette. Candelabra and porcelain decorations crowd the walls and surfaces of the room. Only a few items—including a carpet with vaguely orientalizing motifs—speak to the local context. Overall, the governor’s house in Qingdao had a fussy appearance that differed markedly from the “export houses” built for colonial settlers, but was quite similar to the first government house in Dar es Salaam.

Despite its swags and brackets, the Qingdao Governor’s House was a far cry from the weighty, eclectic style of contemporaneous high-profile buildings in Germany that architectural historian Julius Posener famously labeled “Wilhelminismus.” This was cause for concern: “The Governor is still living in a so-called Swedish wood house,” declared a government report in 1903. Plans were already in place as early as 1902 to build a new and more appropriate residence to host dignitaries like Zhou-fu, the first Chinese governor to visit Kiaochow. And so, Qingdao’s prefabricated governor’s house underwent a transformation akin to the governor’s house in Dar es Salaam. In fact, the Qingdao case involved the erection of an entirely new building on a different site, Signal Hill, to the west of the old site (figure 5.18). Construction started in 1905 and ended in 1907. Werner Lazarowicz (1873–1926), second-in-command at the building department in Qingdao, was responsible for the design. The most notable element of the still extant three-story house is the rusticated granite that accents its Dutch gables, eaves, string courses, lintels, battered base, and Romanesque arcades. A Viking dragon acroteria on the west gable analogizes Chinese imperial iconography, perhaps in a bid to legitimize German rule. The house took up more than four thousand square meters (43,056 square feet) and cost a controversial sum of more than one million marks. Its rectilinear floor plan is animated by a series of projections and recesses that rise to a half-timbered tower on one end. Internally, the house revolves around a nine-meter-high (29.5 feet), two-story hall with a fireplace, wood
paneling, arched wood balcony, orientalizing oriel window, and multiple seating areas. Leading from the hall are reception rooms, a dining room, and a ballroom with a piano made by the famous Leipzig piano factory Blüthner. Above were the private rooms for the governor and his family. Guest rooms and rooms for European staff were on the third floor while Chinese staff lived in an auxiliary building. Signs of economic power were everywhere: imported cornflower-patterned tiles, lampshades made of precious stones, and ornate European furniture. With its medievalizing historical references and bowed plan, the house spoke the Wilhelmine idiom. Critic Alfons Paquet compared the new governor’s house in Qingdao to Franz Schwechten’s massive palace for Kaiser Wilhelm II in Posen (1905–1910), which was itself an expression of Prussian imperialism in Poland. Like the transformation of the prefabricated governor’s house in Dar es Salaam, the metamorphosis of the first governor’s house in Qingdao was not simply about complying with the new building code and

FIGURE 5.18. NEW GOVERNOR’S PALACE, QINGDAO, CHINA, DESIGNED BY WERNER LAZAROWICZ, 1899. THIS SITE-BUILT MANSION EMBODIED AN EMERGING MONUMENTAL GRANITE STYLE IN THE COLONY. COURTESY OF BA, BILD 137–005609.
its demand for “solid,” permanent, fireproof, and “hygienic” buildings. Rather, it was equally about advancing colonial agendas.88

According to art historian Christoph Lind, nothing is left of the prefabricated buildings of early colonial Qingdao. He concedes, however, that these buildings may have had a lasting effect on the architecture of the colony. He traces the penchant for south-facing wood verandas affixed to exteriors, and, later, masonry loggias integrated into buildings, to the well-known British “veranda style” embodied in F. H. Schmidt’s tropical houses.89 What Lind highlights is the way in which architectural ideas moved from place to place and were transformed in the process.

F. H. Schmidt’s impact on Qingdao far exceeded the scope of its prefabrication operation. The firm also built Qingdao’s stormwater, sewage, and water-supply infrastructure as well as streets and bridges. It built, using conventional construction methods, barracks, government buildings, hospitals, factories, offices, and eclectic, red tile-roofed villas. Along with a few other German firms like the contractors Philipp Holzmann, F. H. Schmidt was responsible for Qingdao’s material efflorescence. Kiaochow was such an important market that F. H. Schmidt established a large branch office in the protectorate in 1899. It relocated employees like bricklayer Albert Hansen and architect Hans Evers to Qingdao. Paquet reported that it was impossible to walk down a Qingdao street without running into an engineer or technician. In fact, the colonial government allowed only Germans with desirable expertise to settle in the protectorate. Some F. H. Schmidt employees in Qingdao left the firm to start their own companies and even expanded into other parts of China. Some brought their brides to the colony and raised children there.90 The firm also hired a vast Chinese workforce. By some accounts, these workers were subject to inhumanely long work hours and low wages and asked to perform backbreaking work. These adverse working conditions contributed to colonywide problems with labor retention and slowed the pace of development.91 Through its role in building Kiaochow, representing colonial power, populating the colony, establishing unequal labor relations, and infiltrating other parts of China, F. H. Schmidt was an agent of empire.

By 1911 F. H. Schmidt had conducted business not only in Germany but also in almost all of the German colonies; in other parts of Africa, including Liberia; in other parts of China, including Hankow, Peking, and Tientsin; and in New Caledonia in the Pacific.92 The firm built railroads and bridges in Romania, Turkey, and Serbia; rice mills for British and Dutch firms in Burma and Vietnam; and a sugar factory in Peru. From a new branch in Buenos Aires, the company broke into the construction industry in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. This branch was so successful
that it became an independent entity. From modest beginnings, F. H. Schmidt became a multinational company with a range that mirrored the geography not only of German colonialism but of the entire European colonial project.93

F. H. Schmidt was proud of its global expansion. For the firm, this was not simply a matter of business for business’s sake. Rather, it acknowledged the political dimensions of its work. In a circa-1905 retrospective, the company described its work as a “cultural exercise” (*Kulturaufgabe*) that brought “German work,” “German ability,” and “German building expertise” to foreign societies.94 In essence, it was part of a German civilizing mission enacted through technical and infrastructural interventions. Owing perhaps to the firm’s links to Hamburg, the colonial administration favored F. H. Schmidt and its products over Christoph & Unmack and other prefabrication firms. It was F. H. Schmidt that the government chose to erect its first colonial buildings. And it selected F. H. Schmidt to build the model tropical house at the 1896 Berlin fair. That Christoph & Unmack and F. H. Schmidt were competitors is clear from the fact that both were invited to submit bids for the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion. It is notable that F. H. Schmidt, in an attempt to stay relevant, proposed a partially prefabricated building that would “give the impression of permanent masonry construction” even though it could be disassembled and relocated to the tropics.95 Neither firm won the contract in Cologne. But F. H. Schmidt, like Christoph & Unmack, found a way to remain relevant even during this period of political and economic change.

**GERMAN PREFABRICATION AFTER THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES**

Everything changed for the two firms during World War I. German businesses abroad experienced blockades. Christoph & Unmack and F. H. Schmidt could no longer access either German or other colonial markets. By the time Germany lost its colonies in 1919, both firms had diversified. Christoph & Unmack redirected its business to the German and European market. The firm’s new trademark signaled this change. According to Niesky Museum director Eva-Maria Bergmann, the original logo used the ancient apothecary symbol of a snake to signify the firm’s origins in hospital design. Berlin graphic designer Wilhelm Heinrich Deffke designed a new and more architectural logo in 1918. It consisted of an abstract tetrastyle Greek temple elevation set on a stylobate. Bergmann has suggested that this new logo indicated a reorientation away from portable buildings toward “purposely designed” middle-class houses, public buildings, and large-scale construction in wood.96
There were practical reasons for these changes. The firm’s centennial publication in 1935 refers to the difficulties it experienced during World War I and in the interwar period when it was forced to lay off many employees. It was only with the rise of National Socialism that things improved: involvement in the construction of the Autobahn helped the firm get back on its feet. A photograph of the firm’s more than two thousand employees taken in its new fabrication hall decked with a swastika flag and the National Socialist imperial eagle confirms its enthusiasm for the new regime. Like the marketing genius that it was, Christoph & Unmack made the postwar crisis work in its favor. The urgency of the housing shortage made prefabrication more attractive because “the only way to build affordably . . . is to build fast using factory products.” Furthermore, National Socialist mobilization for the war meant a shortage of building materials. With the prompting of firms like Christoph & Unmack, government authorities and architects rediscovered wood as an alternative construction material. Christoph & Unmack tried to convince the public that wood was not only available but also desirable for reasons of efficiency, safety, economy, and national pride. It was a new era and buildings had to meet new requirements and expectations. Most important was the need to build “good, healthy, cheap single family homes for the people,” so that each individual could “finally move out of the rental apartment and own a house and garden . . . [and] feel close to family, Heimat, and landscape.” With statements like this, the firm endorsed emerging political and cultural developments.

During this period, Christoph & Unmack concentrated on growing its “German” and “Nordic” wood house lines. These prefabricated houses were built using the firm’s three standard construction systems—panelized, log, and conventionally wood-framed. If extant photographs are any indication, the log system was particularly popular. Architect Jos Tomlow describes this system as highly industrialized. Logs cut to a sophisticated profile were placed on top of treated wood beams on site-built masonry foundations. They were connected to each other via tongue-and-groove joints reinforced by wooden dowels. The resulting log walls were completed on the interior with an air space, sheathing, and the firm’s patented composite boards. These walls projected beyond their corner joints in an aesthetic statement. Stylistically, however, the Nordic and German house lines referenced regional wood traditions including Norwegian stave churches, Slavic log houses of the early modern period, and Swiss and Upper Bavarian farmhouses. Christoph & Unmack’s adoption of these traditions harkened back to the 1870s–1890s rediscovery of “Old German” vernaculars and their appropriation into middle- and working-
class housing discussed by architectural historian Barbara Miller Lane in her analysis of national romantic architecture. But the increased emphasis on these motifs in 1920s and 1930s firm catalogs aligned with a conservative turn in German society and politics. For example, Munich architect Johann Mund created the “Upper Bavarian Vacation House,” which was shown at the exhibition “Dwelling and Settlement: Annual Show of German Work” in Dresden (1925). This house used the firm’s prefabricated log system. Its heavily bracketed veranda, patterned balustrade, large sheltering roof, roof ornament, and numerous small curtained and shuttered windows conjured the Bavarian countryside of middle-class city dwellers’ dreams. To clarify the message and reassure critics of the firm’s commitment to nurturing a uniquely German cultural identity, the house was always depicted in catalogs against an alpine backdrop populated by vacationers in Lederhosen and Dirndl. But the house also responded to established Heimatschutz concerns: “When one hikes around the Upper Bavarian region until deep in the mountains and further to Tirol or the Allgäu [western Bavarian Alps] with open eyes, one is repeatedly pleased by the grand, massive old wood log cabins.” According to the firm, Mund’s house evoked exactly the same sensibilities. His design was so successful that the firm commissioned him to create additional models in response to the “taste direction of the South German public.”

Remarkably, this phase in Christoph & Unmack’s history also corresponded with a geographic expansion—within continental Europe this time. Preservationist Jan van Beusekom has identified forty to fifty Christoph & Unmack houses built in the Netherlands between 1919 and 1923. There are also scattered references to houses built in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and France. But the firm still retained connections to its earlier markets, as 1930s references to buildings in Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, the Belgian Congo, and Greenland suggest. In addition, as the National Socialist regime gained momentum in the 1930s, Christoph & Unmack resuscitated its old Doecker product line to fulfill growing demand for quick, cheap structures for use at military bases, work and reeducation camps, and finally at concentration camps. The story of Christoph & Unmack therefore ends in infamy with the Allies ritually burning down the last of the Doecker buildings at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on May 21, 1945, and liquidating the firm’s assets.

F. H. Schmidt’s postwar transformation followed a different course. Japan occupied Qingdao. German businesses in Qingdao were disrupted and German nationals who had defended the protectorate were sent to prisoner-of-war camps in Australia and Japan. Lothar Marcks, a former
technical director at F. H. Schmidt, was interned during the war but returned to China in the 1920s and set up an office in Mukden (now Shenyang) in the northeast. Head carpenter Hermann Mahnke married a Japanese woman before the war. He returned to Qingdao to establish his own firm after being released from prisoner-of-war camp, and later worked in Mukden. Two of F. H. Schmidt manager Conrad Miss’s children returned to China to serve as representatives for German firms in the 1930s. This pattern of self-repatriation of former colonists illustrates F. H. Schmidt’s role in colonialism and its aftermath.

The firm responded to the new political and economic order with aplomb, as noted in a 1925 publication: “Despite the shrinking of the firm’s field of activity as a result of losing the colonies, the firm has managed to regain its previous prestigious position and achieve success in the areas of civil and structural engineering in Germany.” Projects from this period include a reinforced concrete quay wall in Cuxhaven in northwestern Germany and various large apartment blocks in Hamburg. After the war, F. H. Schmidt, like Christoph & Unmack, nurtured some of its previous links to the global and colonial markets. Drawings for a “malaria tropical house” were sent to the Basel Mission in Ghana in the 1920s. The firm also built a new port in French Madagascar in the early 1920s. This project, it hoped, would “preserve [F. H. Schmidt’s] reputation as one of the oldest and most prestigious colonial building firms.” After enjoying National Socialist patronage in the 1930s, however, F. H. Schmidt’s assets were also liquidated after the war.

THE MODERNIST PREFABRICATION REVOLUTION

It was between these two moments, the colonial and the National Socialist, that architectural reformers in Germany and prefabrication firms discovered each other. Starting in the 1910s, Christoph & Unmack invited independent architects to create designs using the firm’s proprietary prefabricated systems. The only condition for their participation was a commitment to building in wood and an openness to nontraditional methods. However, it is not clear what the legal terms of these collaborations were.

Tomlow identifies the firm’s collaboration with Professor Albinmüller, starting around 1914, as the first significant partnership. Born in 1871 and educated first in his father’s carpentry workshop and then at the applied arts schools in Mainz and Dresden, Albinmüller was a product of the debates and policy reforms surrounding art education in the 1880s and 1890s. He worked as a furniture designer during his studies and
supplemented formal study with independent study across Germany and to Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Salzburg, Norway, England, and Italy. Successful entries in exhibitions and competitions led to a teaching position at the applied arts school at Magdeburg from 1900 to 1906. These years at Magdeburg were very productive. He participated independently and with an artists’ collaborative in several exhibitions at home and abroad including the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition (1904). These submissions launched Albinmüller’s career as one of a new breed of designers working at the intersection between art and industry. Philosophically, he subscribed to Nietzsche’s critique of Western civilization and promotion of cultural rebirth. In practice, this translated into involvement in the Lebensreform (lifestyle reform) movement—a uniquely middle-class Wilhelmine effort to reverse the adverse effects of industrialization while retaining its benefits through reform in health, clothing, land allocation, and city and housing design. One expression of Lebensreform was the development of nature-cure resorts set in the countryside. It was in this context that Albinmüller created his first major building in wood, the “light-and-air hut” at a sanatorium in Braunlage in the Harz mountains in 1903–1904. Based on the prototype developed by Swiss naturopath Arnold Rikli in the 1850s, Albinmüller’s building was a one-room wood “hut” set into the landscape to enable sanatoria patients to take in the healing air and sun. It was built on pilings and had no extraneous elements on its exterior or interior. Built-in furniture made the most efficient use of the space and all elements harmonized with each other. Though not originally built by Christoph & Unmack, Albinmüller transferred the rights to serial production of the “hut” to the firm in 1920. The firm intended to use the building as a basis for a line of efficient single-family houses suited to contemporary conditions. Thus in Albinmüller’s “hut,” alternative medical thinking converged with industrialized building methods refined through decades of work in the colonial and military markets.  

