

THE ABODE OF THE OTHER (MUSEUMS IN GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS 1933–1945)

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ABSTRACT

In major German concentration camps, museums were set up with the aim of collecting exhibits and displaying them within a *Rassenkunde* (race science) framework. As the discourse of racial anthropology was built on the rhetoric of the difference between the 'pure' races and people with 'inferior hereditary quality,' SS museums put on display 'pieces of evidence' with a view to rendering present and visible that which was absent and invisible: the hierarchical order of different races. Thus, collections displayed in SS museums in concentration camps were instrumental in the process of defining the Aryan *Übermensch* (superhuman) as the personification of all desirable physical, cultural and intellectual attributes, born to conquer and rule the world as a member of the *Herrenvolk* (master race), and the non-Aryan, above all the Jewish *Untermensch* (subhuman) as his opposite, a radically other and barely human, suitable only for menial chores.

The first museum established in German concentration camps was opened in Dachau early in the 1930s. Similar museums worked in other German concentration camps (Buchenwald, Mauthausen and Auschwitz). The richest was the museum in Gusen I, the sub-camp of Mauthausen. In autumn 1940, when the SS began with the construction of a railway between KZ Gusen I and St Georgen railway station, a grave-yard from the Bronze-Age was found. All the finds were housed in an archaeological museum that was established at the *Museumsbaracke* (museum barrack) within the camp. By the side of archaeological findings, human skins, skulls and body parts were put on view. At the time of the liberation of Gusen I, on 5 May 1945, a collection of 286 body parts was found and a voluminous album with fragments of tattooed human skin.

Today, from all the SS museums' anthropological exhibits not a single one is on display in the museum exhibitions set up in the former concentration camps. So far, these establishments also escaped the attention of scholarly research. Thus, when I interviewed historians employed in Mauthausen Memorial Museum and in Gusen Visitors' Centre, in 2005, they were completely unaware of the existence of above-mentioned museums during the war time.

KEYWORDS: German concentration camps • museums • identity • knowledge and power • racism • history of anthropology

It is the ideological incompatibility of the concentration camp and the museum which makes us think of them as unlikely bedfellows. In our mind, the concentration camp,

as the very emblem for the system of barbarous terror, symbolises precisely those attributes to which the museum was conceived as an antidote. Yet, in major concentration camps established under SS control, museums were set up with the aim of collecting exhibits and displaying them within a *Rassenkunde* (race science) framework.¹ As the discourse of racial anthropology was built on the rhetoric of the difference between the 'pure' races and people with 'inferior hereditary quality' (see e.g. Günther 1933), SS museums put on display 'pieces of evidence' with a view to rendering present and visible that which was absent and invisible: the hierarchical order of different races. Thus, collections displayed in SS museums in concentration camps were instrumental in the process of defining the Aryan *Übermensch* (superhuman) as the personification of all desirable physical, cultural and intellectual attributes, born to conquer and rule the world as a member of the *Herrenvolk* (master race), and the non-Aryan, above all the Jewish *Untermensch* (subhuman) as his opposite, a radically other and barely human, suitable only for menial chores.

However, as Aryan superiority was constructed upon Jewish subhumanity – there could be no 'true Aryan' without a Jew somewhere in the background – the question arises of what would happen if the Nazis were successful in their plans to eliminate all the Jews. The Nazi scholar Dr Wolf Meyer-Christian complained, in March 1944, that young officers of twenty declared upon inquiry that they had never yet seen a Jew in real life; consequently, they found no interest in the Jewish question. The scholar warned that as a result 'they may not properly understand the speeches of the Führer, who always begins his political message with a detailed summary of the Jewish problem' (Tenenbaum 1956: xiii).

RACIAL HYGIENE

Nazi theory had its roots in the pre-1933 racial anthropology based on a social Darwinist view of genetics and racial purity. At the end of the nineteenth century, German social Darwinists, fearing a general 'degeneration' of the human race, set about establishing a new kind of hygiene – a racial hygiene (*Rassenhygiene*) that would turn the attention of physicians away from the individual or the environment and toward the human germ plasm. In the eyes of its founders, racial hygiene would provide long-run preventive medicine for the 'German germ plasm.' During the 1930s, the Nazi movement and its ideology attracted the attention of racial hygienists. One of the most distinguished scholars in the field, Professor Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, Dr Josef Mengele's teacher and mentor at the University of Frankfurt, published an article in 1937, paying tribute to Adolf Hitler for being the first statesman to recognise genetics as a necessity for the state and the folk (Weinreich 1946: 27).

Scholarship within the Nazi system soon acquired a pure service function. Although 'independent' research was tolerated here and there, or even encouraged, the actual truth of the content was of little importance to the ideologues. On the whole, research work was used as a good vehicle for important ideological messages: the cult of race, the *Führer* cult, the idea of the Reich, territorial expansion, self-sacrifice, heroism, loyalty to leaders, honour, fidelity and so on (Haßmann 2002: 111). Under these circumstances, the mainstream of racial hygiene inevitably followed the current of anti-Semitism, its followers drumbeating race purity and the contagious threat of Jews.

Racial anthropology was recognised as the primary research goal of many prestigious institutes, between them the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Heredity and Eugenics in Berlin-Dahlem, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Genealogy in Munich, and the Institute for Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt. Putting themselves 'in the service of the Reich,' racial anthropology institutes received fresh funds, new posts and new tasks. The latter included training in racial studies and eugenics for medical students, practising physicians and members of the SS. These institutes helped train SS physicians and construct the 'genetic registries' later used to round up Jews and Gypsies. Nazi racial legislation brought further benefits. Private individuals, as well as the courts and administrative authorities, sought their expert advice concerning whether a person was 'Aryan' or 'non-Aryan,' fit for having children or not. This trade in expert testimonials was a lucrative one. However, for the objects of the testimonials, it could be a matter of life and death or of the right to have children (Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 52–53).

