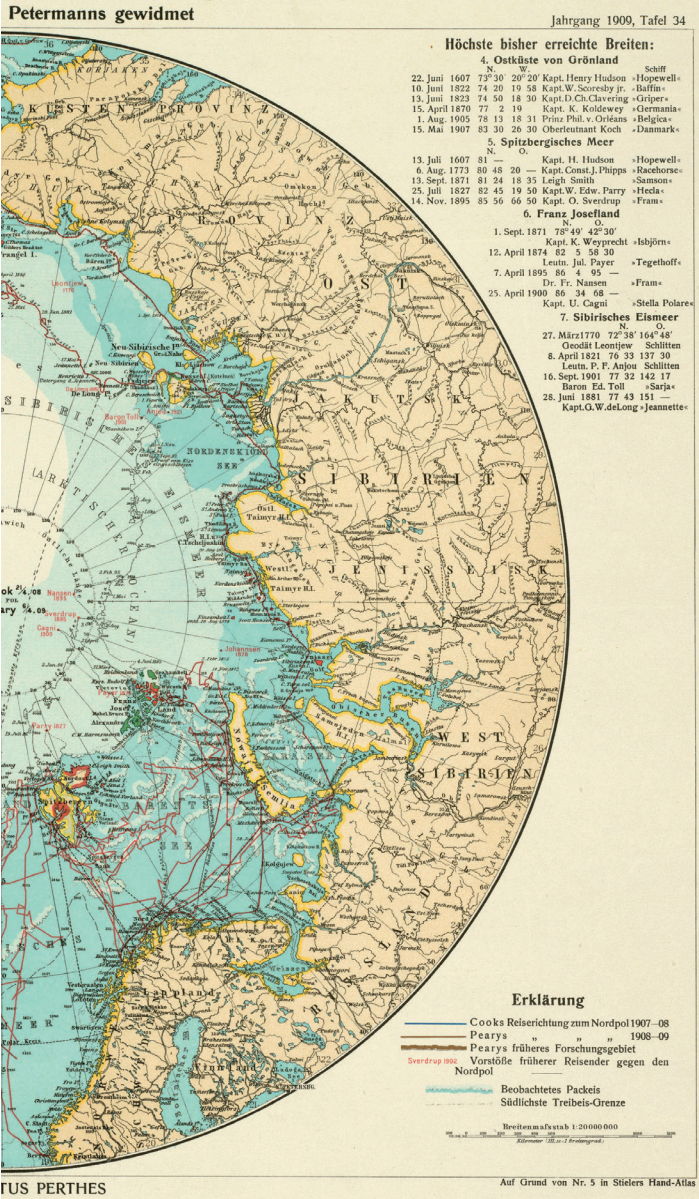


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thanks to the generous support of the Free State of Thuringia, the German Federal Foundation for the Environment, the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States, the German Research Foundation and private donors, the Gotha Research Library has been intensively active in making the collection available to the academic community and the wider public through extensive conservation, cataloguing and digitisation measures, as well as through exhibitions and events, and in conducting scholarly research in cooperation with the Gotha Research Centre (www.uni-erfurt.de/forschungszentrum-gotha) and the Centre for Transcultural Studies/Perthes Collection in Gotha (www.uni-erfurt.de/forschungskolleg-transkulturelle-studien).

Since 2015, the Perthes Collection has been housed in the Perthes Forum, the renovated historical buildings of the Perthes Publishing House in the Justus Perthes Street in Gotha. The Internet portal of the Perthes Collection provides information on access to the holdings and on the progress in cataloging and researching the collection.

OPENING HOURS

Perthes Collection in the Perthes Forum
Special Reading Room:
Monday to Friday: 9 am–3 pm (by appointment)
Maps and archival materials can be used in the special reading room of the Perthes Forum.
Guided tours are available on request.
Please contact: sammlungperthes.fb@uni-erfurt.de.