Albinmüller’s applied arts training and interest in Lebensreform coalesced stylistically in his adoption of Jugendstil. He believed that the “artist-architect,” by freeing art from its slavish adherence to academic traditions and by creating overall unity in design, could offer the means to a “reformed lifeworld” in which a new German national identity could blossom. The whiplash lines of his award-winning “Magdeburg Room” shown at the Saint Louis fair illustrate his approach. Jugendstil sensibilities dominated Albinmüller’s work at the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony, to which he was invited in 1906. It was in the period immediately following World War I, when commissions were scarce, that Albinmüller worked closely with Christoph & Unmack. They collaborated on over thirty proj-
FIGURE 5.19. CHRISTOPH & UNMACK “DAS BÜRGERLICHE WOHNHAUS” DESIGNED BY ALBIN-MÜLLER, JAHRESCHAU DEUTSCHER ARBEIT, DRESDEN, 1925. ALBINMÜLLER USED THE FIRM’S PATENTED PREFABRICATED LOG SYSTEM TO DESIGN A MIDDLE-CLASS HOME WITH JUGENDSTIL ACCENTS. FROM CHRISTOPH & UNMACK, DEUTSCHE HOLZHÄUSER, KATALOG XVI, 11. COURTESY OF CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE.
ects that embodied the full range of contradictory ideas that converged into modern architecture in the twentieth century.

Albinmüller’s designs for middle-class residences (*bürgerliches Wohnhaus*) and *grosbürgerliche* (upper middle-class) villas are illustrative. The *grosbürgerliche* villas met conventional expectations through relatively large floor plans set in large gardens and organized around grand entrance halls and public spaces surrounded by service spaces. However, loggias and pergolas linked these houses to their landscapes in the novel fashion of the Landhaus. Furthermore, these houses were decidedly modern in their use of Christoph & Unmack’s prefabricated systems. At the same time, and in the spirit of the increasingly popular “homeland style” that had emerged from the Heimatschutz movement, Albinmüller and Christoph & Unmack argued that wood was a vernacular material embodying centuries of tradition. It was because he was convinced of the historical value and contemporary relevance of wood that Albinmüller had traveled to Norway, “the land of Germanic wood construction,” to study rural construction and “Nordic Germanic culture” in the summer of 1905. These contradictory tendencies are also visible in the “middle-class house” that Albinmüller designed and Christoph & Unmack erected on a site in Reichenbach/Vogtland in 1924 and showed at “Dwelling and Settlement: Annual Show of German Work” in Dresden (1925). Here, the log system was placed on a floor plan that included aspirational elements like a grand entrance stair but also lowbrow elements like a “kitchen-living room” (*Küchenstube*)—which reformers reclaimed from the old German farmhouse because of its connotations of utility and domesticity (figure 5.19). The whole structure culminated in a steep gable roof of neotraditional dimensions. But the complete lack of decoration on the façade and ribbon of small, white-framed windows set in a dormer above a centered trifold glass entrance door suggested a different sensibility. This sensibility blossomed fully in the interior, where geometric patterns linked furniture, tapestries, and lighting fixtures into a total work of art. Though Albinmüller’s output decreased between the 1930s and his death in Darmstadt in 1941, Christoph & Unmack catalogs ensured an afterlife for his designs that was unimaginable before the “age of mechanical reproduction.” By attaching Albinmüller’s name to these designs, Christoph & Unmack retained some part of the “aura” of the original architect-designed work of art, but succeeded, at the same time, in democratizing the original work through mass production. The firm had achieved what design reformers were striving to realize.

After Albinmüller, the Belgian-born elder statesman of Jugendstil, Henry van de Velde, designed Christoph & Unmack houses on both ends
FIGURE 5.20. CHRISTOPH & UNMACK “EINFAMILIENHAUS HAAG” DESIGNED BY HENRY VAN DE VELDE. VAN DE VELDE USED CHRISTOPH & UNMACK’S PREFABRICATED SYSTEM BUT ACCENTED IT WITH ARTS AND CRAFTS MOTIFS LIKE EYEBROW DORMERS AND A HEAVY THATCHED ROOF. FROM DEUTSCHE HOLZHÄUSER, CHRISTOPH & UNMACK, NIESKY, KATALOG XXIII (GÖRLITZ: GRAPHISCHE KUNSTANSTALT HOFFMANN & REIBER), 20. COURTESY OF CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE.
of the middle-class spectrum. On one end was a modest single-family house in Hoge in the Netherlands that featured only a few multifunctional rooms with nostalgic names like “chamber” (Kammer) and “shed” (Schuppen). On the other end was a sprawling two-story villa for an upper middle-class family in the Hague (figure 5.20). Its symmetrical cross-in-oblong footprint with eroded corners rose gradually to form a bulbous massing that recalled van de Velde’s better-known 1914 Werkbund theater in Cologne. The house in the Hague had an enormous thatched hip roof with eyebrow dormers and massive chimneys that point to English Arts and Crafts inspiration. It is significant that van de Velde, who argued vociferously for the creative freedom of individual designers at the 1914 Werkbund meeting, collaborated with a firm whose emphasis on mass production arguably undermined this principle. Beyond initial authorship, what room was there for creative freedom in a system in which a building could be reproduced ad infinitum and its components mixed and matched to create new products?

Apart from the Albinmüller partnership and the van de Velde interlude, Christoph & Unmack’s work with Konrad Wachsmann was probably its most significant collaboration with a reform-minded architect. Previous histories have identified the Wachsmann period as a turning point in the development of the firm. However, this narrative underestimates the earlier Albinmüller partnership, which brought the firm into the orbit of design reform. Wachsmann’s arrival in Niesky was facilitated by the forward-looking director of the wood construction department, engineer Friedrich Abel, and by Hans Poelzig, who was elected to the firm’s board of directors in 1925. Wachsmann was, by all reports, a talented but restless young designer. After a woodworking apprenticeship, he took architecture courses at the academies of art in Berlin and Dresden. Here he encountered Poelzig’s radical ideas. An aborted stay in Paris led to a referral to Christoph & Unmack from Poelzig. Wachsmann rose meteorically within the ranks of the firm, becoming chief designer within a year of his arrival. Only a few designs, including the sleek director’s house in Niesky (1927), a convalescent hospital, some school pavilions, two weekend houses (1927), and a house for Albert Einstein (1929) can be attributed definitively to Wachsmann. This low number of attributed works is not a commentary on Wachsmann’s output, however, since inhouse designers were not generally acknowledged in firm catalogs.

According to Gilbert Herbert, Wachsmann transformed Christoph & Unmack by redesigning its catalogs to market building components rather than complete structures. He apparently appended a modular grid to the catalog with which clients could combine these components to cre-
ate their dream buildings. Extant catalogs from the 1920s and 1930s do show greater consistency and clarity. Cover graphics changed from early medallion-type designs before the 1910s to abstract shapes and stylized lettering in the 1920s and color blocks and photomontages in the 1930s. Early layouts focused on architectural drawings while later examples revolved around photographs of actual projects supplemented by explanatory text. In all of these cases, however, buildings are imaged in their entirety rather than as a series of components. Only one or two extant examples include a graph paper insert.120

If anything, the component basis of Christoph & Unmack’s systems was as apparent in early catalogs as it was in Wachsmann-era catalogs. For example, a catalog published before the firm’s new trademark was introduced in 1918 explains that tropical houses are available in thirteen-foot, sixteen-foot, eighteen-foot, or twenty-foot widths. Interior space can be partitioned and components like verandas, doors, windows, and two different kinds of floors located according to client wishes. Several potential floor plans and window and door placements are illustrated. The catalog ends with a recommendation that clients forward sketches of their desired floor plans to the firm. Compare this to a later catalog, likely published during Wachsmann’s tenure at the firm: “Weekend Houses Using the Panel System” illustrates five iterations of Hans Poelzig’s “All-Norm House” using floor plans and axonometrics. Furniture schedules and cost estimates are provided for each iteration, but that is all.121 In other words, though these two catalogs suggest the flexibility of Christoph & Unmack systems, neither suggests the possibility of infinite variation from a limited set of parts.

Wachsmann stayed with the firm until 1929 but continued to pursue prefabrication even after he fled National Socialist persecution and emigrated to the United States in 1941. It is clear from his own words that it was he who was transformed by Christoph & Unmack and not the other way around: “In the large factory halls I saw for the first time, like a miracle, production machines producing . . . prefabricated panel systems for housing, hospitals, and schools.”122 For its part, Christoph & Unmack also gained something from its relationships with architects like Wachsmann, namely, a fresh language to market its products and a captive new market.

Where exactly were the points of intersection between Christoph & Unmack and reformist architects?123 A young Walter Gropius was one of the first to detail how prefabrication could fulfill the dream of modern architecture. He did this in a 1910 essay that he wrote while working in Peter Behrens’s atelier, which had recently acquired a groundbreaking contract to advise the electrical company Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft
(AEG). Gropius joined the Werkbund around this time. But he dreamed about how a merger between art and industry could transform housing and submitted a proposal on this topic to the president of AEG. He proposed to establish a company that would produce high-quality housing at a low cost. The company would act as a clearinghouse to coordinate the production of standard housing types (workers’ cottages, single-family houses, multifamily houses, apartments) using building components made by subcontractors. Customers could choose from this predetermined set of types and variations within each type. By using standard sizes and materials, the company would ensure low costs. By offering architect-designed plans, it could guarantee high quality. As Gilbert Herbert points out, however, Gropius did not conceptualize the technical details of his system: exactly what structural systems would guarantee lower costs and high quality in walls and floors, for instance? What Gropius did do, perhaps for the first time in history, was to conceive of an architectural system that was both standardized and customizable, and to imagine a suitable organizational structure. He was never able to realize his vision even in the houses he designed for the Hirsch Copper Company in Germany in the early 1930s or those he conceptualized with Wachsmann in the United States in the 1940s. These ideas would, however, lay the groundwork for his oeuvre. Late nineteenth-century English and Scottish manufacturers of iron building components, like Macfarlane, had come close to achieving Gropius’s goal with their vast inventories and elaborate catalogs. But the German firm that came closest to fulfilling Gropius’s dream was Christoph & Unmack. It is strange, then, that Gropius did not develop a relationship with the firm.

Even more telling than relationships with individual architects, changes in the firm’s outlook from the 1910s align with the rhetoric emanating from reform circles. Words like objective, purposive, standardization, and type enter the vocabulary of the firm. For example, a brochure that accompanied Christoph & Unmack’s exhibits at the 1911 International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden urges that both a beautiful exterior and “objective” and practically laid out and furnished interior are necessary to properly fulfill the “purpose” of any building. This very specialized language dominates catalogs well into the 1920s. References to types and typification abound especially in Christoph & Unmack’s 1927 “Weekend House in Panel Construction” catalog. The centerpiece of this catalog is Poelzig’s type, the “All-Norm House” (figure 5.21). The name itself emphasizes the message being conveyed: “All-Norm” means “fully standard.” It was a type because it met a particular, increasingly common purpose in modern society—retreating to nature during the weekend—that needed aesthetic
expression. Type was also defined by demographics: Poelzig’s house was designed to accommodate a large middle-class family of five. Type also implied something about mode of production, construction method, and costs: according to the catalog, the house was inexpensive because all parts were standardized, materials were used efficiently, and it was easy to transport and install. Lastly, type also suggested the possibility of variation within the constraints of a theme. There were five iterations of the All-Norm House that shared a vocabulary of simple rectilinear forms, flat roots, and undecorated surfaces. They differed primarily in size with a strip of rooms added to the back wall in order to create additional space.

Showing the firm’s awareness of social questions, Christoph & Unmack catalogs name and thereby empower the growing middle class: there are types for doctors, lawyers, dentists, surgeons, and accountants. Many types are single-family but some are multifamily and designed to house up to seven working-class families. There are also types designed especially for the cooperative building societies, like the Wohunungsver-
band Gross-Berlin (Building Cooperative of Greater Berlin), that had fought rampant housing speculation since the middle of the nineteenth century.127

A 1920s catalog for wood churches discusses the firm’s efforts to develop standard types for sacred buildings. Here, the firm explains the crucial modernist concept of *Typisierung* (the making of types) as the “thorough improvement of working methods in German industry,” and the production of buildings “in series,” which are stocked at warehouses and therefore cheaper than custom-built structures.128 The idea was to get high-quality architects to identify the necessary types for contemporary life and create a few representative designs. The catalog goes on to emphasize how important it is to find a balance between efficiency, economy, relevance, and the comfort of the familiar, and between Typisierung and Heimatschutz. To emphasize this point, the cover of the catalog is illustrated with a thirteenth-century Norwegian stave church, a type that had been celebrated in national romantic architectural discourse at the turn of the century.129

Type making also appears in other catalogs. *Holzbauten in aller Länder* (1918) speaks of a “colonial type” represented by two-story, one-story, and six-room versions, all with verandas. Though these catalogs appear to apply new ideas retroactively, these ideas were already latent in Christoph & Unmack’s early work. The firm’s effort to standardize and typify its products gained momentum in the 1920s as the interwar state sought to rationalize “all resources, technologies, and systematic procedures to produce greater economy and efficiency,” and thereby boost public well-being.130 The state attempted to establish standards for industry and the professions such as those developed by the Professional Norms Committee for Hospitals (Fachnormenausschuss Krankenhaus, or FANOK) and the Research Committee of the Imperial Work Service (Forschungs-Komitee des Reichsarbeitsdienstes, or FOKORAD). These organizations specifically designated some of Christoph & Unmack products as nationwide standards.131 As architectural historian Susan Henderson explains, rationalization rhetoric reached into every aspect of German life during this period. Christoph & Unmack was no exception.

Christoph & Unmack’s ideas about Typisierung invoked the famed 1914 Werkbund disagreement between advocates of aesthetic individuality and those who promoted artistic conformity in order to achieve a unified, modern, but distinctively German, design language. A 1930s-era catalog cover (plate 8) maps Christoph & Unmack’s global reach and suggests that the firm could have been a model for what Hermann Muthesius aimed to create through the Werkbund: “for national reasons,
large distribution and transport enterprises whose activities are directed abroad ought to link up with the new movement, now that it has borne fruit, in order to deliberately represent German art in the world."\textsuperscript{132} As if to fulfill this mandate, the firm joined the Werkbund sometime in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{133}

At the same time that Christoph & Unmack collaborated with these reform-minded architects, it worked with other, more culturally conservative designers. These architects designed models for the “German” and “Nordic” lines. One of Christoph & Unmack’s most popular products—one that came close to achieving the name-brand recognition that the Doecker had experienced in the previous century—fits into this category. The “Little Christoph” (\emph{Der kleine Christoph}) was a small (20 square meters, or 215.25 square feet), one-bedroom log cabin marketed as a dwelling for “hunting and weekend; vacation and summer; snow and water sport.”