On the basis of an assumption of the existence of diverse human races there followed researches into, and the 'discovery' of, differentiating characteristics between the 'Aryans' and 'non-Aryans.' To epitomise their truth through science (i.e. pseudo-science), they did not hesitate to make use of 'human material' available through the repressive apparatus. Notwithstanding the pretence of using empirical facts and the high sounding scientific discourse, these endeavours were factually a radical break with traditional scientific values. Since pure Jews, Gypsies, Slavs and other *Untermenschen* had never existed anywhere but in the fantasy of racist anthropologists, SS museums that mushroomed in connection with racial research became the abode of the other. Already in the 1930s, to conduct proper *Rassenforschung* (racial research), in Dachau a special Race Research Department was established. There was a library, a laboratory for sculptures and photographs, a file of documents and a museum. The research work was carried out by delegations of researchers from the various German universities who came out from time to time to gather 'scientific material' for the purposes of Nazi propaganda. Photographs of 'typical' representatives of various nations were shot with the purpose of being published in periodicals with aggressive propaganda aims, such as *Der Stürmer* and *Das Schwarze Korps*, but also appeared in other periodicals, such as *Münchener Illustrierte Presse* and *Illustrierte Beobachter*.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF 'INFERIORITY'

Before being entrusted with posts of responsibility, members of the SS had to complete special courses, as a rule in Dachau. In later years all the concentration-camp commanders were trained there, too (Kogon 1980: 21). After liberation, in a former SS library in Dachau, a bookcase was found filled with Nazi brochures and books containing propaganda and teaching material – lantern slides about the *Untermenschen*. As many marginal annotations and exclamations bear witness, these teaching guides had been studied intently (Smith 1972: 127).

As the ideological usefulness of *Rassenkunde* was all-important, the efforts of their protagonists centred on 'discovering' of a Jew as the polar opposite of the Aryan. What became an accepted image of the subhuman was, supposedly, not just prejudice or convention but a scientific fact based on systematic comparison, empirical details and

developed theoretical arguments. In October 1933, for instance, photographers visited Dachau to shoot 'evidence.' A Jewish merchant, Schönwald, served as a subject. In his childhood Schönwald had recovered from inflammation of the membrane of the brain, which left him with a strabismic eye. SS *Rassenforscher*s, pleased with the discovery, called Schönwald's strabismus 'a typical Jewish look' (Anon. 1934: 84). Almost all the time the camps were in operation, old rabbis, 'millionaires' and other people with notably hooked noses, thick lips and shifty eyes were sought after for the purpose (Kay 1939: 65, 155–156; Blank 1945: 126; Loubal 1945: 38; Hess 1946: 75; Kraus and Kulka 1966: 205; Schnabel 1966: 102–103; Feig 1979: 154; Bernadac 1981: 325–326; Thalmann and Feinermann 1988: 173; Pelican 1993: 12; Cohen 1996: 20).

The distorted image of the non-Aryan was of the essence for the members of the *Herrenvolk* to be instilled with the consciousness of belonging to the 'chosen few,' thus uniting them more closely by ideological means. To be cognizant of it was an important part of indoctrination carried out in the training courses for posts in the Nazi hierarchy. As former high-ranking Gestapo agent Berger recollected, the trainees were instructed in racial theory with the aim of cultivating their ability to tell who was a Jew and to recognise him from a distance of thirty feet, 'no matter how he tried to blend in or how blond and blue-eyed he was' (Engelmann 1988: 252). They were not only able to tell who belonged to which race, but they also firmly believed in their theories. For instance, when Adolf Eichmann visited Auschwitz, he noticed a Jewish inmate Sussan Rosenthal. Since she did not look 'Jewish,' he himself tried to convince her that somebody in her family must have been 'Aryan,' if not her parents, then her grandparents. He asked her to let him know and promised that he would personally take care of her transfer to *Judenrein* Ravensbrück (Shelley 1992: 9).

The frequent tours of Dachau by German and foreign visitors were an important component of the Nazi propaganda. The SS presented the *Musterlager* to experts, scientists and ministers, such as Dr Conti, Funk, Geisler, Himmler, gauleiters, various associations, school-children, generals and officers of lower ranks, as well as foreign journalists and representatives of charitable organisations as an orderly modelled camp with apparently humanely treated inmates. However, by subordinating specially selected groups of inmates whose appearance corresponded to certain racist clichés to the dominating gaze of the Nazi visitors, the camp authorities soon made use of them to prove the correctness of 'racial inferiority' of the inmates. In the 1930s, this was an established part of the program, as also was the visit to the so-called museum where objects displayed were supposed to attest the prisoners' physical abnormality. As reported by the National Socialist Representative Hans Dietrich, who visited Dachau in 1933:

Speaking seriously: on the faces of far the greater part of the human material here stands legibly written why they are imprisoned in Dachau. Eighty to ninety per cent. of these two thousand prisoners – this dismaying impression must inevitably arise in every visitor who has a clear understanding of racial questions – are hybrid bastards, the offspring of casual strolls, with Jewish, Negro, Mongolian or the devil-knows-what blood taint (Beimler 1934: 46).

In January 1937, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler claimed that to cast a glance at a concentration camp sufficed to see clearly that not a single one of the inmates was confined unjustly:

There is no proof in favour of laws of heredity and race more eloquent than concentration camps. There are hydrocephalics, squinters, deformed creatures, half Jews, a wonderful pack of racially inferior scum (Ternon and Helman 1969: 68; Devoto and Martini 1981: 23).

Such dehumanisation of prisoners had also an important social function: exoneration of their guards from the feeling of responsibility. For henchmen it was extenuating circumstances, if their victims were not humans but 'animals.' For instance, an SS-man in Auschwitz used to set his dog upon the prisoners, shouting: 'Mensch beiss den Hund!' ('Man, bite this dog!') (Kraus and Kulka 1958: 93; Schwarz-Bart 1977: 376). To achieve this effect, the victims were criminalised and demonised, which is to say, they were liquidated at the psychological and/or moral level, which paved the way for the material and/or biological liquidation (Devoto 1985: 99). When asked what was the point of all the humiliation, why the cruelty, if they were going to kill them anyway, the notorious henchman Franz Stangl put it in plain words: 'To condition those who actually had to carry out the policies. To make it possible for them to do what they did' (Sereny 1974: 101).

HUMAN MATERIAL OF 'SCIENTIFIC INTEREST'

The first museum established in the German concentration camps was opened in Block 2 of the concentration camp of Dachau early in the 1930s. It contained all kinds of photographs and pictures of human heads and skulls, busts made of wax or plaster, and statues of 'criminal types' made of plaster. The images on display were rather otherworldly. For instance, a Gypsy with a stuffed chicken under his armpits that he supposedly had stolen and paid with his life for the crime, or a chimney-sweeper who tried to escape but was caught and killed. Besides, there were idiots, lunatics, savage-looking people, individuals with disgusting scabies, gaping wounds and so on (Vouk 1946: 91; Domagała 1957: 12; Neuhäusler 1960: 11; Konobelj 1964: 389; Berben 1968: 10; Overduin 1978: 125; Lifton 1986: 271; Crome 1988: 66; Knoll 2004).