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99867 Gotha
www.uni-erfurt.de/bibliothek/fb
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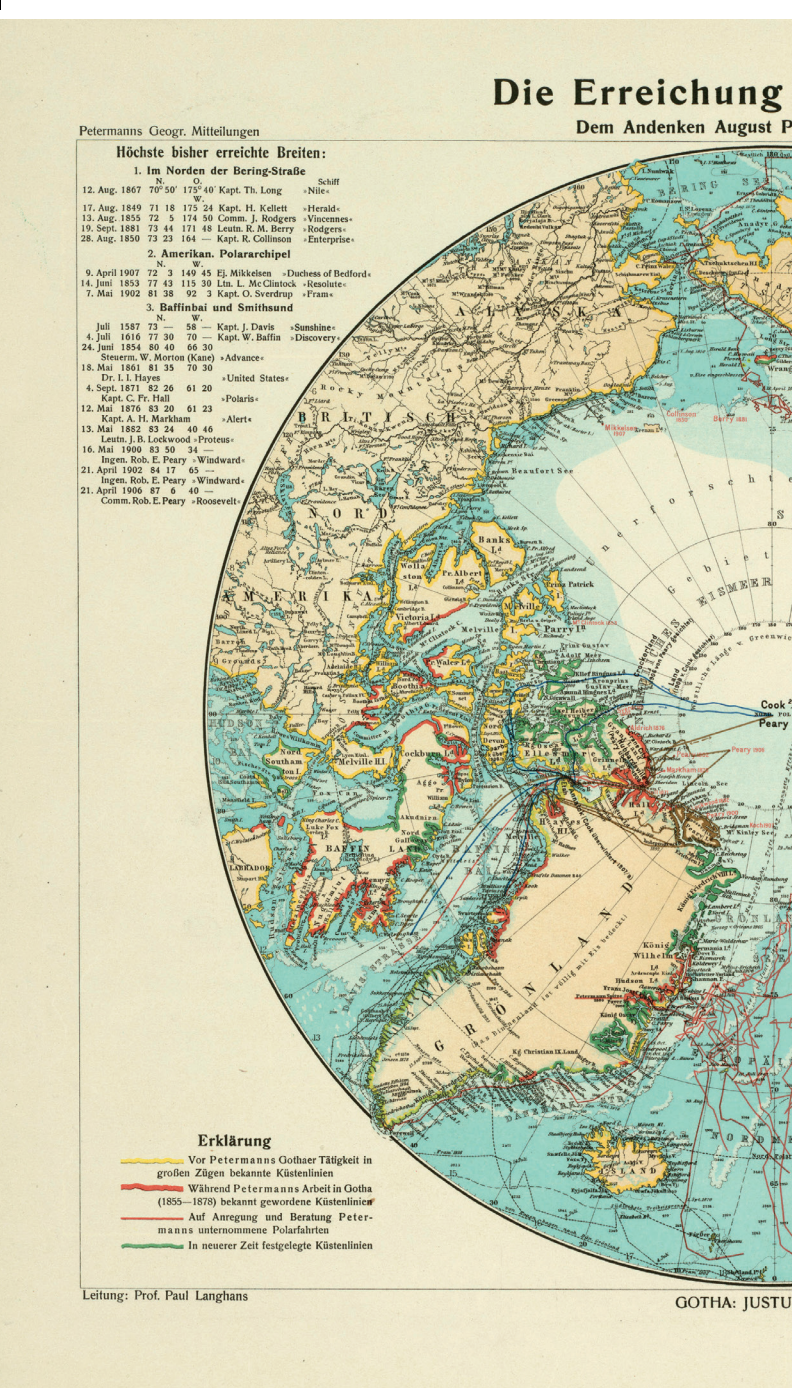


UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT
Gotha Research Library

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Map of the Baghdad Expedition, 1872
inside: Paul Langhans, Reaching the North Pole, 1909