It was designed by the Stuttgart architects Hofacker & Hoffmann and shown at the the “Weekend Exhibition” in Berlin and the “German Garden Design and Silesian Trade Exhibition” in Legnica (Liegnitz), both in 1927 (figure 5.22).\textsuperscript{134} It consisted of a shed roof with a wide overhang sitting jauntily on two projecting log side walls with staggered end profiles. The overhang shaded a simple door next to a stoop or bench. Inside, a built-in dining table and bench dominated a multipurpose living, cooking, and dining area. Against the back, a partition created a bedroom for two. This was a house with the most basic amenities, which, as one critic noted, did not even include a bathroom. In photographs, the dark log walls have a rough exterior finish, which, along with the projecting logs, small whitewashed wood shutters decorated with cutout hearts, and antlers and boars’ heads hanging in the interior, signal the rustic vernacular. But \emph{Der kleine Christoph} was also depicted, in both German and Nordic line catalogs and self-consciously reformist firm publications like “Weekend House in Panel Construction” (1927), as a modern product “built in series.” Christoph & Unmack offered several floor plan and roof options for Der kleine Christoph. By the late 1930s at least sixteen subtypes were available. It was also easy to expand the type over time by purchasing and attaching another unit. Innumerable images of \emph{Der kleine Christoph} and its variations are rendered in photograph, ink, and watercolor in catalogs, firm retrospectives, and advertising material into the 1940s. In every case the house is portrayed with the same bucolic, Heimat-inspired iconography as Mund’s Bavarian House.\textsuperscript{135} Der kleine Christoph highlights overlaps between Christoph & Unmack’s seemingly disparate modernist and tradition-bound work, and between its global, colonial, and domestic activities.\textsuperscript{136}
The firm’s participation at the 1927 “Weekend Exhibition” illustrates this point. Kerstin Dörhöfer has described this event as an almost forgotten episode in modern architecture in Germany. After the tribulations of the immediate postwar years, the economy improved and leisure again became a consideration. Germans appropriated “the English weekend,” or short excursions to the beach or the countryside, as a new and more democratic form of leisure. It was all the rage to leave the city for the weekend and stay in a little house, boathouse, hotel, or rented room along one of Berlin’s peri-urban lakes and rivers. In response, the Berlin Trade Exhibition office initiated a series of very successful “Weekend Exhibitions” starting in 1925. At these events, one could see and purchase everything necessary for a weekend excursion: sun umbrellas, paddle boats, and a “weekend house.” But the weekend craze concealed some desperate realities. Even though the economy had improved, housing was still scarce.
and became even more so during the Great Depression. Though under-emphasized in architectural histories, this was a causal factor in the new discourse about the Existenzminimum, or minimum acceptable level of existence, that emerged in the 1920s. In addition to developing strategies to make urban apartments affordable and humane, some reformers focused on small single-family houses that were inexpensive because they used industrial technologies. The weekend house was an obvious candidate. These architects argued that the weekend house could be converted easily into permanent housing. Being away from the unhealthy, alienating city was an acceptable tradeoff for the small size and limited amenities of the weekend house. This strategic association between economy, leisure, nature, and modernism continued under the Third Reich—for example, in the “Strength for Joy” organization and its modernist resort on the Baltic Coast (est. 1936).

Not surprisingly, Christoph & Unmack had a strong showing at the “Weekend Exhibition.” In addition to the award-winning Der kleine Christoph, the firm displayed at least three other types, including Hans Poelzig’s House and two houses by Konrad Wachsmann. Unlike the acute shed roof, narrow overhang, and log walls of Der kleine Christoph, Poelzig’s house had a flat roof and spacious veranda supported on four thin, smooth posts (plate 7). The veranda was almost level with the landscape, which it integrated through a simple balustrade of widely spaced horizontal and vertical boards. A cross-shaped living area, created by filling in the corners of the rectangular floor plan with bedrooms and a kitchen, opened onto the veranda (figure 5.22). Interior walls were smooth wood and asbestos panels, painted in red, yellow, blue, and white. In the catalog, key modernist terms describe the house: it was “purposive” in its spatial organization and “organically connected” to nature.

Wachsmann’s first weekend house had a simple layout with a bedroom for two and kitchen, bathroom, and extra sleeping space also organized around a central living area. A deep veranda ran along the entire length of the house. House and veranda were protected by a large, flat roof supported by two simple square posts. The vertical lines of the posts echoed the vertical lines that defined each module of the Christoph & Unmack panelized wall behind. In his second design, Wachsmann flipped the orientation of the floor plan so that the main façade was on the short side of the rectangle. This house included the same functions as the first house but in a more compact plan. The most striking aspect of this house was its extensive use of glass: the entire front façade, which opened onto the veranda, consisted of openings. A flat roof integrated the house and
veranda into a single organic whole whose “racy” lines one commentator compared to an automobile.\textsuperscript{140}

Formally and structurally, Poelzig and Wachsmann’s houses evoke the original Doecker. Their wall panels are refined versions of the firm’s turn-of-the-century panels. Their simplicity and planarity recall the utilitarian one- and two-roomed tropical-colonial buildings of the early years. They also borrow that characteristic colonial element, the veranda. According to architect Hermann Sörgel, who reviewed the Weekend Exhibition, in the weekend house, “rooms for special uses, increased comfort, or hospitality are not nearly as important as the veranda, which represents the transition from home to nature, and which one may not omit under any circumstances.”\textsuperscript{141} In this new context, the veranda represented ideas about travel and leisure borrowed from the colonial-tropical house.

If modern architecture was concerned with industrializing the building process and creating a new formal language out of this process, then Christoph & Unmack, with its panelized and log systems, interchangeable components, utilitarian built-in furniture, and standardized types, achieved what the architectural reform community sought avant la lettre. It is striking that an archive of ideas, systems, and forms perfected through Germany’s territorial and economic expansion came to inhabit the entire German prefabrication industry, and fulfilled the modernist dream of the “factory-made house.”\textsuperscript{142}
On March 6, 2002, a raging fire destroyed an asylum-seekers’ home in Niesky, Saxony. The prosecutor ruled that it was arson. At least one additional arson attack against an asylum shelter in tiny Niesky has been reported since the 2002 case. The issue of harboring immigrants has been controversial all over Germany but especially in the former East, and has become only more so since the recent surge in immigration to Europe started in 2011.

The building that was destroyed in 2002 was of historical importance. It had been designed by Albinmüller in 1923 as a home for Christoph & Unmack’s unmarried officials (Ledigenheim). It was a long, dormitory-style, two-story building (plus basement and attic) organized efficiently along a double-loaded corridor. Public spaces, including a hall and common dining room, inhabited a central section that projected beyond the main volume in front and in the back (figure C.1). At the back of the house, this central bay extended into a long, wide veranda spacious enough to be used as a “living veranda.” I have suggested that this programmatic element and Christoph & Unmack’s entire system of industrial building must be understood in relation to the firm’s colonial and tropical past. On the front façade, a gable protruding from the hip roof called attention to the central bay. Inside the bay, a large triangular window broken up by diagonal came strips sat above the main door and lit up the double height main stair hall behind. Two small rhomboid windows flanked either side of the triangular window. They were echoed in triangular eyebrow dormers that peeked out from the hip roof, in the chevron-shaped uprights of the surrounding fence, and in other geometric elements throughout the building. Together, these pat-
FIGURE C.1. HOME FOR UNMARRIED CHRISTOPH & UNMACK EMPLOYEES DESIGNED BY ALBIN-MÜLLER, BUILT IN NIESKY IN 1923. AFTER FUNCTIONING AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING DURING THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC PERIOD, THIS JUGENDSTIL DORMITORY-STYLE BUILDING WAS USED AS A SHELTER FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM CA. 2000 UNTIL 2002, WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED BY ARSON. COURTESY OF MUSEUM NIESKY.
terns gave the building a *Jugendstil* sensibility. Albinmüller expressed the log-based prefabricated structural system of the building by allowing the log walls of the building to project beyond their intersections. The joints between the prefabricated interior wall and ceiling panels became the lines that visually connected all elements of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* interior. By the time he designed this building Albinmüller had developed a successful partnership with Christoph & Unmack, so he was allowed significant latitude in its design, which was more expressive than any of his previous Christoph & Unmack projects. In the purposive plan, industrially produced building components, and simple, elegant detailing of the Ledigenheim, Albinmüller achieved one of his greatest architectural works.²

It is a strange twist of history that this *Jugendstil* tour de force that built on colonial-tropical knowledge was later converted into a shelter for immigrants from parts of Africa and the Middle East. But the existence of the building itself is not surprising. Over the course of the nineteenth century, colonialism and imperialism were etched into Germany’s material landscape in deep and enduring ways. Traces of Germany’s colonial exhibitions and native villages survived long after the original events they were associated with. Germany, like other European colonial empires, also built monuments and memorials at home to commemorate its successes. But this memorializing practice may have been especially important for Germany because of the brevity of its colonial project. Statues to fallen heroes were erected and streets and entire districts were named after important colonial figures and destinations. In general, after the World War II, anti-imperial sentiment in East Germany led to the destruction of colonial monuments, while West Germans destroyed only those monuments erected by the Nazis. The Nazi past overshadowed the colonial past and 1960s anticolonial movements in Africa and Asia barely registered in Germany. Colonial images and objects continued to circulate in the physical environment and material culture. In this sense, architecture and material culture have served an archival function long after Germany’s colonial and imperial adventures.³

Things started to change in the 1990s, however, as a more critical historiography of German colonialism developed, and as Germany’s small postcolonial population emerged from the shadows. Arguably, what George Steinmetz and Julia Hell have described as the work of “decolonizing the landscape of colonial memory” has only recently gained momentum. Steinmetz and Hell take the idea of decolonization as an active process of liberating the minds, languages, and existences of the formerly colonized, famously theorized by Frantz Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and
Walter Mignolo, and turn it on its head to posit a similar intervention for former colonizing societies. If, as is now largely accepted, colonies and metropoles were and still are part of a continuous political, economic, and ideological system, then a case can be made for European societies to unlearn their colonial worldviews. It is not enough to simply destroy visible traces of colonialism. Rather, we must engage critically with these traces in an attempt to understand the “historical-political crimes of German colonialism,” promote an “antiracist and countercolonial culture of memory,” and “reveal postcolonial and racist thought and social patterns of today.” Decades-long efforts to convince authorities in cities across Germany to replace colonial streets names are finally starting to bear fruit. It was only in 2012, almost twenty years after Afro-German activist and writer May Ayim first pointed out that names like Mohrenstrasse (Moor Street) glorified colonialism, that the government of the Wedding district of Berlin finally agreed to erect a sign (in lieu of the bolder act of changing street names) explaining the history of the district’s “African Quarter.” Even more recently, in December 2015, Munich’s Advisory Board for Foreign Nationals finally resolved to change the city’s “historically oppressive” street names such as “Hererostrasse” and “Dar-es-Salaam-strasse.”

Ethnographic museums whose histories are, of course, closely intertwined with colonial activity and which also exist at the intersection of material and discursive registers are also experiencing a crisis of name and identity. The crisis started in the 1990s when curators, in response to falling attendance, questioned their museums’ reliance on old-fashioned understandings of nation and race. They questioned whether objects in their collections were really embodiments of specific folk cultures, challenged their own strategies for presenting these objects, and contested their claims to ownership of these objects. Renaming became a way to balance competing agendas: the ethnographic museum in Frankfurt became a “worldcultures museum” in 2010 and now operates more like a field site for researchers who “go native” in the museum and design exhibitions around their discoveries. In 2014 the ethnological museum in Munich adopted the name Museum of Five Continents in a self-reflexive attempt to include Europe in its ethnographic gaze. Digital technology has been invaluable in this process of decolonizing the landscape of colonial memory: scholars, curators, and activists have collaborated to set up websites that serve as clearinghouses for a robust program of lectures, interviews, publications, exhibitions, walking tours, and mapping projects that actively and publicly decolonize urban space and material culture. Intellectually, these projects share certain ideas about the interrelationship
of public and private memory and national identity that were first articulated in the campaign of the 1950s and 1960s to “come to terms” with the Nazi past.9

This book aims to decolonize the landscape of colonial memory in the history of German architecture. This is an important task because nineteenth- and twentieth-century German architecture is central to the history of modern architecture as it is now understood through much of the world. The fact that a developmental history of architecture that follows the basic chronological model of the Western survey (and has a geographic range that mirrors European and North American territorial expansion) is standard fare at architecture programs in much of Africa, Asia, and Oceania tells us all we need to know—there is no need to justify why the discipline needs to go global. In this sense at least, global architectural history is a fait accompli that has already had the feared effect of weakening local histories.10 The disjunction between the global reach of the discipline and the limited compass of its content could not be clearer. Even in the Anglo-American academy, where critical postcolonial, cross-cultural, diasporic, and transnational approaches have slowly made inroads, the core narratives of architectural history remain stubbornly unchanged.11

Nowhere is this more evident than in the history of modern architecture in Germany, which, because of Germany’s distinctive trajectory in the 1930s and 1940s, was disseminated intact in its canonical form in which colonial experiences and ideas already resided but remained unacknowledged. Architect-ethnographers’ efforts to accumulate knowledge about foreign traditions in order to inject new life into German architecture, the contradictory concept of colonial Heimatschutz, the presence of colonialism at the hallowed Werkbund Exhibition, and the entanglement of colonial and modern methods, forms, and ideas in German prefabrication all signal this sublimated history.

Rather than applying a preset postcolonial theory argument to yet another “culturally specific” case study, this book illustrates the capacity of theory to produce new knowledge.12 There was no Le Corbusier of German architecture whose travels and consequent appropriation of subaltern forms and concepts constitute a tortured chapter or lifelong obsession in the architect’s oeuvre. Nor does this book document the evolution of a single city on the erstwhile colonial periphery in light of the colonial state’s interventions and local mediations—though such a book would reveal the distinctiveness of the German colonial case. Rather, my aim has been to explore how German architecture came to terms with the flood of knowledge and recalibration of cultural, social, economic, and
political ideas that characterized the era, and to reflect on the disciplinary and professional implications of these developments.

Taking a leaf from the protagonists of my story, I used the concept of the archive—understood as both a material collection and a structuring system in discourse—to envision how German architecture interacted with its non-European counterparts at the end of the nineteenth century. Building in part on the work of postcolonial theorists, some contemporary artists are engaging with the archive in ways that parallel the arguments made in this book. These artists have renewed the principle of publicity of the archive: “the archive is there to serve memory, to be useful” even if the outcomes of an engagement with it cannot be fully predicted. They have articulated a new “archival contract” that demands the right to ravish and consume archives in ways that spawn new knowledge that is positioned against dominant narratives. These artists have developed readings of the archive’s “latent,” “regenerative,” and “radical” potential that build on the past, are situated in the present, and project meaning into the future.

One potential result is the redefinition of the borders of spheres of knowledge like architecture. In architectural ethnographies, the discourse on colonial Heimatschutz, Werkbund colonialism, and the missionary and military histories of prefabrication, the latent possibilities of a German colonial modern rise to the surface. Thinking through and with the new archival contract allows us to draw together such unacknowledged and perhaps even unknowable narratives into a new, nonlinear, and more global history of German architecture.
INTRODUCTION


6. The subject is broached in some recent publications including Itohan Osayimwese, “Colonialism at the Center: German Colonial Architecture and the Design Reform


9. After World War I, Southwest Africa was governed by South Africa, Cameroon went to France and Britain, Togo to France, Tanzania to Britain, and Burundi and Rwanda to Belgium, while Kiaochow was occupied by Japan before going back to China. For an updated and concise summary of German colonial history and issues in German colonial studies, see Conrad, German Colonialism, 1–14.

10. Conrad, German Colonialism, 11.


16. “Public Health Department Report for 1913,” Zanzibar National Archives, BA 7/1,


42. For a discussion of these different understandings of the archive, see Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 17–55, especially 44–45.