However, not only the images but also different body parts, sometimes with unusual features, for instance, abnormal genitalia, were indeed kept in glass jars as macroscopic preparations in Dachau itself or were prepared there for shipment to various institutes and museums in the Third Reich (Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 23; Bláha 1946: 53; Kupfer-Koberwitz 1960: 163). For the most part they represented various atypical people, so-called interesting cases, who were killed with intracardiac injections. Afterwards, their whole skeletons or body parts were allocated to the 'museum of curiosities' or, their skulls, – used as paper-weights on SS desks (Najmiger 1973: 159). At the end of the Second World War, Dachau's concentration camp museum stored some two hundred jars on shelves filled with the preparations of anatomical curiosities: brains of people beaten to death on which the bleeding was discernible, feet full of ulcers and abscess, burnt hands of runaways who went on the wire, different organs of tubercular, typhoid and nephritic patients. The jars were labelled with legends of their contents, for instance: 'Found in the stomach of prisoner X... who committed suicide' (Haulot and Kuci 1945: 154).

The most important collection in German concentration camps' museums was assembled in Gusen I, the sub-camp of Mauthausen. In autumn 1940, when the SS began

with the construction of a railway between KZ Gusen I and St Georgen railway station, a graveyard from the Bronze Age was found. The commander of the camp, SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Chmielewski, took this opportunity to present himself as a studious man. So, with the approval of Himmler, he stopped the construction of the railway and formed one extra prisoners' command to carry out archaeological excavations under professional guidance. He also ordered the prominent Austrian inmate, Dr Johann Gruber (the later 'Papa Gruber' and 'Saint' of Gusen) to head this external command. On the whole, some 50 graves were excavated, restored and documented by inmates under the scientific observation of Dr Hertha Ladenbauer-Orel from the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments (Institut für Denkmalpflege) in Vienna. All the finds were taken back to Gusen I to be housed in an archaeological museum that was established at the *Museumsbaracke* (museum barrack) within the camp. This museum was often presented to high-ranking visitors to the Mauthausen-Gusen Camps; in 1943, Himmler came to see it for himself. For Christmas 1942 the inmates had to produce an Archaeological Catalogue with some 85 photographs and drawings that was used by the SS as a gift for more high-ranking commands. By the side of archaeological findings, human skins, skulls and body parts were put on view in the museum in Gusen I. At the time of its liberation, on 5 May 1945, a collection of 286 body parts was found there and a voluminous album with fragments of tattooed human skin. Healthy or sick prisoners, if they had some special characteristics, would be killed by means of injections into their hearts and their skeletons and other individual body parts would be preserved in a very special way. Thus, on 27 January 1943, a healthy Dutch crippled Jew was killed and his skeleton preserved. Many body parts were sent to the SS Medical Academy in Graz (Berdych 1959: 79; Rabitsch 1970: 73; Le Chêne 1971: 206–207; Maršálek 1987: 25–26, 36; 1995: 171; Klee 1997: 43; Pike 2000: 39; Hemmers 2003: 225; Gammer 2005).

The archaeological museum in Gusen I existed until October 1943, when Himmler ordered that the most valuable archaeological objects (more than ten boxes) should be moved to Nuremberg to protect them against allied bomb-raids in an adapted natural cave. Those that were left behind at Gusen were removed to a small hut. In 1944, the archaeological commando was wound up. Other finds came to the museum when, during the tunnel digging for the Messerschmidt and Steyr factories, various palaeontological discoveries were made. An important mammoth tusk was sent to the Linz museum. After the war, just three of those boxes with KZ Gusen I archaeological exhibits came back to the prehistoric unit of the Museum of Natural History in Vienna where some pieces were exhibited until a few years ago, a few other pieces were put on display at the exhibition of the KZ Mauthausen Memorial Museum (Le Chêne 1971: 206–207; Maršálek 1987: 36; Hemmers 2003: 226).

In the so-called Scientific Block in Buchenwald's hospital, parts of human bodies were displayed on the shelves along the four walls: 'hearts, livers, lungs, rectums, breasts, wombs, penises and vaginas, all meticulously labelled with ages and dates' (Faramus 1990: 198). The body parts were collected in pathological section in the concentration-camp hospitals. All kinds of specimens were prepared there for 'scientific purposes,' even if dozens were selected principally in accordance with principles of the fabulous and the amazing. Anatomical bits and pieces were exhibited in a local show-room or sent to the Institute of Hygiene of the *Waffen SS* in Berlin or to the SS Medical Academy in Graz (Hajšman 1948: 186; Kogon 1980: 244). After the liberation of the camp

in April 1945, the British parliamentary delegation could see a laboratory with a large number of glass jars containing preserved specimens of human organs in formaldehyde and the walls of the laboratory and other medical rooms decorated with death-masks of the 'more interesting' prisoners (Daily Mail 1945: 9). Every jar carried a label bearing the victim's name, age and race. For instance: Peter Unschlag, Aryan, 35 years old; or, Moritz Schwartz, Jew, 55 years old. On one jar, in which a heart of a Jew was preserved, there was a notation that the victim's wife had been an 'Aryan' (Weinstock 1947: 102, 162).

In the dissection-room in Mauthausen, too, some SS camp doctors kept a collection of abnormal body parts in formaldehyde, such as an eye 'as big as an apple,' a hand with six fingers and the like. These were bottled and stored on the rows of shelves built round the walls; they all once belonged to the camp inmates (Le Chêne 1971: 88; Osten 1986: 91; see also Klee 1997: 38).

SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Müller, who in the early 1940s ran the pathology section, collaborated with Dr Erich Wagner, a camp medical officer who was writing a doctor's dissertation on tattoo markings. In the first half of the twentieth century, the practice of permanently marking of the body excited the interest of scientific community as an evidence of an individual's regression to an antisocial form of being (Bogdan 1988: 249). Müller and Wagner searched the whole camp for tattooed inmates, whom they had photographed. In 1939, the inmates were ordered to report to the dispensary by Commandant Karl Otto Koch (the head of the concentration camp Buchenwald from 1937 to 1941). The ones with the best and most artistic specimens were selected and then killed by injections. The corpses were then turned over to the pathological section, where the desired pieces of tattooed skin were detached from the bodies, treated and then put on display for SS visitors as particular treasures. Allegedly, Koch himself had a complete library of books bound in human skin and a table lamp fashioned out of human bones with a shade of human skin. However, it was his wife, Ilse Koch, known as 'red-haired beast' or 'commandantess,' who enjoyed an unsavoury reputation with Buchenwald inmates for her taste for human skin, above all with coloured tattoo markings. She had lampshades, book-covers and gloves made of it (Daily Mail 1945: 9; Mladský 1945: 95; Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 91; Hajšman 1947: 238; 1948: 186; Frischauer 1953: 146; Russell 1954: 182; Moulis 1959: 49; Czarnecki and Zonik 1969: 128–129; Stankiewicz 2002: 82; see also Sobolewicz 1998: 186). Half a century after Buchenwald was liberated, Kurt Glass, one of the former inmates who worked as a gardener at the Koch family villa, shared his memories of Frau Koch:

She got the idea she would like lamp shades made of human skin, and one day on the Appelplatz we were all ordered to strip to the waist. The ones who had interesting tattoos were brought to her, and she picked out the ones she liked. Those people were killed and their skin was made into lampshades for her. She also used mummified human thumbs as light switches in her house (Kinzer 1995).

Hundreds of human skins, tattooed with bodies or figures of women, the sun, horses, ship, palms, musical instruments and the like, prepared in different ways, were sent to Berlin, at the request of SS-Standartenführer Enno Lolling, the chief physician in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps. Müller also instructed prisoners working in the pathology section on how to make penknife cases and similar articles from human skin (Kogon 1980: 244-45).

It was dangerous for an inmate in Dachau, Mauthausen, or any other German concentration camp to show coloured or otherwise attractive tattoos. Many such were killed and their prepared skin made into all kinds of haberdashery (slippers, wallets, lamp-shades, gloves, book-covers, handbags) (Haulot and Kuci 1945: 154; Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 22, 68; Morcinek 1946: 93; Berdych 1959: 79; Le Chêne 1971: 88, 172; Najni-gier 1973: 159; Eilenberg 1985: 94; Klee 1997: 42–43). For instance, SS-Hauptsturmführer Josef Kramer, commandant of Auschwitz between May and November 1944, gave his wife a handbag made of tattooed human skin for their wedding anniversary (Fénelon 1977: 180). Similar specimens were kept in other concentration camps as well. A former prisoner from Auschwitz, Wiesław Kielar, for instance, recollected seeing formalin-preserved pieces of tattooed human skin, one of which was from a prisoner's penis (1982: 59; see also Cohen 1996: 18). After the liberation of the camp, on 29 April 1945, Dachau inmates saw several pieces of skin in the camp's museum with particularly interesting tattoos, prepared and tanned (Haulot and Kuci 1945: 154).

In Buchenwald, Lolling was also interested in methods of shrinking human heads to the size of an orange. Under his instructions, the SS physicians shrank at least three human heads (Kogon 1980: 245). After the liberation of the camp on 11 April 1945, many skulls, plus shrunken heads of two decapitated Poles, who had been hanged for having sexual relations with German girls, were found by the American Army. They were the size of a fist and the hair and the marks of the rope were still there (Internationales Lagerkomitee Buchenwald s.d.: 81; Hajšman 1948: 186; Frischauer 1953: 147; Russell 1954: 182; Tarizzo 1962: 387; Logunov 1963: 149; Czarnecki and Zonik 1969: 128; Kogon 1980: 245; Berti 1989: 143; Stankiewicz 2002: 82).

In the winter of 1941, Commandant Höß started a museum in Auschwitz. Photographs, drawings and paintings made by expert inmates showing the characteristics of 'racially inferior' inmates were put on display there (Costanza 1982: 26, 42; Fritz 1986: 78). The collection of body parts was standard practice also in Auschwitz. An SS doctor and anatomy professor at the University of Münster, Johann Paul Kremer, recorded in his diary that he preserved 'fresh material from the human liver, spleen and pancreas' on several occasions; once from a young Jewish prisoner who was first photographed (Bezwińska and Czech 1995: 167–169, 173; see also Ternon and Helman 1969: 114–115). As recollected by Helmut Clemens, an errand boy for Mengele, many glass jars with preserved hearts, brains, eyes and other body parts were displayed there (Fings 1997: 104; Hesse 2001: 75). Besides, there were also some plaster casts of the women's genitalia (Central Commission 1946: 75).

In Auschwitz, a variety of body parts of 'scientific interest' that were extracted during dissection were preserved as anatomical specimens or sent to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute at Berlin-Dahlem as part of a research study on the racial specificity (Müller 1979: 46; Astor 1985: 97; Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 54; Proctor 1992: 19–20; Kubica 1994: 325; Lifton and Hackett 1994: 314; Fings 1997: 105; Klee 1997: 475; Völklein 2000: 154, 170; Sonneman 2002: 70). Former inmates remembered an entire wall covered with scores of human eyes, pinned like butterflies, or a wooden table full of eyes (Astor 1985: 98; Posner and Ware 1986: 34; Kubica 1994: 326; Klee 1997: 480). To aid Dr Wagner of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, who was engaged in a study of Gypsy twins and had reported on hereditary eye anomalies, Mengele killed Gypsies by intracardiac injections so that he could send their eyes to his former teacher and mentor, Professor Otmar von

Verschuer, and other scientists at the prestigious institute. In one case, Mengele ordered that an entire family of eight be killed so that their eyes could be dissected and sent to Berlin-Dahlem. All together, Mengele sent at least forty pairs of eyes to Berlin-Dahlem where Dr Karin Magnussen was doing a research on heterochromia (Weindling 1989: 563; Klee 1997: 487; Sandner 1998: 235–236; Völklein 2000: 169–170; Hesse 2001: 68; Sonneman 2002: 69–70; Langbein 2004: 340).

In autumn 1944, the imprisoned gynaecologist Gisela Perl had been ordered to interrupt a two-month-old pregnancy and conserve the embryo in formalin. It was a difficult operation without instruments, without anaesthetics, but she succeeded in bringing out the eight-week-old foetus in one piece. It was a beautiful specimen and she put it into the formalin jar to show it to Dr Mengele (Perl 1948: 119–120). Afterwards she had to induce a large number of abortions in order to get embryos (Klee 1997: 484; Völklein 2000: 168). The embryos were put in glass jars and sent to Berlin (Perl 1948: 122; Klee 1997: 484–485).

