



Welcome

Welcome

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Dear Readers,

It is an honour for me to convey a message of greeting to this volume based on the international conference “Provenance Research on Collections from Colonial Contexts: Principles, Approaches, Challenges” that is of such great cultural and political significance.

Until this day, there has been a lack of consistent reviewing of colonialism in the German public sphere. Foreign rule over parts of Africa, Oceania, America and Asia was for a long time a suppressed chapter of European, German, but also Lower Saxon history.

Museums preserve a variety of exhibits that were acquired illegally or should not be exhibited for ethical reasons. Even at school, colonialism in general and German colonialism in particular are often not discussed with adequate reflection. Colonial history continues to have an impact today, resulting in racist prejudices, among other things. German colonialism, being relevant as well for Lower Saxony, unfortunately often remains unmentioned. Therefore, a careful and transparent scientific and social reviewing is of central importance.

With the Network for Provenance Research initiated in my office and the PAESE joint project, which was unique in this form, the state of Lower Saxony is playing a pioneer role in the field of provenance research, especially in the context of colonialism.

The collaborative project, coordinated at the Lower Saxony State Museum Hanover and funded by the Volkswagen Foundation since 2018, investigates the provenance of selected holdings from colonial contexts in the five largest ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony. In addition to the Lower Saxony State Museum Hanover (*Landesmuseum Hannover*), participating institutions include the Ethnographic Collection of the University of Göttingen (*Ethnologische Sammlung der Georg-August-Universität*), the *Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch Oldenburg*, the *Roemer- and Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim*, the Municipal Museum Brunswick (*Städtisches Museum Braunschweig*) and the Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society in Hermannsburg (*Ev.-Luth. Missionswerk Hermannsburg*).

Since most of the research on the provenance of the objects is carried out within the framework of PhD projects at universities in Lower Saxony, the project represents at the same time a role model for cooperation between museums and universities contributing to the training of young academics in the field of provenance research on cultural goods from colonial contexts.

This can only be achieved in cooperation with experts from the so-called countries of origin in Namibia, Cameroon, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea, and Australia. I am pleased about the institutions and individuals cooperating with PAESE being equally represented in the program of the event and that they will finally be given “the last word” in the closing session.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Lower Saxony State Museum in Hanover and all those involved in the PAESE joint project for the conception and organization of this interdisciplinary conference. My special gratitude goes to the Lower Saxony State Museum Hanover and to Dr Claudia Andratschke and Dr Lars Müller for their coordination. Equal gratitude goes to the Volkswagen Foundation and Pro Niedersachsen.

I am very pleased to have succeeded in bringing together international experts in the field of provenance research on non-European collections from colonial contexts for an exchange of views in the state capital of Hanover and worldwide.

I wish you a good read and a further stimulating discussion in the field of provenance research.