46. Hamilton et al., *Refiguring the Archive*, 23.

CHAPTER 1. THE ROLE OF EXPOSITIONS IN GERMAN COLONIALISM AND ARCHITECTURE

1. Though they denote different national origins and display some differences in form, I will use the terms world’s fair, international exposition, and universal exhibition interchangeably throughout this book to emphasize the ubiquity of the phenomenon.


10. Ludwig Klasen, Grundris-Vorbilder von Gebäuden für Kunst und Wissenschaft (Leipzig: Baumgartner’s Buchhandlung, 1887), advertising insert and 965–95. Klasen used the term plan-model (Grundris-Vorbild) rather than type. This was essentially a definition of type according to morphology and purpose.


13. For a discussion of exposition architecture that uses the concept of type, see Erik Mattie, World’s Fairs (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998). Peter van Wesemael rightfully criticizes the recourse to merely documenting architectural and urban types in many analyses of exposition architecture (Wesemael, Architecture of Instruction, 33). Following Wesemael, I attempt to make the concept of type operative in my analysis of exposition architecture.


15. Çelik, Displaying the Orient, 170.


22. Huber, Die Ausstellungen, 191; Paquet, Das Ausstellungsproblem, 82, 28; H. Glenn Penny, Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 42.


26. The Qaytbay Mosque had been replicated earlier in the Cairo exhibit at the 1889 Exposition Universelle.

27. See, for example, Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 207–10.


29. Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 82; Roman, “Exotische Welten,” 27.


35. Meinecke, *Deutschland*, 13; David Pizzo, “‘To Devour the Land of Mkwawa’: Colonial Violence and the German-Hehe War in East Africa c. 1884–1914” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007), 145; Lindenberg, *Pracht-Album*, 52; Karl Weule,

36. Meinecke, Deutschland, 18.


38. Meinecke, Deutschland, 17.


40. Meinecke, Deutschland, 15.


43. Meinecke, Deutschland, 64.

44. Ciarlo, Advertising Empire, 56.

45. Meinecke, Deutschland, 11–63.

46. Meinecke, Deutschland, 60, 63. See Erwin Günter’s drawing of the consulate in Zanzibar, Image 002-0059-19, Colonial Picture Archive, University of Frankfurt.


51. A double roof consists of two layers of roof separated by an airspace that insulates the space below from solar radiation and creates a chimney effect that ventilates and cools the building. Double roofs were a standard feature of early European bungalows in India. See Anthony D. King, “The Bungalow,” AAQ: Architectural Association Quarterly 5, no. 3 (1973): 10.

52. Meinecke, Deutschland, 54–59.

53. Lauber, Deutsche Architektur, 44; Meinecke, Deutschland, 56.

54. Bennett, Birth, 69. See also Klasen, Grundris-Vorbilder, 970.
55. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 97, 201, 208, 236. As Alfons Paquet pointed out, however, concerns about exhibition fatigue circulated primarily among exhibitors who spent all their time at expositions (Paquet, *Das Ausstellungsproblem*, 288).


65. This critique is discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

66. Poethe, Bugr-Ansichten, introduction. France, Austria, Belgium, and England were among twenty-two countries that accepted the invitation. See “Letter from Bugra to Dr. Solf, Reichskolonialamt, June 3, 1912, BA, RKA, v. 6348, i, 69 [1994]. On the “street of nations” type, see Celik, Displaying the Orient, 68–69. The street of nations type had been a standard in exposition planning since the 1878 Paris Exposition where independent nations were invited to erect, along a ceremonial avenue, pavilions that reflected their national character.


71. As Kristen E. Twardowski discusses, the exhibits organized by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society) as part of the German educational exhibit in Saint Louis fair arguably fit within the remit of a broad German imperialist project. See Twardowski, “Excavating Imperial Fantasies: The German Oriental Society, 1898–1914” (master’s thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2015), 64–67.

75. Paquet, Das Ausstellungsproblem, 284.
76. Lewald, *Amtlicher Bericht*, 509; Meinecke, Deutschland, 121.
78. Meinecke, Deutschland, 203.
87. Meinecke, Deutschland, 251.
88. This publication carried the title *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* until 1902, when it was changed to *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*.


98. Harrod, "Toward a Transatlantic Style."


105. Folkwang Museum later became Museum Folkwang.
108. Lloyd, *German Expressionism*.

CHAPTER 2. THE IRRESISTIBLE CALL OF ADVENTURE


9. Hvattum, Gottfried Semper, 128.


life and career is based on Suzanne Marchand’s “Leo Frobenius and the Revolt Against the West,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 2 (1997): 153–70.

30. Leo Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika: Aufhellung der Schicksale eines Erdteils* (Munich: Beck, 1923), xi. Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887) was a Swiss jurist, antiquarian, and historian of ancient Roman law. He is recognized as the first scholar to have theorized the “unity of humankind” and thus anticipated the “cultural circle” tradition that Frobenius and others elaborated. See Erik Wolf, “Bachofen, Johann Jakob,” in * Neue Deutsche Biographie* 1 (1953), 502–3, accessed November 24, 2015, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118505645.html#ndbcontent. On the impact of ancient non-European cultures on modern architecture, see Bernd Nicolai, “‘Gegenstandlose Architektur’ aussereuropäische Hochkulturen im Diskurs der Beginnenden klassischen Moderne,” in Minta and Nicolai, *Modernity and Early Cultures*, 149–74.


35. Michel points out that though Worringer referred to a generic non-European art, he was thinking primarily of Asian art, which he understood to be superior to African and Oceanic art. See Michel, “‘Our European Arrogance’: Wilhelm Worringer and Carl Einstein on Non-European Art,” *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik* 56 (2004): 149.


40. Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika*, 4, xii.


43. On armchair anthropology, see, for example, Suzanne Marchand, “Priests among the Pygmies: Wilhelm Schmidt and the Counter-Reformation in Austrian Ethnology,” in Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, 302.


51. Paris and Washington were proposed as host cities for technical attachés in 1882–1883. Karl Hinckeldeyn (1847–1927), who toured the USA in the 1880s, was chosen as the attaché to the Washington, DC, embassy in 1884. Simon Paulus, *Deutsche Architektenreisen: Zwischen Renaissance und Moderne* (Petersberg, Germany: Imhof, 2011), 114.


57. Hildebrand, *Der Tempel*, 2.


63. Fritsch, “Vorbemerkung.”
64. Hildebrand, *Der Tempel*, 4, 10, 24.

66. See the frontispiece, for example, which reads: “His excellence, the former German ambassador in China, Counselor Mr. von Brandt, the deserving promoter of Chinese art research.”


68. Hildebrand’s brother, Peter, who was a Bauinspektor, also worked on the railroads in China until 1912–1913 (Neu, *Bitburger*, 125).


71. Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority*, 232. Interestingly, the German architecture firm Ende & Böckmann’s 1887 traditionalizing design for Tokyo’s Central Station precipitated a similar response.


73. Degener, *Wer ist’s?,* 56. The organization was founded in Tokyo by German businessmen, scholars, and diplomats in 1873. Its goal was to research and disseminate knowledge about East Asia but it had a special focus on Japan. “Über die OAG,” *OAG: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, accessed April 24, 2013, http://www.oag.jp/ueber-die-oag/.

76. For example, Baltzer, *Die Architektur*, 79–80, 185.
77. Baltzer, *Die Architektur*, 246, 283; Kögel, *Grand Documentation*, 382; Talinn Grigor,


80. Baltzer, *Das japanische Haus*, 3. Here, Baltzer was being critical of what he perceived as Japan’s unthinking emulation of Western architecture.


84. Kögel, “Early German Research,” 81–82. Eduard Kögel has conducted extensive archival research on Boerschmann. I have drawn in particular on Kögel’s “Early German Research”; Kögel, “Researching Ernst Boerschmann,” *China Heritage Quarterly* 24 (December 2010), http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=024_research.inc&issue=024; and “Im ‘Tempel der Azurblauen Wolken.’ China-Forscher Ernst Boerschmann rang lebenslang um das Verständnis der chinesischen Architektur,” *Schattenblick*, August 3, 2011, http://www.schattenblick.de/infopool/kunst/fakten/kfarco36.html. Kögel has compared the research activities and publications of several German architects in China during this period. He does not, however, analyze the premises of their interest in ethnographic research.

85. Historical sociologist George Steinmetz notes that the German government’s willingness to fund Boerschmann’s project signified a turning point in German political goals as well as ethnographic representations of China. As noted above, however, the German government supported projects on Chinese architecture from at least 1892. See George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 476.


88. See Steinmetz’s discussion of changing German attitudes toward China in *Devil’s Handwriting*, 361–490.


NOTES TO PAGES 84–87

(Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2003), 149; Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments*, xxii, 26; Poole, “Excess,” 162.


97. Taut, *Die Stadtkrone*, 140. Bruno Taut’s brother, Max, also studied Boerschmann’s books and used them as inspiration in his built works. See Kögel, *Grand Documentation*, 33.

98. Kögel, “Early German Research,” 87. Boerschmann taught at what is now the Technical University of Berlin and also at the Humboldt University in Berlin (see flyer, “Ernst Boerschmann and Early Research in Traditional Chinese Architecture,” International Symposium Berlin Institute of Technology Habitat Unit, January 13–14, 2011).


106. Daroonthanom, *Das architektonische Werk*, 3; also Honguthen, “Karl Döhring.”

107. Döhring also received a doctor of law degree from the University of Greifswald in 1916 and embarked on studies in philology and theology (Daroonthanom, *Das architektonische Werk*, 9–10).


111. Döhring, *Buddhist Temples*, 16.

138. Gispen, *New Profession*, 31, 86–113; Clark, “Social History,” 10, 90, 93. Clark and others have argued that the number of doctoral degrees conferred on architects and engineers after the 1870s reform of the Prussian architectural education system marked a major triumph in a struggle for social status that started earlier in the century.
140. Boerschmann was named an honorary professor at the Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg in 1927 (Kögel, “Early Research,” 86; Yetts, “Writings,” 124).
144. See “Quellenangabe” in Taut, *Die Stadtkrone*, 140.

CHAPTER 3. HEIMATSCHUTZ AND THE COMPETITION FOR COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE


6. “Hauptversammlung Breslau 4–5.6.1913, Bericht: Punkt 6: Antrag der Abteilung Karlsruhe i. B. betr. architektonische Gestaltung der Neubauten in den Kolonien,” and “Anlage 6, Vorstandssitzung der DKG in Berlin am 6. Dez. 1912, Vorlage für Punkt 15 der Tagesordnung, Antrag des Vorstandmitgliedes Geh. Hofrat Prof. Dr. von Oechelhaeuser, Karlsruhe i. B.” in BA, DKG, vol. 622, 411, 416. The German word bodenständig can also mean “native” or “indigenous.” The English term contextual is a close approximation; however, it does not quite have the same resonance as the German term, which shows up repeatedly in discussions about architectural reform in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term contextual recalls twentieth-century theories of architectural regionalism that advocated a similar concern for the local context as that promoted by Oechelhaeuser.


12. It was only after WWI that conservative Heimatschutz thinkers irreparably separated the idea of Bodenständigkeit from its modern and contemporary connotations and linked it exclusively with tradition. By 1949 the architect and Werkbund member Otto Völckers could object vociferously to the idea of Bodenständigkeit on the grounds that it imbued building materials and practices with a certain fixity and isolated them from the vicissitudes


34. Speitkamp makes similar arguments about Krämer-Bannow’s colonial Heimatschutz in a recent article, “Heimatschutz” und ‘Kulturkreislehre.’ See also Schnoor, “Hygiene,” 131.


40. Minutes of the meeting of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft in Danzig on June 5–6, 1914, BA, DKG, vol. 622, 143.


It was arguably not until the 1954 establishment of the Department of Tropical Architecture at the Architectural Association in London that the architecture of the tropical colonies became a distinct field of study for architects worldwide. See Jiat-Hwee Chang, “A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Singapore in the British (Post)Colonial Networks of Nature, Technoscience and Governmentality, 1830s to 1960s” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009), 290–94; and Mark Crinson, *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 26–51. The goals of this unrealized German tropical architecture curriculum would have been similar to but slightly different from the tropical architecture idea promulgated by the Architectural Association. German tropical architecture would have shared the ambivalent British belief in an architectural language that was at once universal and grounded in its regional context. However, the British obsession with climate as a seemingly neutral scientific category that merged the quest for modernization with concern for local specificities was missing in this brief German vision of tropical architecture.


53. *Deutsch Werkbund Ausstellung Köln 1914, Kunst in Handwerk*, in BA, DKG, vol. 622, 397. *Zweckschönheit* shares a linguistic root with *Zweckmässigkeit*, and both have to do with the role of purpose in modern architectural design.


59. “Bericht über die Sitzung des Ausschusses” and “Bericht über des Vorstandes,” BA, DKG, vol. 622, 324, 334. Vereinigung Deutscher Architekten und Ingenieurvereine is the name given in archival documents; however, I have not been able to track down any further information about this organization. This may be a reference to the Verband Deutscher Architekten- und Ingenieurvereine.


65. Böhm designed several churches in Latin America in the 1930s, three of which were eventually built. See Kathleen James-Chakraborty, “Dominikus Böhm in Amerika,” in Voigt and Flagge, *Dominikus Böhm 1880–1955*, 100.


76. For the identity of the authors of the brief, “Bericht über die Sitzung der vom Vorsande,” BA, DKG, vol. 622, 308.


79. These perspective drawings were published in August Hoff, *Dominikus Böhm: Ein Deutscher Baumeister* (Regensburg: Josef Habbel, 1943), 15. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate these drawings in any archive.


81. Colonial settlers and architects advocated a “living veranda” in place of or alongside the living room of a colonial house. See, for example, Konrad Loens, *Hausbau in Kolonie und Übersee* (Hamburg: n.p., 1915), plate 2.


89. Heuss, “Das ’Haus der Freundschaft,’” 5.


95. Jury comment #43, BA, DKG, vol. 622, 2–3, 45. Leitenstorfer failed to submit a complete set of drawings and may have been eliminated in part for this reason.


98. Letter from Secretary Solf to Oechelhaeuser in Karlsruhe, Gartenstr. 25, July 18, 1914, BA, DKG, vol. 622, 95.


101. Submissions by women include entry no. 44, “Warum nicht immer Juli,” by Grete Schröder; entry no. 49, “Seekrank,” by Margarete Knüppelholz-Roeser; entry no. 64, “Jaunde”; and entries no. 18 and no. 27, “Kolonial Bauten I & II” in “Architektenwettbewerb für Neubauten—Adressen und Vistenkarten von Bewerben,” BA, DKG, vol. 629–32. It is of course possible that the Grete Schroeder and Margarete Knüppelholz mentioned in the Colonial Society’s records refer to different women from those discussed in the emerging literature on German women architects.


112. It is clear, however, that some of the awardees were more conservatively inclined than Völckers. Ernst Leistner, for example, was involved in the Kochenhofsiedlung, a housing development built in Stuttgart (1927–1933) that served as a conservative riposte against the internationalism and abstraction of Werkbund-inspired architecture. See Stefanie Plarre, *Die Kochenhofsiedlung—Das Gegenmodell zur Weißenhofsiedlung: Paul Schmitthenners Siedlungsprojekt in Stuttgart von 1927 bis 1933* (Stuttgart: Hohenheim, 2001), 61.
117. On the “rule of colonial difference” see Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*, 18–33.