Former inmates also bore witness of the whole heads ‘of particular anthropological interest’ kept in glass jars (Kielar 1982: 58). It seems that the majority of them had been severed from the bodies of Gypsy children with noma in order to be transported to the SS Institute of Hygiene at Rajsko for histopathological study. The institute prepared specimens of selected body organs and preserved heads of children in formaldehyde jars, which were delivered to the SS Medical Academy in Graz (Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 84–85; Kubica 1994: 320, 333). Mengele sent some of them also to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute; one of the few existing documents that cover Mengele’s time at Auschwitz is a paper he signed to accompany the head of a twelve-year-old Gypsy boy (Astor 1985: 101; Strzelecka 1993: 93; Klee 1997: 403–404, 482).

The most important centre for experimentation at Auschwitz was Block 10. The block and its ‘museum’ was a topic of rumour and speculation, including tales of ‘stuffed’ [mummified] bodies (Lifton 1986: 271).

During the Nazi era, such museums were not established just in concentration camps but in other ‘scientific’ institutions too. As photographic evidence from April 1942 indicates, a similar collection of papier-mâché models of ‘Gypsy’ heads was put on show by the criminal-biological department of the Reich Health Office in Berlin-Dahlem, in which Dr Robert Ritter and his assistants were active (see Burleigh and Wippermann 1991: 119).

‘A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE’
BY DR JOSEF MENGELE

SS-Hauptsturmführer Josef Mengele, who was awarded a PhD for his thesis entitled *Racial Morphological Research on the Lower Jaw Section of Four Racial Groups* at the University of Munich in 1935, was drawn to Auschwitz by the camp’s potential for research, a laboratory chock full of human guinea pigs. Professor von Verschuer, as wartime director of Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, and Dr Ferdinand Sauerbruch, the country’s foremost surgeon, arranged with the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* for funds to cover Mengele’s investigations in the concentration camp (Astor 1985: 91–92; Posner and Ware 1986: 12; Weindling 1989: 562; Strzelecka 1993: 90–91; Klee 1997: 472, 488). In August 1943, in a

progress report to the Council, Professor von Verschuer wrote:

My co-researcher in this research is my assistant the anthropologist and physician Mengele. He is serving as Hauptsturmführer and camp doctor in the concentration camp Auschwitz. With the permission of the Reichsführer SS [Himmler], anthropological research is being undertaken on the various racial groups in the concentration camp and blood samples will be sent to my laboratory for investigation (Posner and Ware 1986: 33).

A year later, Mengele's garrison commander produced another report about his research work in the camp in which he referred in glowing terms to Mengele's experiments on twins: 'In addition to that, he, as an anthropologist, has most zealously used his little off-time duty to educate himself further and, utilizing the scientific material at his disposal due to his official position, has made a valuable contribution in his work to anthropological science. Therefore, his performance can be called outstanding' (Posner and Ware 1986: 53).

At the beginning of September 1944 a scientific conference was organised in Auschwitz with Dr Josef Mengele as the main speaker; his presentation being entitled 'Examples of the Work in Anthropological and Hereditary Biology in the Concentration Camp' (Posner and Ware 1986: 55).

Visitors to SS museums were members of all grades and strata of the Nazi world, including the employees of *Rassenforschung* institutes. To vary the sight-seeing, the camp authorities occasionally exhibited important personalities from the ranks of the inmates on the way to the museum – distinguished persons, church dignitaries of various persuasions, political figures from conquered countries and well-known artists and presented them alongside murderers, rapists and Gypsies (Bláha 1946: 48; Domagała 1957: 12; Neuhäusler 1960: 11; Zámečník 2003: 77). Needless to say, the SS made sure that detainees with distinctive physical characteristics were represented in order to make obvious that only dangerous and abnormal beings were imprisoned (Berben 1968: 10). Commander of the camp introduced to the visitors some of them as a multiple murderer, the other as a Viennese mayor or a Czech Communist deputy and perhaps as a Jewish doctor who raped dozens of Aryan girls. These live anthropological exponents were meticulously selected and had to play this undignified role at each visit" (Zámečník 2003: 77).

In Auschwitz, some years later, *Lagerarzt* Josef Mengele outclassed those demonstrations by setting up a sideshow of his most treasured set of dwarfs, all seven of them, before an audience of one visiting senior bureaucrat and 2000 SS men. The dwarfs belonged to a Romanian Jewish circus family, the Moskowitzes. When Mengele first set eyes on two of them, a pair of twins named Elizabeth and Perla, he exclaimed with delight that he had 'work for twenty years.' Mengele stripped the family of 'Lilliputians' naked and triumphantly paraded them on stage, complete with a family tree to illustrate his point that they were the offspring of 'degenerate' forebears (Posner and Ware 1986: 53–54; Lifton and Hackett 1994: 313; Klee 1997: 473–475; Völklein 2000: 156–157).

Testimonies and accounts by former prisoners indicate that Mengele treated dwarfs and persons with innate abnormalities as he did other subjects of scientific interest. Having placed them in separate blocks he carried out anthropological measurements and then killed them. He mailed specially prepared skeletons of the murdered dwarfs

and handicapped persons to the Anthropological Institute at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for their collection (Kubica 1994: 326).

NEWTONS AND SHAKESPEARES TO ORDER

Extremes like these, however, did not disgust the Nazis. On the contrary, monstrosity provided a desirable contrast with the more harmonious form of imagined Aryan men, and we can detect a certain fascination with the monstrous as an outgrowth of chauvinism and opposition between Aryans and the others based on it. The SS *Übermenschen* believed that their imagined physical appearance (cf. e.g. Kogon 1980: 3) constituted a standard by which all the others were judged: the latter were perceived monstrous because they did not look exactly like an ideal Aryan. The object of racial research was to cloak the Master Race ideology with the respectability of scientific facts. As a matter of fact, their scientific value was nil because the research began not with hypotheses based on evaluation of evidence but rather with axioms for which evidence had to be found.

