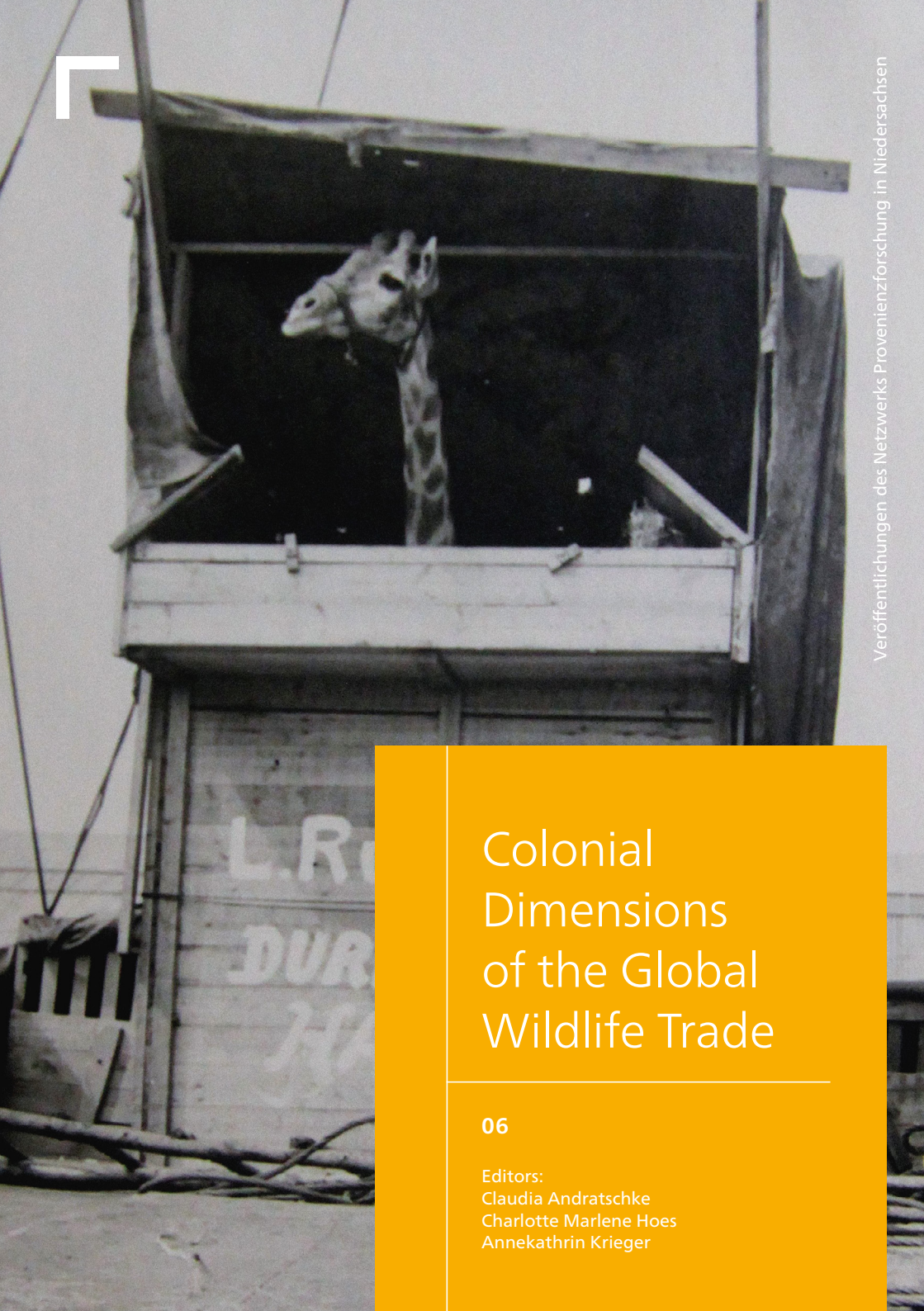

Veröffentlichungen des Netzwerks Provenienzforschung in Niedersachsen

Colonial Dimensions of the Global Wildlife Trade

06

Editors:
Claudia Andratschke
Charlotte Marlene Hoes
Annekathrin Krieger

Colonial Dimensions of the Global Wildlife Trade

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Colonial Dimensions of the Global Wildlife Trade