122. Letter from the government of Togo to the government of German East Africa, dated April 2, 1906, 123, TNA, G 7/1.


124. See for example, Bowserox, Raising Germans; Ciarlo, Advertising Empire; Short, Magic Lantern Empire.

CHAPTER 4. REFORM AND WORLD’S FAIR THINKING AT THE 1914 WERKBUND EXHIBITION


2. Angelika Thiekötter’s essay, “Die Ausstellung—ein rauschendes Fest,” in Der westdeutsche Impuls 1900–1914 Kunst und Umweltgestaltung im Industriegebiet: Die Deutsche Werkbund-Ausstellung Köln 1914, ed. Dirk Teuber (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1984), 337, hints at the potential value of this avenue of analysis. See also Wolfram Hagspiel’s description of the 1914 exhibition as “almost” a world exhibition in “Deutsche Werkbund-Ausstellung Köln 1914,” in 100 Jahre Deutscher Werkbund: 1907–2007, ed. Winfried Nerdinger (Munich: Prestel, 2007), 65. Wolfgang Pehnt argues that despite hosting more than one million visitors, the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition was only a “world exhibition” in the minds of Cologne’s placard designers. But, he notes, the organizers of the Werkbund Exhibition were serious about their world status ambitions and succeeded in hosting a world’s fair in Cologne only a dozen years later. See Pehnt, “Anstand, Maß und Qualität: Der Deutsche Werkbund und seine Kölner Ausstellungen,” in 100 Jahre Deutscher Werkbund NW 1907 bis 2007, ed. Helfried Hagenberg and K.-M. Schmidt-Waldhauer (Essen: Klartext, 2007), 27.


5. Deutsche Werkbund Ausstellung Köln 1914, BA, DKG, vol. 622, 397. For Paquet’s views on China, see Li. oder im neuen Osten (Frankfurt am Main: Rütten & Loening, 1913), 295–302. For another caustic description of colonial architecture that uses the buzzword
parvenu, see “Hauptversammlung Breslau 4–5.6.1913, Bericht: Punkt 6: Antrag der Abteilung Karlsruhe i.B. betr. architektonische Gestaltung der Neubauten in den Kolonien,” BA, DKG, vol. 622, 411. Given the Werkbund’s increasing orientation toward international trade, it is no surprise that Paquet was one of the country’s foremost experts on universal expositions. I discuss his views on expositions in chapter 1.


9. Minutes of the first meeting of the committee for the colonial house and minutes of the meeting of the committee for the colonial house, dated October 21, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 37, 101, 116, and BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 28.


13. Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung, Köln 1914: Offizieller Katalog (Cologne: Rudolf Mosse, 1914), 27–28. Since Werkbund records of the exhibition were lost during World War II, I have reconstructed events primarily using Colonial Society and Imperial Colonial Office records. My history of this event is therefore strongly biased by the concerns of the colonial lobby. On the Werkbund’s intermingling of public and private interests, see Maciuika, Before the Bauhaus, 248–64.


17. I am attributing these two functions to the buildings based on my reading of the minutes of the commission for the colonial pavilion. It is clear, however, that a decision on the final format of the pavilion was not made until construction, as newspaper articles, exhibition catalogs, etc. all offer slightly different descriptions of its function. See “Sonderabdruck aus dem ‘Deutschen Kolonialblatt,’ Nr. 14 von 15. Juli 1913: Das Kolonialhaus auf der Deutschen Werkbundausstellung in Köln 1914,” BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 50; letter from Mayor Wallraf of Cologne to Secretary of Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, dated February 1, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 3–4; letter from Secretary of Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, to Governor of Dar es Salaam, dated July 16, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 60; letter from Carl Rehorst to Architect Fischer, Imperial Colonial Office, dated December 17, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 184; and “Von der Werkbund Ausstellung,” Rheinische Zeitung, March 12, 1914, 2.

18. Baltzer, “Hausbau der Europäer.” German colonial women were especially concerned with fine-tuning the degree of segregation between their families and servants. See Antonie Brandeis, Kochbuch für die Tropen: Nach langjährigen Erfahrungen in den Tropen und Subtropen, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1913), 15. The topic was also of great concern

19. Pott also designed a dining room in the Main Hall (Haupthalle) of the exhibition.


22. Letter from Secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, to Governor of Dar es Salaam, July 16, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 60; letter from government of Dar es Salaam to Secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, May 5, 1914, BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 143; letter from government of Dar es Salaam to Secretary of the Imperial Colonial Office, Dr. Solf, dated October 1, 1913, regarding Werkbund Exhibition, and letter from Imperial District Office Wilhelmstal to Imperial Government in Dar es Salaam, dated December 31, 1913, regarding collecting materials for display at Werkbund Exhibition, Tanzania National Archives, Imperial Government of German East Africa, 1894–1914, Plans and Sketches of Government Buildings, G 7/120, 33–37, 40.

23. The Togo house was originally conceived as a prefabricated structure to be built using the “iron frame system of the firm F. H. Schmidt.” The Togolese colonial administration offered to take over and reuse the Werkbund house in Togo if it were built according to the layout provided in this letter (whatever the construction system used). However, the Werkbund commission for the colonial pavilion did not take up this offer. See BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 183–84.


30. “Bericht über die Sitzung des Ausschusses,” BA, DKG, vol. 622, 355. In the end, the commission decided against importing furniture from the colonies. Instead, most of the furniture in the pavilion was designed by Pott and built by the Berlin firm Rudolf Hertzog.

33. Maciuika mentions the Werkbund’s colonial pavilion in Before the Bauhaus, 352.
39. Short, Magic Lantern Empire, 115; Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, Was Afrika mir gab und nahm (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 166; Ciarlo, Advertising Empire, 74.
41. Christoph & Unmack Aktiengesellschaft, Die Döcker-Bauten auf der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung, Dresden 1911 (Dresden: Christoph & Unmack, 1911).
42. Commission members referred to this building during their deliberations. See minutes of the meeting of the committee for the colonial house, dated October 21, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 116.
44. “Living gallery” was used interchangeably with “living veranda.”
46. Minutes of the meeting of the committee for the colonial house, dated October 21, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6371, 116.
50. For example, Letter from Herr Gleim, Imperial Colonial Office, to Consulate in Singapore, Batavia, Calcutta, Bombay, and Colombo, dated August 7, 1913, BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 210; Letter from Royal German Consulate, Calcutta to Imperial Chancellor Dr. von Berthmann Hollweg, Berlin, dated January 24, 1914, BA, Auswärtiges Amt, vol. 1850, 121.
51. Though sovereign countries did not construct pavilions on its grounds, the Cologne exhibition did, as Maciuika has noted, create opportunities for international trade and diplomacy. The Foreign Office organized a tour of the exhibition for Brazil’s minister of transportation and planned to host other foreign officials. The exhibition also welcomed private individuals from other countries, including Le Corbusier. Exhibition organizers also hosted a series of sessions to train German consular and diplomatic officials to propagate Werkbund ideas overseas (Maciuika, Before the Bauhaus, 259). See also Joan Campbell, The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 46; Kries, Le Corbusier, 90.
52. Inventory of photographs, BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 193.


55. Letter from government of East Africa to secretary of Imperial Colonial Office, April 21, 1914, BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 142.

56. See, for example, letter to Professor von Oechelhaußer in Karlsruhe i/Baden, dated July 7, 1914, BA, DKG, vol. 622, 33; and letter from Building Advisor Fischer, Imperial Colonial Office to German Colonial Society, dated August 17, 1914, BA, DKG, vol. 623, 31–32.

57. Inventory of photographs, BA, RKA, vol. 6374, 193.

58. Hagspiel mentions the relocation of the colonial pavilion in “Die Schließung Der Werkbund-Ausstellung und das Schicksal der Bauten,” in Teuber, *Der westdeutsche Impuls*, 342. I have been unable, however, to find any evidence that the building was indeed relocated to Blankenberg.


64. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 274.


71. Angelika Thiekötter, “Die Ausstellung—ein rauschendes Fest,” 338. Following their rebirth in 1896, the history of the modern Olympic Games has been closely connected to the history of international expositions. The second, third, and fourth Games were held at British, French, and American fairs. In contemporary times, former exhibition sites continue to form the cores of new Olympic venues. See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 45, 49; Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 117, 134. On the role of sports in the Werkbund Cologne exhibition, see Walter Borgers, “Der Sport Auf der Werkbund Ausstellung,” in Teuber, *Der westdeutsche Impuls*, 333–36.


CHAPTER 5. THE COLONIAL ORIGINS OF MODERNIST PREFABRICATION


9. How Britain Goes to War: A Digest and an Analysis of Evidence Taken by the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa (London, 1904), 171 item 1104, quoted in Herbert, *Pioneers*, 96.


18. Of course, the line between state and private enterprise was somewhat blurred in early German colonialism as it was in so many other colonialisms. Prefabricated buildings were used during the construction of several railroads. See, for example, Hasse, Tansania, 95–109; Gurlitt, “Die ersten Baujahre,” 58–86; “F. H. Schmidt,” SUB; “Wohnungsbau und Wohnungsbenutzung in den Tropen, von Geheimen Oberbaurat Baltzer, Sektionssitzung am 7. Oktober nachmittags, Vortrag auf dem Berliner Kolonial-Kongress 1910,” Deutsches Museum, Juhaus 1201; Peters, Baukunst in Südwestafrika, 93–97, 272; Arthur J. Knoll and Hermann Hiery, eds., The German Colonial Experience: Select Documents on German Rule in Africa, China, and the Pacific 1884–1914 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 230.

19. Döcker was spelled Doecker after Christoph & Unmack purchased the patent. In many German-language sources, the term Baracke (barrack) is used to describe buildings designed for short-term use. In contemporary English, however, barracks refers to permanent, usually masonry buildings erected to house soldiers. Cf. Robert Jan van Pelt, email correspondence with the author, October 10, 2014.


23. Also spelled “Drenkhahn” and “Sud[о]op.” According to Wolfgang Lauber, some plantations near Buea in Cameroon built corrugated iron houses for senior employees around the turn of the century. See Lauber, Deutsche Architektur, 97.


35. “Beschreibung” Christoph & Unmack.
39. *Zerlegbare transportable hygienische Häuser am Dienste der Gesundheitspflege und Volkswohlfahrt* [1903], 3, MuN.
41. *Transportable Baracken (Döckerisches System)* [1886], 6; “Beschreibung” Christoph & Unmack.
46. *Zerlegbare transportable Hygienesche Häuser* [1903], 20.
53. The Christoph & Unmack catalog for the 1911 International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden is the earliest available catalog with references to the Harmonika line. See *Die Doecker Bauten*, 7.
55. *Export-Katalog für Holzbauten*, 80.
56. “Beschreibung” Christoph & Unmack.
60. These included portable Doecker buildings in original, improved, and “reinforced” light construction; portable Doecker “pavilions and houses” of “strong” and “strongest” construction; “Doecker-Fournier” construction; “pure wood construction”; nonportable “German wood houses”; and the “Nordic Log House.” The original flying Doeckers were categorized as “light” construction because of their portability, longevity, and temporary nature. “Strong” construction was less portable or even stationary and meant for longer-term occupation. “Pure wood” and “German wood” houses used wood instead of artificial Doecker boards. Nordic log houses improved on long-standing German and Scandinavian heavy timber construction methods, and were connected to an effort among German intellectuals to formulate a narrative of Germanic northern cultural and ethnic identity distinct from Mediterranean heritage. See *Zerlegbare transportable Hygienesche*, 3; *Verwendungsformen von zerlegbaren, transportablen Doecker-Bauten* (Munich: Dr. C. Wolf & Sohn), Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, I. HA Rep. 76 Kulturministerium, VIII B, No. 1749; *Zerlegbare, Transportable, Hygienische Häuser im Dienst der Gesundheitspflege und Volkswohlfahrt* (Berlin: Meisenbach, Riffarth & Co., [1903]), 8; *Ein Vierteljahrhundert*,

61. For a partial list of firms involved in prefabrication in 1914, see BA RKA vol. 6371, 140.

62. Selberg & Schlüter sold both Christoph & Unmack buildings and buildings erected using its own system. Philipp Holzmann designed its own portable house system while the Deutsche Barackenbaugesellschaft used the award-winning Brümmer system from the 1900 universal exposition in Paris. See Fitzner, Deutsches Kolonialhandbuch, 429: “Pläne und Skizzen zu Gouvernementsbauten,” 1894–1914, 5–16, Tanzania National Archives, Kaiserl, Gouvernement von Deutsche Ostafrika, G 7/120.


64. There are numerous unconfirmed examples of prefabricated buildings from the German era depicted in photographs and mentioned in primary sources. See, for example, boma-kalender.de and www.deutsche-schutzgebiet.de.

65. Hasse, Tansania, 95.

66. Hasse notes that the buildings that stand along the coast of Dar es Salaam today are the second generation of prefabricated structures sent to East Africa (Hasse, Tansania, 95).


68. These buildings are designated by numerals I through V in archival documents. I follow this nomenclature in my discussion.


70. Hasse, Tansania, 107.

71. House V followed the same plan and served the same purpose as House II and will therefore not be discussed in detail here.


73. For the history of women in the German colonies, see, for example, Wildenthal,


75. The floor plan depicted in figure 5.11 shows ground-floor posts that must have been a later addition.


83. The tower may have been a later addition, since it is not visible in all early photographs.


92. There is evidence that F. H. Schmidt worked in every German colony except Southwest Africa.
93. The branch in Buenos Aires was “General de Construcciones, Soc. Anon.” There were also several affiliates in Buenos Aires including SAEMA, S. A., Exploitation Maderaria y Anexos. See United States Congress, *Elimination of German Resources for War. Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs*, United States Senate, Seventy-ninth Congress, first session, pursuant to S. Res. 107 (78th congress) and S. Res. 146 (79th congress), authorizing a study of war mobilization problems, part 5, testimony of Treasury department, July 2, 1945 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945), 686.
95. Minutes of the meeting of the commission for the colonial house, dated October 21, 1913, BA RKA, vol. 6371, 116; list of firms invited to bid on the construction of the colonial house, 140; letter from F. H. Schmidt to Imperial Colonial Office, dated November 28, 1913, BA RKA, vol. 6371, 169–76.
97. 100 Jahre Christoph & Unmack, 12.
103. Jahreschau Deutscher Arbeit.

106. F. H. Schmidt, Bauunternehmung, 3.


108. F. H. Schmidt, Bauunternehmung, 3.

109. United States Congress, Elimination of German Resources for War, first session, part 5, testimony of Treasury department, July 2, 1945, 686.

110. Nordische Blockhäuser Katalog XVIII 3. Auflage, Christoph & Unmack, [1934], Canadian Centre for Architecture.


120. Holzhaus-Fragenbogen: Warum baue ich mir ein Holzhaus, C7U, H 175. 5000. 4. 34, MuN; Schriftverkehr zw. Oberforstmeister i.R. Lange und Christoph & Unmack, Niesky, 62/10, MuN; Anschreiben zum Katalog 14, 7.8.1924, 95/02, MuN; Bauvorhaben “Kleiner Christoph” Görlitz, Schriftwechsel, 19/03, MuN.

121. Wochenendhäuser in Tafelbauweise, Christoph & Unmack A.G., MuN.


126. *Die zerlegbare, transportable Doecker-Turnhalle*, 3, MuN.


128. Holzkirchen, *Christoph & Unmack* (Görlitz: Hoffmann & Reiber), MuN.

129. Holzkirchen: *James-Chakraborty, German Architecture, 63–65.*


133. *Holzkirchen; Doecker-Bürogebäude.*

134. Little Christoph was shown that same year at the Deutsche Gartenbau und Schlesische Gewerbe Ausstellung Liegnitz (GuGALi), as was a “Middle-Class House” designed by Hans Scharoun for Christoph & Unmack. See Wurm, “Die Industrialisierung,” 208.