As Erika Myriam Kounio-Amariglio, a former prisoner from Auschwitz, recollected, one day she and her mother were called in for examination. A specialist in 'racial science' and his assistant had arrived from Berlin to do their research. This consisted of shooting a film and taking photographs of (naked) prisoners, and of making casts of heads representing various 'races' found in the camp. In the room she remembered seeing some shelves with several plaster heads placed on them. At the base of each head was a piece of cardboard with the identification 'Gypsy,' 'Ukrainian,' 'Polish' and others. The researcher wished to make 'heads' of the Greek race. First he questioned the mother, but rejected her, as she was not Greek. Then he likewise found the daughter insufficiently representative of either the Jewish race or the Greek. He again called in the mother and asked her with great insistence who the father of the daughter was. Perhaps she had an affair with a Christian? He kept on questioning her and was becoming increasingly annoyed at her denials. In the end he let them both go without making casts (Kounio Amariglio 2000: 100; see also Shelley 1991: 70, 81; Klee 1997: 371–372).

Rassenkunde was by no means just information about the racial other, but its very creation, its fabrication (Goldberg 1993: 184); its followers took into consideration only the data that substantiated their preconceptions. If not, they simply ignored them. How this method worked, is best illustrated by the way Dr Josef Mengele conducted his research. Upon the arrival of a transport of Polish Jews from the ghetto of Lodz in August 1944, Mengele, functioning as a camp physician, spotted a hunchbacked man about fifty years old who was accompanied by a tall, handsome boy of fifteen or sixteen with a deformed right foot, which had been corrected by an apparatus made of a metal plate and an orthopaedic, thick-soled shoe. They were father and son. Mengele thought he had discovered, in the person of the hunchbacked father and his lame son, a sovereign example to demonstrate his theory of the Jewish race's degeneracy. He had them fall out of ranks immediately and had Dr Miklós Nyiszli to examine them from a clinical point of view, take exact measurements of the two and set up clinical records including all interesting details, especially those relative to the causes which provoked the bodily deformities (Nyiszli 1973: 128–129). When these were done, the two were shot dead. 'These bodies must not be cremated,' he said. 'They must be prepared and their

skeletons sent to the Anthropological Museum in Berlin' (Nyiszli 1973: 129; see also Klee 1997: 480). So they were, while the other prisoners from the same transport went directly to the gas chambers or were doomed to die in the following months; their bodies literally turned into ashes.

Before sending the skeletons to Berlin, accompanied by a group of officers, Mengele took a thorough look at them. 'They pompously examined certain parts of the skeletons and launched into high-sounding, scientific terms, talking as if the two victims represented an extremely rare medical phenomenon. They abandoned themselves completely to their pseudo-science' (Nyiszli 1973: 132).

Twin studies – that is, of identical twins raised apart – were among the leading preoccupations of several racial-hygiene institutes; their purpose was to sort out the relative influences of nature and nurture in human character and institutions. Racial hygienists were convinced that many kinds of human behaviour were at root genetic – crime, alcoholism, wanderlust, even divorce. Studies of how twins behave in different environments were supposed to prove the absolute primacy of heredity over environment. As a consequence, an order was issued in 1939 by Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick that all twins had to be registered with Public Health Offices for the purpose of genetic research (Proctor 1992: 19–20).

Taking his cue from his teacher and mentor von Verschuer, Dr Mengele developed a strong interest in monozygotic twins as a key to the secrets of heredity and race that he was determined Auschwitz would unlock. He would always single out and keep alive pairs of twins, as he did people with abnormalities and defects, when he was on duty at selections for the gas chamber. The features that were identical, he assumed, were inherited, the rest developed or were acquired by time and the environment. Hence, the population could be controlled and genetically engineered to perfection (Perl 1948: 125; Astor 1985: 19, 91; Posner and Ware 1986: 3). Twins destined for Mengele's experiments were housed in Block 14 of Camp F in Birkenau, nicknamed the Zoo (Posner and Ware 1986: 35). Dr Hans Münch, who worked at the Hygiene Institute of the Military SS at Rajsko, an Auschwitz subcamp, and who came to know Mengele well, had no doubt about his motivation: 'Himmler was one of the great Nazi mystics and it is conceivably possible that pseudo-scientific research was done with the purpose of pleasing Himmler. Certainly Mengele's primary goal was to become a university professor after the war' (Posner and Ware 1986: 32).

According to the accounts of inmates who were assigned official duties in Mengele's research, and of its subjects themselves, individual pairs of twins were subjected to four types of examinations: anthropometric, morphological, x-ray and psychiatric evaluation. For his research Mengele employed the services of some twenty doctors, specialists in relevant branch of medicine; they conducted morphological, x-ray and surgical examinations, as well as sight, hearing and dental checks. In addition, he employed the anthropologist Dr Martina Puzyna, former assistant to the Polish anthropology professor Jan Czekanowski at the University of Lwów. Czekanowski had perfected a method of statistically measuring different external features in terms of racial groups. Dr Puzyna was supplied with the latest Swiss precision measuring instruments and began work in April 1944. During the next six months, almost until Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army in January 1945, she had measured some 250 pairs of twins (Posner and Ware 1986: 36–37; Kubica 1994: 323; Klee 1997: 485; Völklein 2000: 147; Stojka 2003: 93). The

anthropological exam consisted of each body part being precisely measured and results compared. During the research, measurements were taken of their skulls, ears, noses and other external features, carefully noting down every detail – the distance from the nose to the ear, the distance between the ears, the circumference of the head and the like (Hoedeman 1991: 216; Strzelecka 1993: 91–92; Kubica 1994: 323; Steiner 1995: 66; Klee 1997: 477–478). Mengele often personally photographed the subjects of his interest or entrusted this task to the photographic workshop in the main camp, Auschwitz I. As he wanted colours to be as similar as possible to the shades of the skin, he employed Dinah Gottliebowa, a Czech Jewess, as a painter. Gottliebowa made comparative drawings of individual body parts of twins, dwarfs and of the experimental subjects (Kubica 1994: 323).

The documentation of Mengele's research, including photographs, drawings, accounts and analysis, was preserved in special files, one for each person subjected to experiments. The files included personal data with 96 details, x-ray, photograph and results of blood, urine, stool and saliva samples. The last stage of Mengele's research was the analysis of body parts during dissection; that is why human 'guinea pigs' were killed by intracardiac phenol injection (Kubica 1994: 324–325; Völklein 2000: 147).

