

Increasing knowledge across collections by example of the Valdivia Expedition

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In 1898, the research ship “SS Valdivia” set out on a 9-month long journey to explore the deep sea of the Atlantic, Indian and Arctic Ocean in search of new species. The documentation, dissection and if possible determination of the collected material took place immediately on board of the ship. At the end of the expedition a large part of the collected specimens were passed on to experts of the Zoological Museum Berlin for further research. Today we house “Valdivia”-material in not only in the marine invertebrate, ichthyology and mollusk collections but also in the ornithology, herpetology and entomology collections as well as in the museum’s archives, were historical record, correspondences, travel logs and original drawings relating to the Valdivia expedition are stored. Its’ distribution across different section of our institution evoked the need for close cooperation between the various collection to utilize the full potential of this scientifically and historically outstanding material.