135. Koshar, *German Travel Cultures*, 34.


**CONCLUSION**


8. Almost every major city in the country now has a [cityname].postkolonial.de website. To my knowledge, these websites exist for Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Cologne, Hanover, Leipzig, Aachen, Dortmund, Oldenburg, and Heidelberg.


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Index

Note: Page references in italics refer to figures.

Abstraction and Empathy (Worringer), 71
AEG. See Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft
“African Chair,” 64
African Quarter, 14, 246
Afrikanische Bautypen: Eine etnographisch-
architektonische Studie (Frobenius), 74, 75
Agriculture Hall, 47, 48, 48, 49, 52, 53
AKOTECH. See Arbeitsgemeinschaft für
Kolonial- und Tropentechnik
Albinmüller (Albin Camillo Müller), 57, 228,
231, 233, 243, 291n111; cabinet by, 59; career
of, 229; design by, 244; house by, 236;
prefabricated structural system by, 245
“All-Norm House” (Poelzig), 234, 235, 236, 240
Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG),
176, 234–35
Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Kamerun, 124
amusement park, Werkbund Exhibition of
1914, postcard of, 179
Anderson, Benedict, 202, 269n116
anthropology, 74–75, 86; cultural, 62, 63, 66
Applied Arts Museum, 46–47
Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kolonial- und
Tropentechnik (AKOTECH), 82, 267n83
arcades, 126, 127, 170, 222
archaeology, 16, 66, 68, 86, 89, 92
architects: colonial, 139; engineers and, 120;
private, 94; reform-minded, 54, 221
architectural history, 29, 65, 68, 86, 91, 92, 247;
art history and, 294n10; modernism and, 5
architectural reform, 14, 19, 45, 54, 122, 133,
141, 142, 143, 145, 146–50, 153, 155, 181, 234;
disseminating, 166–73; prefabrication and,
142, 221; stimulating, 154; Werkbund and, 173
architecture: African, 75, 96; Chinese, 78, 79,
83, 84, 117; colonialism and, 4, 5, 9–12,
14, 18–20, 22, 25, 62; ecclesiastic, 126,
200; ethnography and, 73–90, 93, 94,
95, 96, 248; European, 81; Islamic, 37,
47; Japanese, 81, 263n25; quality of, 122;
Scandinavian, 63; Siamese, 87; South Seas,
112, 113; subjugation of, 188; travel and, 90,
91–92, 93; tropical, 121, 274n51; urbanism
and, 13; Werkbund-inspired, 277n112.
See also colonial architecture; modern
architecture
Architektenhaus zu Berlin (home of Berlin
Society of Architects), 143
Architekten-Verein zu Berlin (Architects’
Union of Berlin), 147
archives, 19, 25, 284, 268n96; colonial, 17, 18;
publicity of, 248; thinking through, 14–18
“Arctic Sea Panorama,” 31, 255n30
art: African, 71; architect-designed, 231;
avant-garde, 71; decorative, 4, 30; ethnog-
raphy and, 15; European, 71, 84; graphic,
4, 30; Greek, 71; Roman, 71; Western, 68
art history, 16, 81, 86, 94, 294n10
“Art in the Tobacco Trades” (exhibit), 184
ateliers, 24, 70, 135, 142, 143, 146, 147, 163, 234
Babunda building, 72
Bachofen, Johann Jakob, 70, 264n30
Backstein gotik, 32, 33
Baltzer, Franz, 88, 92, 94, 95, 96, 267n80,
267n81; Boerschmann and, 83; book by,
80, 89; ethnography and, 82; Hildebrand
and, 79; Imperial Colonial Office and,
81–82; interests of, 79–80; railroad by, 14;
Werkbund and, 82
balustrades, 212, 213, 218, 227, 240
Bamum, 11, 170, 171
barracks, 195, 285n19; design for, 160
Barth, Heinrich, 75, 95
Basel Mission Society, 9, 168, 205, 228
Batavia, 169, 173
Bauakademie, 89, 106
Bauakademie, 89, 106
Bauhaus, 5, 64
Baukunst (building art), concept of, 118
Baukunst und Landschaft in China (Boer-
schmann), 84
Baumeister, 93, 120
INDEX

“Bautechnische Aufgaben in unseren Colonien” (Wiskow), 148
Bavarian House, 238
BDA. See Bund Deutscher Architekten
Beaux-Arts, 30, 177
Behrens, Peter, 57, 59, 175, 177, 234
Beijing, 77, 82, 144, 224
Bekleidungstheorie, 65
Bennett, Tony, 22, 23
Bergmann, Eva-Maria, 225, 288n60
Berlin, 49, 51, 110, 142, 143, 144, 149, 155, 160, 163, 166; “Weekend Exhibitions” and, 239
Berlin Museum, 77
Berlin Society of Architects, 143, 146
Berlin Trade Exhibition (1896), 18, 23, 26–29, 27, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 53, 57, 106, 157, 193, 196; hosting, 29; industries/sectors at, 28; main portal of, 54; site plan of, 26; trace of, 52; visitors to, 26
Berlin Zoological Garden, 143
Bismarck, Otto von, 29, 77, 211
Bismarck Archipelago, 34, 36
Black Forest houses, 118
Bletter, Rosemarie Haag, 67, 68
Bodenständigkeit [n.], bodenständig [adj.] (contextualism, contextually), 107, 108, 113, 124, 125, 139, 148, 151, 153, 187, 271n6, 271n12
Boerschmann, Ernst, 68, 79, 82–83, 88, 96, 115, 267n84, 267n85, 268n97, 268n98; archive and, 268n96; cultural work of, 83; ethnography and, 84–85; popularity of, 94; Qufu and, 69; research of, 84, 85; Technische Hochschule and, 270n140
Böhm, Dominikus, 3, 124, 125–26, 133, 140, 143; bodenständig motif and, 132; colonial architecture and, 129; competition and, 125; government residence by, 129–30, 129, 130; hospital by, 126–27, 126, 127; house by, 131, 134, 133, 134, 135; stylistic approach of, 130–31; verandas by, 128, 134; Werkbund and, 126
boma (fortified residence), 38, 49, 259n74
Boxer Rebellion, 68, 82, 193
Brandes, Antonie, 217
British Museum, Semper and, 64, 65
Brünesholz, Emil, 146
Brussels World’s Fair (1910), 47, 174, 258n67
Buddhism, 80, 81
Buea, 9, 119, 164, 172, 285n23
Bugra. See Internationale Ausstellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphik
building codes, 11, 219, 223–24
Building for the Cremation of King Mongut, 87
Building Office, 149, 154, 171, 218
building technicians, 9, 76
buildings: colonial, 10, 12, 165, 167–73; export, 41; exposition/compared, 24–25; Gothic, 91; government, 146, 216; hygienic, 224; portable, 192, 201, 204; prefabricated, 3, 166, 193–94, 196, 221, 225; public, 225; Romanesque, 92; stone/Arab/Portuguese, 38; tropical, 40, 117. See also Doecker buildings
Bund Deutscher Architekten (BDA; Union of German Architects), 70, 123, 159
Bund Heimatschutz (League of Homeland Protection), 3, 19, 106, 107, 108
bungalows, 165, 255n51; design for, 160
Büttner, Carl Gotthilf, 128.
“Cairo” exhibit, 255n226
Cameroon, 9, 11, 37, 42, 51, 54, 123, 124, 156; annexation of, 6; buildings in, 150, 194, 195; farms in, 165; plantation/trade enterprise in, 211
Cameroon house, 131, 132, 134, 139, 146
capitalism, 12, 62, 91, 111; industrial, 21, 174, 203
“Caraib” Indian house, 65
Caroline Islands, 111, 113
Central Station (Tokyo), 79, 266n71
Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung, 54, 76, 79, 89, 265n60
Ceylon, 67; architecture from, 168
“Chari Hut,” 182, 183
Chicago World’s Fair (1893), 30, 47, 54, 255n30
Chief’s House, 74
Christoph, Christian Ferdinand, 199
Christoph, Johannes Ehregott, 198, 199
Christoph & Unmack (firm), 20, 166, 187, 241, 243, 245, 292n123; advertisement by, 208; buildings by, 191, 194, 195, 197, 202, 204, 212, 239, 243, 288n62; catalogs, 104, 194, 195, 204, 207, 235, 236; colonial establishment and, 200–13; 215–25; Der Kleine Christoph and, 236; designs by, 228, 239; Doecker and, 227, 285n19; evolution of, 198–207, 209–10, 233–34; factory of,
INDEX

200; furniture by, 206, 207; houses by, 41, 197, 198, 206, 207, 209, 226, 227, 230, 231, 232, 233, 244; labor for, 211; plan by, 103; postwar transformation of, 226, 228; prefabricated systems of, 196, 225, 231, 234; recognition for, 195; relevance of, 225; success for, 199–200; transportation needs of, 203; Typisierung (the making of types) and, 105; Wachsmann and, 233–34; “Weekend Exhibition” and, 240; work of, 237, 238 churches, prefabricated, 190

Ciarlo, David, 37, 209

civilization, 22, 67, 110, 115, 211, 219

“civilizing mission,” 7, 66, 109

climate, 8, 11, 69, 107, 118, 123, 128, 135, 142, 143, 147, 148, 274n51; Congolese, 183; tropical, 195, 204, 209, 212

clo, 179, 180

Cologne, 19, 117, 134, 139, 153, 156, 168 colonial administrators, 15, 150, 164, 168, 171 colonial architecture, 4, 10, 12, 108, 119–20, 151, 160, 171, 172, 180, 185, 188; competing for new, 122–47; contextual approach to, 166; critique of, 107; French, 53–54; German, 11, 110, 121, 165, 251n25; misunderstanding of, 131; model-worthy, 157, 168; old/new, 169; problem with, 154–57, 165; prototypes for, 152; reform of, 109, 122, 133, 145, 146–47, 148, 155, 166, 168; vision for, 153

Colonial Building Department, 155

Colonial Economic Committee, 156

colonial establishment, building, 210–13, 215–25 colonial exhibition, 33–34, 40, 43, 44, 51–52, 53, 245; architectural plagiarism at, 283n83; entrance to, 35; map of, 37 Colonial Hall, 37, 39, 39; interior of, 40 colonial houses, 19, 166, 161, 162, 197, 279n9, 279n14; committee for, 270n3, 281n44; constructing, 156; model, 162, 164, 165 colonial ideology, 22, 112, 146, 147, 152, 177, 185 colonial lack, trope of, 151 colonial life, 50, 128, 173, 217 colonial pavilions, 45, 106, 117, 139, 155, 157–66, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 169, 172, 173, 176, 181, 225; analysis of, 177, 178; plan for, 44; proposed, 154 colonial technicians, 12, 121 colonialism, 21, 23, 66, 68, 82, 110, 147, 148, 166, 173, 174, 177, 185, 187, 211, 246, 248; agents of, 5; analogies of, 12; architecture and, 4, 5, 6, 14, 18–20, 22, 25, 173; authority and, 11; conditions of, 17; conservative agenda of, 112; cultural history perspective on, 225n24; development of, 7; documentary project of, 78; German, 6–9, 12, 14, 18, 43–50, 59–60, 89, 109, 117, 161, 171, 225, 245, 246, 251n24, 281n18; impact of, 8–9, 204; interpreted, 56; mandate of, 19; memory and, 209; modernism and, 5, 6, 18, 59, 173; official policy for, 7–8; prefabrication and, 188–89; promoting, 105–6; public interest in, 34; strategies engaged with, 59; world’s fairs and, 29, 33–34, 181 colonization, 13, 15, 23, 95, 188, 192; formal, 170; internal, 139; prefabrication and, 189 columns, 48, 130, 133, 164, 166, 177, 212; classical, 23, 157; masonry, 138, 218; Tuscan, 213 commerce, 24, 55, 56; traditional forms of, 22 community, 22, 29, 75, 88, 108, 116, 241 concentration camps, 227 Confucius Temple, 68, 69, 101 Congo Village, 176, 181, 182, 183, 185 Congress for Historic Preservation. See Tagung für Denkmalpflege Conrad, Sebastian, 8, 174

construction, 164, 207, 211–12, 213, 222, 224; conventional, 221; serialized, 202; wood, 157, 231, 287n60 contextualism, 19, 153, 164, 166, 185, 187, 271n6. See also Bodenständigkeit [n.], bodenständig [adj.] counter-models, models and, 168, 169, 172

Crystal Palace (Outshoorn), 25 Crystal Palace (Paxton), 25, 26, 180 cultural reform, 12, 19, 25, 108, 229 culture, 29, 78, 81, 108, 109, 204, 205, 211, 225, 226; African, 61, 70, 72, 75, 110, 169; analytical study of, 62; antiracist/counter-colonial, 246; Arab, 37; architectural, 25, 70, 93, 95; Asian, 38, 61; Chinese, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84; European, 32, 38, 88; folk, 246; foreign, 55; German, 107, 231; Greco-Roman, 70; indigenous, 82, 87, 111, 112, 122; innovation, 204; material, 110, 245, 246; Mediterranean, 70; memory, 246; non-European, 181, 264n30; Nordic, 231; popular, 121; preservation of, 110, 111; Samoan, 112, 113; Siamese, 86, 93; subaltern, 17, 112; urban, 23; visual, 203, 210; Wachagga, 116; Western, 66; world, 23, 28, 43, 246; Yoruba, 110 Dar es Salaam, 3, 11, 160–61, 172, 192, 193, 211, 213, 271n3, 288n66; buildings in, 177, 212,
INDEX

217, 218, 199; colonial exhibition in, 156; German East African building department in, 120; houses in, 213, 216, 222, 223; urban planning for, 289n78

Darmstadt Artists’ Colony, 229

Daroonthanom, Krisana: Jugendstil and, 85

“Das bürgerliche Wohnhaus” (Porti), 230, 231

Das japanische Haus: Eine bautechnische Studie (Baltzer), 79, 81, 96

Das Kolonial Gehöft, 157

Das unbekannte Afrika (Frobenius), 70, 72–73

Deffke, Wilhelm Heinrich: design by, 225

Deutsche Barackenbaugesellschaft, 210, 288n62

Deutsche Gardenbau und Schlesische Gewerbe Ausstellung Liegnitz (GuGALi) (1927), 292n134

Deutsche Kolonialzeitung (newspaper), 117

Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasien (German Society for the Natural History and Ethnology of East Asia), 62–63, 80

Deutsches Dorf (Hoffacker), 47

Deutsches Kolonialhaus (Antelmann), 29

“Deutschum und Deutsche Kolonien,” 44

domestic, 7, 14; architectural, 16, 20, 54, 61, 144; artistic, 56; cultural, 56; professional, 47; social, 119; technical, 119; urban, 107

Die Architektur der Kultbauen Japans (Baltzer), 79, 80, 88, 81

Die Baukunst und religiöse Kultur der Chinesen (Taut), 84

“Die Frau in Haus und Beruf” exhibition (1912), 163

Die Stadtkrone (Taut), 68, 96

Diebitsch, Carl von, 88–89, 90

Döcker, Johan Gerhard Clemens, 194; prefabrication and, 189, 192, 203, 204

Doecker buildings, 165, 191, 194, 194, 195, 196, 199, 201, 202, 204–5, 206, 210, 238, 241, 287n19; at concentration camps, 227; flying, 287n60; materials for, 202; revival of, 227; tropical, 212