As recollected by one of his victims, the daily routine for Mengele's twins was regimented. After Mengele's visit, they received some food and then were taken to the labs for tests. They were examined, measured and given x-rays. Three times a week they marched from Birkenau to Auschwitz, where they were assembled, naked, in an enormous room in front of a dozen doctors. They measured parts of the body: the size of the mouth, the shape of the bones of the face and skull, and the colours of eyes and hair. These details were compared to a chart kept for each set of twins. The 'specimens' were photographed and catalogued (Mozes-Kor 1992: 56–57).

Many former prisoners agree that Mengele held that it was possible to select, engineer, refine and ultimately 'purify' the Aryan race (Nyiszli 1973: 54; Ramati 1985: 212; Posner and Ware 1986: 12, 43; Mozes-Kor 1992: 56–57). A former prisoner who gained some knowledge of Mengele's research in Auschwitz estimated that his experiments, lacking scientific value, were 'no more than foolish playing.' She pointed the finger at 'this charlatan,' claiming that he 'profaned the very word, "science!"' (Lengyel 1959: 153). Mengele's research, as Dr Martina Puzyna put it, contributed to science little more than one more effort to turn the truth on its head (Posner and Ware 1986: 43). For Mengele, the splendid vision was *über alles*. In the case of awkward or contradictory facts, he simply ignored or altered them. Ella Lingens-Reiner even hypothesised that he 'probably also knew that we cheated him and presented brothers or sisters with a strong family likeness as "dissimilar twins"' (1948: 153).

However, American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton was less inclined to believe that Mengele seriously thought he could change genetic patterns through a kind of chemical intervention. Instead, Lifton felt that Mengele concentrated on the more prosaic line of compiling measurements of human anatomy, that his research was basically standard for research in physical anthropology at that time, as was his zeal to measure everything. 'His method was descriptive, the amassing of data,' Lifton claimed, 'and I know no evidence that he had any significantly original scientific ideas' (Astor 1985: 99).

It was the allure of numbers that fascinated many nineteenth- and twentieth-century physical anthropologists. It inspired in them the faith that rigorous measurement

could guarantee irrefutable precision (Gould 1984: 73–74). As a result, in that time anthropology's claim to scientific status was largely based on its veritable equation with anthropometry – the careful measurement of different human anatomical features. According to *Rassen* Günther, its task was precise measurement of the height, the length of the limbs, the skull and its parts, and meticulous determination of 'the colour of the skin (after a colour scale), and of the hair and eyes' (Günther 1927: 2). Among these anatomical features, the most important was the human cranium, and from the 1840s, when the Swedish anatomist Anders Retzius used the ratio of width to length to distinguish dolichocephalic from brachycephalic heads and skulls, craniometry was the privileged mode of anthropometric inquiry (Weindling 1989: 50; Massin 1996: 107). However, if Mengele's research was indeed no more than basically descriptive science, it does not necessarily mean that he did not aspire to more noble goals. Already in the mid-nineteenth century some authors had criticised the approach of the contemporary anthropologists who were occupied 'exclusively with the past; with Man's antiquity; with his origin, – whether born or created; with race distinctions – being most assiduous in collecting skulls, and talking most learnedly of dolichocephalic and brachycephalic (long and short heads), without apparently a suspicion at present that brains are of any use.' As it was argued then, 'the object of Anthropological Science must be to improve the race of man, and to make Newtons and Shakespeares to order' (Bray 1868: iii).

SKULLS AND BONES

Another horrifying chapter of racial science was the collection of skulls and skeletons brought together by SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr August Hirt, who held the chair of anatomy at Strasburg University and worked under the auspices of the *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage Society) headed by Heinrich Himmler. As stated by himself, Hirt accumulated a collection of skulls of nearly all races, only in the case of the Jews were there too few to permit scientific conclusions. He saw the war in the East as an opportunity to correct this state of affairs and obtain tangible scientific evidence by procuring the skulls of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik commissars who personify a repulsive, yet characteristic, subhumanity' (Untermenschum) (Cohen 1953: 102; Delarue 1963: 369; Klee 1997: 359).

To ensure the integrity of his studies, Hirt insisted on having the heads of the specimens measured and photographs taken while they were still alive. In view of the scarcity of 'Jewish-Bolshevik Commissars,' a total of 115 internees – including 79 Jewish men, 30 Jewish women, four Central Asians and two Poles were selected. SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr Bruno Beger, an anthropologist and a member of the 1938 Nazi expedition into Tibet, at that time working for the *Ahnenerbe*, came to Auschwitz to select the appropriate persons. They were taken to the concentration camp Natzweiler, near Strasburg, where eighty of them were gassed at the beginning of August 1943. For this purpose a special gas chamber had been constructed. The investigators made sure that the heads were not damaged in the killing. Complete corpses, not the skulls only, were transported to the Anatomical Institute at Strasburg University and stored there. Various studies were performed on the skulls and brains, including those of 'racial classification' and 'pathological features of the skull formation' (Cohen 1953: 102–103; Tenenbaum 1956: 104; Ternon and Helman 1969: 185; Sehn 1971: 303; Lifton 1986: 284–285; Müller-Hill 1988:

51; Hoedeman 1991: 140–144; Shelley 1991: 57; Klee 1997: 371ff; see also Kater 1997: 250–251; Hale 2004: 427, 514–519).

When the Allied armies approached the city, Professor Hirt ordered his assistants to cremate the as yet undissected corpses, but the task was too heavy for the limited facilities at hand. As a consequence, French forces liberating Strasburg found in Hirt's dissection room 'many wholly unprocessed corpses,' others 'partly-processed' and a few that had been 'defleshed... late in 1944' (Lifton 1986: 254, 286).