GOTHA RESEARCH LIBRARY
The Perthes Collection in Gotha

The Perthes Collection in Gotha combines the historical records of three academic publishing houses – the Justus Perthes Publishing House in Gotha, the Geographic Publishing House of Justus Perthes in Darmstadt and the state-owned Hermann Haack Institution of Geography and Cartography in Gotha. Its origins date back to 1785, when Johann Georg Justus Perthes took over the publishing and distribution of the Almanach de Gotha/Gotha Court Calendar, thus founding the Justus Perthes Publishing House in Gotha. The Gotha, which achieved world renown as a European encyclopedia of the nobility and state manual, marks the beginning of the success story of the Perthes Publishing House. But even more significant for the publishing house was the fact that Justus Perthes (†1816) and his descendants turned to the publication of modern scientific maps. Adolf Stieler’s Hand Atlas, which went through eleven editions between 1817 and 1945, became the leading product of the Perthes Publishing House and one of the most significant atlases of the modern age. The „Stieler” established the company’s rise in becoming one of the most important, market-dominating cartographic and geographic publishers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Outstanding geographers and cartographers such as Heinrich and Hermann Berghaus, Karl Spruner, Carl Vogel, Hermann Habenicht and Bruno Hassenstein, but also Paul Langhans, who was controversial because of his racist and later National Socialist positions, worked as authors and employees of the publishing house. It was a particular stroke of luck that August Petermann joined the company in 1854. Petermann, who was a student of Heinrich Berghaus and had previously worked as a cartographer in Edinburgh and London, made the



publishing house a hub for the collection and dissemination of the geographic knowledge of the time within a few decades thanks to his far-reaching connections. The central organ for this was Reports from Justus Perthes’ Geographic Institution, published by Petermann since 1855, which, distributed worldwide, was the most important German-language geographic and cartographic journal until the mid-20th century. Here, pioneers of African, polar and Asian research such as Heinrich Barth, Theodor Heuglin and Carl Mauch, Julius Payer and Erik Nordenskjöld, the Schlagintweit brothers and Sven Hedin published the results of their journeys, which were transferred into exemplary topographical and thematic cartography by the publishing house’s staff. In keeping with the high aspiration of popularising geographic knowledge to the public, the publishing house achieved an equally leading position in the development of school geography from the second half of the 19th century, which is associated with Emil von Sydow, Hermann Wagner and above all Hermann Haack. The Perthes Publishing House not only visualised the discovery of the non-European continents and the poles in atlases and maps but was also an important protagonist in the explorative and colonial appropriation of non-European regions. With its products, distributed worldwide, it helped to set the standards for the scientific cartography and school geography formed in the 19th century. The history of the publishing house is at the same time exemplary for the profound social upheavals and changes in the 20th century. As a model National Socialist company, the Perthes Publishing House was integrated into the Na-

tional Socialist economic system and war production from 1935 onwards. In GDR times, the family business was expropriated without compensation in 1953 and nationalised. The Geographic Publishing House of Justus Perthes in Darmstadt, which was re-established in the Federal Republic of Germany in the same year, developed into a leading manufacturer of school wall maps and teaching aids for geography and history. The Gotha parent company, since 1955 the state-owned Hermann Haack Institution of Geography and Cartography in Gotha, was the leading map publisher in the GDR until it was transferred back to the Perthes family in 1992. Its products had an impact far into the socialist world. Today, the name „Perthes“ stands for the only map publishing archive preserved on the European continent. The Perthes Collection in Gotha preserves more than 185,000 maps, 3,500 school wall maps, 120,000 volumes of the publisher’s library, 1,650 copper plates and 800 metres of archival material, testifying to over 200 years of publishing history. The unique historical collection of exceptional cultural value provides deep insights into the workshops of cartography in the 19th and 20th centuries and the development of all scientific disciplines of the modern age related to space and maps. The Perthes Collection was acquired in 2003 by the Free State of Thuringia with the support of the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States from Stephan Justus Perthes, the direct descendant of the founder of the publishing house, and from the Klett Foundation and placed in the care of the Gotha Research Library of the University of Erfurt. Since 2003,