Döhring, Karl, 94, 268n10; ethnography and, 90; Museum of Siamese Antiquities and, 87–88; professional authority and, 93; Siam and, 85, 86–87, 92, 96
domes, 27, 31, 99, 130, 122; beehive, 11; onion, 89, 126, 128

Dörhöfer, Kerstin, 142, 180

Doecker buildings, 165, 191, 194, 194, 195, 196, 199, 201, 202, 204–5, 206, 210, 238, 241, 287n19; at concentration camps, 227; flying, 287n60; materials for, 202; revival of, 227; tropical, 212

Die WOMAN Exhibition in the British Empire Exhibition 1924 at Sheerness, 156

“Exhibition of the Indigenous,” 35, 37, 38, 43, 45, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55; described, 36

exhibitions, 22–23, 26, 27, 29, 32, 44, 54, 59, 71, 182, 203, 204, 253n11; architecture and, 18; colonial, 37; design, 246; national economy and, 28; specialized, 22; trade, 175; world, 28, 278n2

expositions, 50, 169, 175, 182, 254n12; basilica-type, 26; development of, 21–22, 25; host-
ing, 28–29; international, 253n1; modern architecture and, 21; Olympic Games and, 281n71; replicating, 23; strategies for, 181; types of, 29–34, 36–43
expressionism, 67, 68, 84

F. H. Schmidt (firm), 20, 37, 139, 166, 192, 195, 219, 290n92, 291n107; buildings by, 212, 213; establishment of, 210; growth of, 225; houses by, 193, 216, 220, 227; iron frame system of, 280n23; labor for, 211; liquidation of, 228; mess halls by, 213, 215; postwar transformation of, 227–28; prefabrication and, 225; Qingdao and, 121, 224; relevance of, 225; tropical building and, 40
Field Museum, 52, 58
Finke Residence, 118, 119
Finsch, Friedrich, 36
Fischer, Julius, 123, 149, 156, 158
Fischer, Theodor, 108, 125, 134, 175, 177; house by, 135; Main Hall and, 178, 180–81; on Werkbund, 135–36
Fischer von Erlach, Johann, 91
"Flying Doecker," 195, 195
Foreign Office, 40, 77, 94, 281n51
Forschungs-Komitee des Reichsarbeitsdientes (FOKORAD), 237
Frankfurt, 110, 210, 246, 294n8
Frobenius, Hermann, 81, 88, 94, 95, 183; African architecture and, 96; Hildebrand and, 78; teleological history and, 75–76; work of, 74–75, 76–77
Frobenius, Leo, 70, 73, 75, 88, 95, 96, 110, 263n29; African art and, 72; cultural circle and, 264n30, 265n46; drawing by, 72; Einstein and, 71; ethnography and, 74, 77; Kulturkreis and, 81
functionalism, 24, 69, 72, 121, 122
furniture, 64, 134, 234, 280n30; built-in, 241; colonial type, 163; folding, 206; Harmonika, 207, 208, 287n33; tropical, 207; utilitarian, 163
gables, 111, 118, 121, 143, 150, 151, 154, 172, 195, 212, 231, 243; Chinese, 81; Dutch, 222; flying, 34, 35
gardens, zoological-botanical, 29, 56, 71
Ghent exhibition (1913), 175
Geppert, Alexander, 23, 29
German architecture, 50, 63, 73, 119, 122; colonial and, 59; design cultures and, 62; discourse of, 25, 61, 90; history of, 95, 247, 248; lost harmony of, 134; travel/ethnographic research on, 62
German Army, Marine, and Colonial Exhibition (1907), tropical outfitting and, 206–7
"German Colonial Exhibition," 28, 30, 34, 37, 40, 43, 49, 50, 55
German Colonial Lexicon (Schnee), 95
German Colonial Museum, 52
German Colonial Society, 92, 95, 108, 116, 139, 146, 157, 170, 206; competition by, 105, 120, 122, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 133, 135, 137, 138, 141, 143, 144, 147–52, 169, 172; Heimatschutz and, 118; leadership of, 105; Oechelhauener and, 106, 107, 117, 118, 123; private architects and, 123; Werkbund and, 122, 155, 156; Women’s League of, 163
German East Africa, 34, 44, 50, 82, 115, 116, 157, 162, 165, 193, 198, 293n142; builders in, 9; building department, 120; buildings in, 150, 151; exhibit by, 43, 48, 49, 52, 56, 58, 59, 156, 181; prefabrication in, 192
German East Africa Society, 192
German Society for Ethnology and Anthropology, 88
German Society for the Natural History and Ethnology of East Asia. See Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasien
German Southwest Africa, 118, 123, 134, 135, 140, 146, 164, 169, 172, 215, 290n92; architects in, 9; buildings in, 124, 150; construction projects in, 106, 163; farms in, 165; genocide in, 193; government office building/residence in, 129, 149; house in, 139; life in, 165; protectorate over, 6, 7
German-Turkish Union, 135, 136, 137
German Werkbund, 82, 109, 118, 121–22, 123, 125, 142, 146, 159, 161, 164, 165, 167; activities of, 175; architectural reform and, 173; colonial pavilion of, 106, 117, 139, 157, 166, 225, 281n33, 281n43; Colonial Society and, 122, 155, 156; critique of, 154–57; domestic interior and, 157; German-Turkish Union and, 137; goals of, 135–36; leadership of, 123; modern architecture and, 153; principles of, 179
Gesamtkunstwerk, 57, 157, 245
Giesecke & Wenzke (firm), 146
globalism, 23, 32, 46, 174
Government House, 57, 119
governor’s house, 216, 217, 222, 223; restoration of, 219; transformation of, 223
Governor’s Palace, 9, 10, 172
governor’s villa, 216, 218, 219, 221, 227
Great Exhibition (1851), 21, 31, 55, 64, 65
Greenland, 191; buildings in, 227
Grisebach, Hans, 27
Gropius, Walter, 3, 20, 23; factory by, 164, 178, 180
Grundriss-Vorbilder (Klasen), 24, 254n10
Grundal, See Deutsche Gartenbau und Schlesische Gewerbe Ausstellung Liegnitz
Gurlitt, Friedrich, 12, 154, 165, 198; colonial architecture and, 120; East Africa and, 139
Gutmann, Bruno, 51, 115, 116
Hagenbeck, Carl, 31–32, 63, 99, 211
half-timbering, 40, 213, 215, 222
Hamburg, 110, 166, 211, 228, 294n8; growth of, 210
Hardy, Hugo, 58
Harmonika furniture, 207, 208, 287n53
Haupthalle (Fischer), 177
Haupthalle (Pott), 280n19
“Haus der Frau” (M. Knüppelholz-Roeser), 140, 141, 178, 179
Heidelberg, 106, 107, 294n8
Heimat, 19, 107–8, 143, 172
Heimatschutz, 108, 124, 128, 142, 148, 231, 284, 271n12, 272n34; colonial, 19, 107, 109–13, 115–17, 118, 155, 247; pedagogical tendency in, 115; support of, 154, 155; tradition/modernity and, 109, 137; Typisierung and, 237; understanding of, 122, 227
“Heimatschutz in die deutschen Kolonien” (Krämer-Bannow), 110
Heimatstil, 32
Hellgrewe, Rudolf, 34
Herbert, Gilbert, 188, 189, 231, 235, 293n142
Herero people, 149; genocide of, 8, 193; “huts” of, 140
Herrnhut, 190–91, 198
Hildebrand, Heinrich, 76–77, 83, 85, 88, 94, 95, 96, 266n6; Balzer and, 79; Bismarck and, 77; Chinese architecture and, 78; ethnography and, 78; Frobenius and, 78; photography of, 265n55; railroad work of, 265n6
Hindorf, Richard, 117, 123, 147
history: African, 72; art, 16, 81, 86, 94, 294n10; Chinese, 79; colonial, 8, 15, 250n9;
cultural, 51, 69, 78, 82; European, 32, 88; functions/tasks and, 136; German, 9, 12; linear, 33; primordial of, 111; teleological, 75–76; transnational, 89. See also architectural history
History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (Fergusson), 68
Hofacker & Hoffmann, 236, 238
Hofacker, Karl, 27, 32, 46, 54
Holstein, Gertrud Claire, 163
“Hosenneger,” 110, 171, 272n17
hospitals, 14, 126–27, 126, 127, 138, 139, 172, 233; field, 192; pavilion, 275n68; portable, 192. See also South Seas hospital
House I, 193, 212, 213, 215, 216; plan of, 214
House II, 193, 213, 215, 216, 288n71; plan of, 214
House III, 193, 213, 215, 216; plan of, 214
House IV, 213, 215, 216; plan of, 214
House V, 213, 216, 288n71; plan of, 215
House for Colonial Pictures (Pott), 167, 172
House of Friendship, 135, 136, 137
houses, 190, 220, 225; colonial-tropical, 241; corrugated iron, 281n23; country, 159; export, 220; factory-made, 241; government, 129, 130, 222; middle-class, 292n134; mission, 191; permanent, 240; planter’s, 212; portable, 207; Samoan, 114; shortage of, 226; Togolese, 160, 280n23; veranda, 165; weekend, 103, 233, 234, 239, 240, 241; wood, 287n60; Yap, 113, 114. See also colonial houses; tropical houses
Houses and People of Japan (Taut), 69, 96
Humboldt, Alexander von, 204
“huts,” 140, 182, 183; indigenous, 169; Togolese, 34
hygiene, 11, 134, 205, 224
IBA. See Internationale Baufach-Austellung
iconography, 67, 79, 222; Heimat-inspired, 238; Islamic, 68; Judeo-Christian, 68
identity: crisis of, 246; cultural, 174, 209; 287n60; ethnic, 287n60; German, 8–9; local/regional, 108; national, 46, 69, 108, 247; racial, 209; Western, 32
Imperial Colonial Office, 44, 81–82, 106, 107, 120, 123, 139, 149, 155, 156, 168, 169, 279n13
imperialism, 83, 136, 223, 245; ideologies/apparatus of, 62; infrastructural, 22–14, 13, 76, 187
“Indian Coffeehouse,” postcard of, 99
“Indian Court,” 64, 65
“Indigenous Church,” 45, 45
industrialization, 7, 13, 91, 92, 93, 188, 199, 211; adverse effects of, 229
Ink Palace, 148, 149
innovation, 4, 16, 25, 28, 43, 46, 54, 55, 188, 192; aesthetic, 42; architectural, 66; culture of, 203, 204; pursuit of, 210; resistance to, 151; technical, 151
International Hygiene Exhibition (1911), 84, 165, 197, 235
Internationale Ausstellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphic (Bogra) (1914), 43, 44, 46, 51, 53, 116, 163, 168; design/content of, 257n60; pavilion from, 45; site plan for, 100; world interaction and, 46
Internationale Baufach-Austellung (IBA) (1913), 44, 106, 140, 165, 175, 197, 257n60
internationalism, 28, 174, 178, 229, 231, 245
J. E. Christoph Machine Factory, 199, 201, 203
J. Feinhals tobacco company, exhibit by, 183–84, 184, 185
Jugendstil, 85, 119, 229, 231, 245
Kaufman, Edward: travel and, 90, 92–93
Kiaochow, 3, 77, 82, 90, 91, 123, 154; architectural development in, 144; German military officers in, 13; modernization of, 79
Jasmund, August, 89, 90
J. E. Christoph Machine Factory, 199, 201, 203
J. Feinhals tobacco company, exhibit by, 183–84, 184, 185
Jugendstil, 85, 119, 229, 231, 245
Kaufman, Edward: travel and, 90, 92–93
Kiaochow, 3, 77, 82, 124, 156, 219, 220, 222; annexation of, 6; architects in, 13; modernization of, 79
Jasmund, August, 89, 90
J. E. Christoph Machine Factory, 199, 201, 203
J. Feinhals tobacco company, exhibit by, 183–84, 184, 185
Jugendstil, 85, 119, 229, 231, 245
Kaufman, Edward: travel and, 90, 92–93
Kiaochow, 3, 77, 82, 124, 156, 219, 220, 222; annexation of, 6; architects in, 13; modernization of, 79
Knüppelholz, Erich, 141–42
Knüppelholz-Roeser, Margarete, 3, 141–42, 143, 276n10; house by, 140, 141, 178; modernist ethos of, 162
Kögel, Eduard, 96, 263n55, 265n56, 267n84; Boerschmann and, 83; Japanese buildings and, 79
Krämer, Augustin, 110
Krämer-Bannow, Elisabeth, 110, 272n34; colonial indigenous vernacular and, 113; Heimatschutz and, 111, 115, 128; indigenous cultures and, 111; rhetoric of, 111–12; subaltern cultures and, 112; watercolor by, 102
Krampe, Max, 146
Kuhnert, Wilhelm, 161, 280n24
Kulturarbeit [sing.], Kulturarbeiten [pl.] (cultural work[s]), 108, 109, 113, 124, 116, 155
Kulturkreis [sing.], Kulturkreisen [pl.] (cultural complex[es]), 70, 75, 81, 96
Kunstgewerbemuseum (Applied Arts Museum), 46–47, 84
Kurfürstendamm, 31, 99
Laak, Dirk van, 13, 14
Labrador: Moravian mission to, 199; prefabrication in, 191, 192
Lake Malawi, 192
Lake Nyassa, 192
Landbau [sing.], Landhäuser [pl.] (suburban residence[s]), 132, 159, 164, 205, 210, 231
landscapes, 122, 169; colonial, 41; Siamese, 93
Lane, Barbara Miller, 63, 227
languages: architectural, 45, 55–56, 130, 198; Chinese, 77; European/Asian, 38; Japanese, 80
Lazarowicz, Werner: design by, 222, 223
Le Corbusier, 69, 175, 247, 281n51
League of Homeland Protection. See Bund Heimatschutz
Lebensreform (lifestyle reform), 109, 229
Leipzig, 110, 140, 163, 165, 166, 168, 197, 294n8; German colonialism in, 43–50
Leipzig International Exhibition. See Internationale Baufach-Austellung
Leipzig Mission Society, 51, 115, 116
Leistner, Ernst, 140, 146, 172, 277n112
Leitenstorfer, Hermann, 135, 137, 140, 143, 276n95; hospital by, 138, 158, 159
Lemme, Hans Martin, 140
Lessons in Architecture (Blondel), 24
Leue, August, 38
Lloyd, Jill, 4, 58, 84–85
Lome, 151
Louisiana Purchase Exhibition (1904), 43, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 57, 177, 196–97, 229, 266n77
Maasai warrior, 53, 173
Maciuika, John, 132, 134, 153, 164, 281n33, 281n51
INDEX