Professor Hirt's collection in Strasburg was not the only one of the kind. To meet the demands of German civil and military institutes and also for private purposes, the crania, parts of bones, sometimes whole skeletons were prepared in Dachau, for it was fashionable with the SS men to have a real human skull and bones as ornaments on their writing desks. The most popular were skulls of young inmates with healthy teeth; occasionally, such individuals were killed with an injection and their skeletons and skulls prepared (Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 22; Bláha 1946: 53; Hess 1946: 176; Kupfer-Koberwitz 1960: II, 163). In the concentration camp of Mauthausen several internees with various physical curiosities were killed by SS camp doctors. On 10 September 1941, SS-Sturmbannführer Dr Eduard Krebsbach killed the Spanish prisoner Francisco Boluda Ferrero and kept his skull as a decoration for his desk (Pike 2000: 83). It seems that two Dutch Jews, aged 18–20, with teeth of good quality were also selected for special injections, and their skulls afterwards used as paperweight to decorate Nazi doctors desks (Delarue 1963: 311; Le Chêne 1971: 88; Pike 2000: 86). In the operating theatre of the Mauthausen concentration camp there stood, fixed on a metal pole, a 'very skilfully prepared skeleton of a well-formed man.' The skeleton was at one time the Spaniard Umberto, who was 'the only one of all well-formed men whose teeth were all in good condition' (Živković 1946: 142; see also Tomažič 1945: 8). A former inmate, Dr Josef Podlaha, reported seeing 'art' ashtrays made of the skulls of killed prisoners; after the liberation of the camp he handed over this collection to the American criminal police (Czechoslovak Doctors 1946: 68). Not only skeletons of well-formed people, but skeletons with bodily deformities, too, were in great demand as subjects of research. As such, they were sent to the SS Medical Academy in Graz (Klee 1997: 43, 136).

In Auschwitz, too, skeletons of individuals with bodily deformities were called for. According to a former prisoner nurse Maria Zombirt, when a 'Zwerge' died his skeleton was prepared and sent to a museum in Berlin (Klee 1997: 473). As a former Czech inmate, L'udovit Feld, remembered, he and his peers in Auschwitz lived through great pain for they knew that they would sooner or later be murdered and their skeletons put on display in a biological museum (Klee 1997: 475).

Although, today, these attempts by 'racial scientists' are judged as crimes, similar views were quite common. The object-centred logic of natural history museums required that the topic of human race be presented through static displays of artefacts and texts. In most museums, actual human bones, teeth and hair were displayed, along with the statistics, charts and photographic studies that comprised the evidence of racial categories. Occasionally, plaster casts and figures like those used in other anthropological exhibitions were displayed (Lang Teslow 1998: 57). It seems that anthropological collections in the nineteenth century were constituted specifically in order to demonstrate racial differences. Samuel George Morton, who is credited with making one of the first systematic collections of skulls, wrote that: 'The principal object in making the follow-

ing collection has been to compare the character of the skull in the different races of men, and these again with the skulls of the lower animals, and especially with the reference to the internal capacity of the cranium as indicative of the size of the brain' (Dias 1998: 36–37).

A DOLICHOCEPHALIC DICTIONARY OR A BRACHYCEPHALIC GRAMMAR?

According to Curator Berthold Laufer in his preface to Henry Field's *The Races of Mankind*, the word Aryan was 'one of the most misunderstood and misused terms.' In its origin this word belonged to the Sanskrit and Iranian languages and designated the Indian and Iranian languages and designated the Indian and Iranian stock as a unit before their division and migration into India and Iran, respectively. When the linguistic relationship of Sanskrit and Iranian with Greek, Latin, Slavic, Germanic and Celtic was discovered, the term Aryan was sometimes applied by European philologists to this entire family of languages, but was later replaced by the term Indo-European. For Laufer, there was 'no such thing as an Aryan race,' nor were blond hair, fair skin and blue eyes characteristic of Indo-Europeans. On the contrary, while there is no blondness among the people of India and Iran, it does occur among Semites, Turks, Finno-Ugrians and Central-Asiatics. To uphold his point of view, Laufer suggested that the most perfect specimen of what was popularly but wrongly styled 'Aryan' he had met in a Turk from Istanbul. He also referred to Max Müller who expressed the opinion that 'an ethnologist who speaks of an Aryan race, Aryan blood, Aryan eyes and hair, is as a linguist who would speak of a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar' (in Field 1933: 5-6).

In the Third Reich, however, contemporary racial anthropologists did not share Laufer's opinion. For them, the Aryan had a long head and blood group A, was tall, fair and blue-eyed (Günther 1927: 2, 264), while on the other side the Jews, Gypsies and Slavs were dark-eyed and black-haired, had round heads, a long nose and blood group B (see e.g. Krüger 1999: 45; Haßmann 2002: 115). Although actual facts went compellingly against their construct, this did not mean that they were not persuasive enough in selling it. And they were not the Nazis alone who subscribed to this point of view. Decades after the Second World War was over, former inmates from Auschwitz time and again showed that they had misperceived the 'Angel of Death' Dr Josef Mengele, describing him as 'very Aryan-looking' or as 'tall and blond,' although he more closely resembled a *Zigeunertyp* than a perfect 'Nordic' specimen: he was no taller than 160 centimetres, with dark eyes and hair and a 'swarthy, almost gypsylike complexion' (Jezernik 2001: 352; see also Astor 1985: 6; Posner and Ware 1986: 25, 52; Klee 1997: 459; cf. Jezernik 2004: 31–32).

Natural history museums and SS museums exhibitions, preoccupied with the race distinctions, were both set with the aim of fossilising the racial difference, precluding ambivalence and barring any doubts. Created to generate and protect group interests, they benefited 'Aryans' only if withheld from 'non-Aryans' (see Lowenthal 1996: 128). A former inmate of Auschwitz recollected, in the summer of 1944, that Dr Josef Mengele often looked regretfully at the 'scientific material' he had collected with the help of a

large staff of prisoner-collaborators, claiming: 'What a pity it will fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks!' (Lingens-Reiner 1948: 153). As a former Austrian prisoner, Konrad Just, reported that the new commander of the camp of 1942, Martin Weiss, had the displayed objects dismantled and put them away in a nearby horse-stable, where they had been destroyed by the SS shortly before the liberators reached Dachau (Knoll 2004); similar was the fate of alike exhibits elsewhere (see e.g. Hesse 2001: 84). Today, from all the SS museums anthropological exhibits not a single one is on display in the museums exhibits set up in former concentration camps. Not only are they not accounted for, they have also been lost in obscurity. It is my opinion that the removal of the SS museums and their exhibits out of our sight was at least partly motivated by the apprehensiveness about their scientific objectivity. However, they should have been preserved. Not as evidences of non-Aryan inferiority, which they were not, but as a powerful reminder that anthropology without humanity just could not aspire to be a science.

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NOTES

1 Museums of various types were also set up in Italian concentration camps during the Second World War (see Jezernik 1999: 196), and in Yugoslav concentration camps established for the so-called enemies of the state after Tito's break-up with Stalin in 1948 (see Jezernik 1994: 161).