Mahlberg, Paul, 167, 173
Main Hall, 26–27, 27, 28, 55, 176, 177, 178, 180–81, 183–84, 280n19
Makkovik church/mission, 192, 203
Mallgrave, Harry Francis, 65, 66
Manga Bell, Rudolf Douala, 119; palace of, 169–70, 176, 177, 178, 180–81, 183–84, 280n19
Manning, John, 188–89
Meiji period, 79, 143
Meinecke, Gustav, 34, 37
memory: colonial, 209, 245, 247; culture of, 246; public/private, 247
mess halls, 213, 215
“Metropolis and Mental Life, The” (Simmel), 42
Metzendorf, George, 180
Meyer, Adolph: factory by, 164, 178, 180
Meyer, Birgit: visual ideology and, 200
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 96, 264n41; ethnography and, 64–73
migration, 7, 8, 12, 83, 174, 207
missionaries, 44, 168, 248; preservationist discourse and, 115
models, counter-models and, 168, 169, 172
modern architecture, 24, 58, 70, 147; colonialism and, 6, 59, 173; concerns of, 19; ethnography and, 62, 63–64, 69; expositions and, 21; genealogy of, 96; history of, 19, 20, 247; narrative of, 4–5; non-European culture and, 264n30; reform and, 177, 185; Werkbund and, 153
modernism, 4, 14, 19, 20, 22, 36, 58, 109, 141, 187, 188, 240; architectural, 5, 42, 88; colonial, 5, 18, 59, 110; European, 23; functionalism of, 24, 69; German, 219; language of, 21; social, 4
modernization, 13, 14, 85, 95, 113, 120, 188; Japanese, 79; Turkish, 90
Möhling, Bruno, 56, 260n97
Moravia, 198–99; prefabrication and, 200
Moravian Church, 199, 200, 201; prefabrication and, 190, 191, 192
motifs, 46, 49, 128, 184, 185, 218, 227, 232; bodenständig, 132; Chinese, 77; Islamic, 27, 37; Japanese, 81; orientalist, 55, 89, 222; Palladin, 85
Mousgoum, 11
müller, Albin Camillo. See Albinmüller
Mund, Johann, 227, 238
Munich, 146, 159, 183, 246, 294n8
Munich Applied Arts Exhibition (1908), 47, 58, 174
Museum of Ethnology, 62, 143
Museums, 16, 24, 59, 62, 259n74; ethnographic, 29, 71, 246; ethnological, 246; information gathering by, 15; world cultures, 246
Muthesius, Hermann, 3, 36, 38, 108, 132, 134, 160, 164, 174, 178, 180, 261n50, 268n70, 273n45; influence of, 146; pavilion by, 177; style architecture and, 118; Werkbund and, 237–38
mythology, 11, 13, 120, 193, 212
Nachtrag, Gustav, 75, 95
Nain, 191
Namibia, 6; genocide in, 8
National Socialism, 8, 226, 227, 228, 234, 245, 247
native village, 71; criticism of, 36–37
Neu, Peter, 265n53, 265n55, 266n67
New Guinea, 34, 35, 36, 117, 128, 139, 140, 172, 192; annexation of, 6
Niesky, 20, 166, 187, 190, 198, 199, 202, 203, 233, 243
Niesky Museum, 225, 288n60
Njola, Ibrahim, 170, 171
"noble savage" trope, 66, 67, 95
Nolde, Emil, 71
North German Mission Society, 116
Nubians, 31, 91
objectivity, 3, 19, 153, 185, 187. See also Sachlichkeit [n.], sachlich [adj.]
Oechelhaeuser, Adolf von, 3, 108, 116, 145, 146, 148, 151, 156, 161, 164, 172, 271n6; on building materials, 149; colonial architecture and, 109, 110, 132, 155; Colonial Society and, 106, 107, 117, 118, 123, 155; critique by, 107, 147; Manga Bell and, 170; program II and, 139; Schreiber and, 117–22; style architecture and, 118; Truppel and, 122; Werkbund and, 121, 122
Olbrich, Joseph Maria, 57, 84
“Old Berlin,” 30, 32, 33, 36, 46, 55
Olympic Games, 178, 282n71
Orient, 31, 67–68, 91, 136
Osborne, Thomas, 16, 50
Ottoman Empire, 14, 88, 89, 90, 123, 135; disintegration of, 91; German military officers in, 13; visit to, 195
outfitting industry, 206–7, 209
Outshoorn, Cornelis, 25
pagodas, 68, 81, 170
palaces, 9, 10, 17, 25, 26, 89, 148, 149, 169–70, 176, 172, 180; hybrid, 171; pagoda, 170
Pankok, Bernhard, 47, 57
Paquet, Alfons, 50, 154, 222, 279n5; exhibition fatigue and, 257n55; exhibitions/national economy and, 28; German work and, 175
Paris Exposition Universelle (1878), 26, 33–34, 180, 258n67
Paris Exposition Universelle (1889), 42, 52, 258n67
Paris Exposition Universelle (1900), 29, 47, 54, 59, 79, 175, 183, 238n67, 288n62; buildings at, 182
Paul, Bruno: work of, 47, 57, 57
Paulus, Simon, 91, 92
pavilions, 25, 193, 287n60; construction of, 281n51; described, 44; Doecker, 195; dome, 27; exhibition, 40; school, 233. See also colonial pavilions
Paxton, Joseph, 21, 25, 26, 64
Permanent Exhibition Commission for German Industry. See Ständige Ausstellungs-kommission für die deutsche Industrie
Peters, Walter, 150, 192
Philipp Holzmann AG, 210, 224, 288n62
“Phrachedi in Siam, The” (Döhring), 86
Picturesque China: Architecture and Landscape (Boerschmann), 84
Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century (Herbert), 188
planning, 11; colonial city, 12; models, 178; urban, 12
Poelzig, Hans, 3, 20, 137, 233, 236; atelier of, 142, 143; weekend house by, 23, 103, 235, 239, 240, 241
politics, 14, 20, 46, 66, 93, 95, 187, 226; cultural, 136; regional/national, 153
portable, 188, 192, 201, 207
Posen, 139, 143, 146, 223
postcolonialism, 5, 14, 15, 62
Port, Paul, 160, 280n19; Arts and Crafts and, 166; building by, 173, 178, 180; colonial compound and, 158–59; colonial pavilion by, 158, 159, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 178, 181; Sachlichkeit and, 163; Werkbund and, 159
power: colonial, 9, 130; economic, 12, 76, 158, 223; political, 12, 76
preservation, 86, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 113, 115, 142
Prichard, James, 65
primitivism, 4, 5, 71, 263n21
purposiveness, 3, 19, 69, 113, 115, 117, 147, 153, 154, 155, 157, 161, 164, 166. See also Zweck-mässigkeit [n.], zweckmässig [adj.]
Qaytbay Mosque, 30, 98, 258n26
Qingdao, 3, 9, 77, 82, 83, 117, 122, 192, 215, 220, 221, 228; climate of, 11; farms in, 165; houses in, 222, 223 Japanese occupation of, 227; prefabrication in, 224; transformation of, 121, 219; villas in, 130, 154
Qufu, 68, 69, 101
quikuru, 34, 35
railroads, 14, 79, 172, 224; construction of, 77; mountain, 179; prefabricated buildings and, 281n18
Redecker, Gottlieb, 149
reform, 16, 20, 177; modern architecture and, 185; social, 109
Rehors, Carl, 3, 156, 158, 163, 164, 177, 178, 180; colonial pavilion and, 154; colonial status and, 155; Werkbund and, 157, 174, 179
Reichstag, 118, 143
Reuleaux, Franz, 46, 258n68
Rheinische Zeitung, advertisement in, 182
Riemerschmid, Richard, 47, 57, 134, 151
Rikli, Arnold, 229
Romania, 224; houses in, 227
Rome, 61; centrality of, 88
Russo-Chinese bank, 144, 145
Rutenganio, 191, 192, 194
Sachlichkeit [n.], sachlich [adj.] (objectivity, objective), 85, 141, 149, 153, 164, 187
saddle-roofs, 11, 149
Said, Edward, 38, 67, 68
Saint Louis, 53, 59, 197; German colonialism in, 43–50
Saint Louis World’s Fair (1904), 47, 175, 177, 181, 258n71, 260n97; German applied arts section at, 259n85; German East African exhibit at, 157; impact of, 56
Samoa, 11, 13, 112, 140, 168, 172, 215; annexation of, 6; artifacts from, 63; colonists in, 128; hospital for, 14
Sander, Wilhelm, 123
Schmidt, Franz Heinrich, 210, 211
Schmitz, Bruno, 27, 28, 55, 58
Schreiber, August W., 51, 123, 168; Colonial Society and, 147; critique by, 116–17; North German Mission Society and, 116; Oechelhaeuser and, 117–22; tropical building and, 117
Schröder-Zimmermann, Grete, 141, 142, 143, 276n101
Schultze-Naumburg, Paul, 3, 84, 109, 113, 141, 143, 276n100
Sculptures, 4, 59; African, 53, 71, 184, 185
Seel, Richard, 14, 144, 145; grand prize for, 143, 145–46; hospital by, 172
Selberg & Schluter (firm), 288n62
Semper, Gottfried, 61, 75; ethnography and, 64–73
Serbia, 76, 224; construction in, 227
Siam, 14, 18, 67, 76, 85, 86, 90, 92, 93, 94, 123
German military officers in, 13
Simmel, Georg, 23, 52, 54, 178; Berlin Trade Exposition and, 42; international exposition and, 221; internationalism and, 28
Sinclair, John Houston: state house by, 218, 219
Slavery, 22, 185, 211
Sörgel, Hermann, 241
South Seas, 36, 111, 124, 131, 139, 140; architecture of, 112, 113, 141, 142
South Seas hospital, 125, 126–27, 158, 141, 143, 144, 146, 172; design for, 138; floor plan for, 125; sea façade of, 126, 127
“Special Exhibition Cairo,” 28, 30, 31, 32, 55, 253n30; postcard of, 98; stereoscopic view of, 97
ständige Ausstellungskommission für die deutsche Industrie (Permanent Exhibition Commission for German Industry), 156, 175
Staudinger, Paul, 117, 147
Steinmetz, George, 112, 140, 213, 245, 267n85
Stratigakos, Despina, 141, 153, 163
“Street of Nations,” 46, 100
Strzygowski, Josef, 81, 84, 88
Style: African, 71; colonial, 122, 154; homeland, 231; Indo-Saracenic, 219; Islamic, 89; Moorish, 39
Sudan, 31, 54, 75, 204
Swakopmund, railway station at, 172
Tagung für Denkmalpflege (Congress for Historic Preservation), 106, 155, 270n3
Tanagra theaters, 44, 257n61
Tanga, 165
Troppenbeck, Ernst, 139
Taut, Bruno, 3, 17, 81, 84, 96, 137, 180, 257n60, 261n23, 264n41, 268n97; ethnography and, 64–73; Glashauss and, 164; the Orient and, 67–68
technical experts, 13, 76, 94, 148
Technical Institute in Berlin-Charlottenburg (Technische Hochschule Berlin-Charlottenburg), 34, 82, 84, 85, 142, 270n140
Technisches Rathaus, 137, 139
Technology, 4, 13, 24, 42, 94, 157; architectural, 187; colonial, 192; construction, 218; digital, 246; prefabrication, 189; travel, 93
tembe, 34
Temple of Azure Clouds, 82
Temple Ta-chüeh-Sy (Dajue Si), 77, 78
temples, 77, 78, 82, 86; Japanese, 80; primitive, 69
tents, 188, 206; Harmonika, 207
Thiekötter, Angelika, 175, 278n2
Third Applied Arts Exhibition (1906), 141, 174, 176, 259n85
Tiergarten district, 143, 154
Tintenpalast, 148, 149
tippelskirch, 37, 207
Togo, 9, 11, 160, 172, 192, 198; annexation of, 6; buildings in, 150, 151; farms in, 165
Tokyo, 144; rail network for, 14
Tomlow, Jos, 226, 228
Trade, 66, 153; colonial, 41; international, 174
Travel: architecture and, 90; architectural component of, 69; ethnography and, 90
Treaty of Versailles, 7, 225–28
Treptower Park, 26, 52
Trocadéro, 26, 27, 28, 180
tropical houses, 37, 39–40, 41, 42, 165, 197; 206, 209; malaria, 228; portable, 207
tropical outfitting, 206–7, 209
Truppet, Oscar von, 122, 124
Turin exhibition (1902), 47, 59, 175, 258n67
Türmchen, 118, 130
type, 24, 235, 236, 254n10, 257n84; architectural
complex of, 23; colonial, 169, 237; designs
based on, 150–51; drawings, 172, 173;
 elemental, 75; exposition, 179, 254n12;
making of, 237; reproduction/continuity/
differentiation and, 25; standardized, 241.
See also Typisierung
Typisierung (type making), 134, 149–50, 151, 237
Union of Berlin Architects. See Vereinigung
Berliner Architekten
Union of German Architects. See Bund
Deutscher Architekten
Union of German Architects and Engineers.
See Verband Deutscher Architekten- und
Ingenieur-Vereine
Unmack, Christian Rudolf, 199
urbanism, 4, 13, 21, 69, 188
“Utilis-Möbel” type, 163
van de Velde, Henry, 3, 57, 134; houses by, 231,
232, 233; theater by, 164, 173, 178, 180
verandas, 127, 128, 149, 158, 165, 209, 217, 224,
237, 240, 241; arched, 132; colonial, 205;
exterior, 213; glassed-in, 220, 221; living,
134, 157, 164, 243, 275n81, 281n4; long, 215;
shading, 133, 134; thatched, 193; tropical,
131, 132; wood, 222; wraparound, 212, 216
Verband Deutscher Architekten- und
Ingenieur-Vereine (Union of German
Architects and Engineers), 144, 274n59
Vereinigung Berliner Architekten (Union of
Berlin Architects), 78, 144, 260n97
Vereinigung Deutscher Architekten und
Ingenieurvereine (Coalition of German
Architects and Engineers), 133, 274n59
vernacular, 43, 64, 135, 226, 231, 238; colo-
nial, 113, 147; indigenous, 113, 147
Vienna exposition (1873), 25, 180
Villa Roland Behn, 121
villas, 121, 123, 143, 159, 205, 210, 224, 231, 233;
colonial, 130; governor’s, 216, 218, 219, 221,
222; open, 132; suburban, 130; Tiergarten,
118, 132, 154
Vohsen, Ernst, 123, 156
Vöckers, Otto, 140, 146, 271n12, 277n112
Vollbehr, Ernst, 45
Wachagga: chapel, 53, 116, 117, 168; houses, 51,
51, 115, 116; people, 51, 115
Wachmann, Konrad, 3, 235; Christoph &
Unmack and, 233–34; houses by, 240, 241
“Weekend Exhibition,” 238, 239, 240, 241
“Weekend House in Panel Construction”
catalog, 235, 238
weekend houses, 233, 234, 239, 239, 240, 241
Werkbund Exhibition (1914), 3, 19, 117, 121, 124,
134, 140, 141, 146, 153, 154, 155, 169, 172,
173–75, 177–85, 247, 248; agenda at, 174;
buildings at, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 167, 173,
180, 184; colonial architecture at, 168, 185;
colonial pavilion and, 157–66; 177; Ger-
man work at, 173, 174; house at, 161; “huts”
at, 183; internationalism of, 178; postcard
of, 179; site plan for, 176
“white man’s burden,” 65, 109, 110
Wilhelm II, Kaiser, 29, 58, 107, 196, 199, 223
“Wilhelminismus,” 119, 222, 223
Winand, Carl, 140
Windhoek, 149, 164; buildings in, 150; villa
district of, 118, 123
Winkelmann, Emilie, 142, 163
Wiskow, August, 147, 148, 197, 198
world’s fairs, 23, 30, 36, 165, 173, 175, 177, 178,
181, 253n1, 258n68; colonial projects and,
32; colonialism and, 29, 33–34, 181; genre,
46; Germany and, 22, 25–29; as iconic
sites, 21; strategies for, 259n74
Worringer, Wilhelm, 71, 72, 75, 264n35
Wright, Frank Lloyd, 17, 58
Zanzibar, 11, 37, 219
Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung (journal), 177
Zweckmässigkeit [n.], zweckmässig [adj.] (purpo-
siveness, purposive), 113, 124, 146, 149, 151,
153, 187, 274n53
Zweckschönheit (functional beauty), 121, 274n53