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Edited by
Claudia Andratschke, Charlotte Marlene Hoes, Annekathrin Krieger

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Aware of its cultural and political responsibility in the sense of the Washington Principles and the Joint Statement, the Federal State of Lower Saxony founded a network for provenance research in 2015. It concentrates all efforts and competences of provenance research on state level and connects them with the German Lost Art Foundation. In this book series the Network for Provenance Research publishes the results of conferences, as well as chosen academic contributions of its members and partners. The network focuses on all relevant issues of provenance research, such as research on assets seized through Nazi persecution, on cultural goods from colonial contexts and on confiscation of cultural assets in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the GDR.

Reihe:
Veröffentlichungen des Netzwerks Provenienzforschung in Niedersachsen, Bd. 6

Im Bewusstsein seiner kulturpolitischen Verantwortung im Sinne der „Washingtoner Prinzipien" und der „Gemeinsamen Erklärung" hat das Land Niedersachsen 2015 das Netzwerk Provenienzforschung gegründet. Es bündelt die Kräfte und Kompetenzen im Bereich der Provenienzforschung auf Landesebene und verzahnt sie mit den Initiativen der Stiftung Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste. In der vorliegenden Reihe veröffentlicht das Netzwerk Provenienzforschung in Niedersachsen die Ergebnisse von Tagungen sowie ausgewählte wissenschaftliche Beiträge seiner Mitglieder und Partner. Im Fokus der Netzwerkarbeit stehen alle relevanten Kontexte der Herkunftsforschung: Recherchen zu NS-Raubgut und Provenienzforschung zu Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten sowie zu Kulturgutentziehungen in der ehemaligen Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und der DDR.

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In Memory of Rebekka Habermas

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Welcome

Welcome

Jan Hüsgen

German Lost Art Foundation

Germany has been acknowledging its responsibility in dealing with its colonial past for several years now. In March 2019, the Conference of Culture Ministers along with representatives of the federal government and central municipal associations adopted the "Framework Principles for dealing with collections from colonial contexts". This was followed by the establishment of a German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts, which began its work at the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States in 2020, in July 2022, the "Joint Declaration on the Return of the Benin Bronzes" was signed. In just a few years, a great deal has transpired in German cultural policy in the area of cultural goods and collections from colonial contexts. These developments have also influenced the work of the German Lost Art Foundation.

The Foundation was established in 2015 by the Federal Government, the federal states and the central municipal associations. It promotes provenance research through financial grants and the documentation of research results in its research database *Proveana*. The Foundation's focus was initially limited to the subject of Nazi-looted cultural property, but has expanded in recent years to include other fields of activity, including, the area of cultural property confiscations in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the German Democratic Republic. In January 2019 the German Lost Art Foundation set out the

conditions for the funding of provenance research projects on cultural goods and collections from colonial contexts and for basic and contextual research relating to this field.

Since then, funding recommendations for more than 73 long- and short-term projects totalling approximately 9,44 million euros have been made across nine application rounds. The projects are divided into the areas of basic and contextual research, in which, for example, the significance of trade networks in the acquisition of cultural objects is being researched, or museum collections which are assumed to have been looted in the course of so-called punitive expeditions are explored. High priority is given to the field of provenance research of human remains.

The project *The Global Networks of the Animal Trading Companies Reiche and Ruhe – Provenance Research on the Circulation of Animals, Humans and Objects in the 19th and 20th Centuries* uncovers international networks of the trade in animals and ethnographic objects as well as the (forced) mobility of people through the mid-20th century. By visualising the global entanglements of the animal trade and its actors, the results of the project will provide an important starting point for further research. This relates to the objectives of our projects in the field of basic and contextual research, in which the centrality of colonial endeavours in collections is researched beyond individual objects and groups of objects.

I would like to emphasise that we regard ourselves as a dynamic funding agency that regularly seeks to improve its funding guidelines in order to meet the needs of the applicants. In recent years, funding has been extended to private legal entities, and – in order to achieve a better participation by international partners – it is now possible to submit applications in English. This allows for projects to be co-developed with experts, interest groups and institutions as well as potential claimants and descendants from the countries and societies of origin of the collections.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude. As a funding organisation, the German Lost Art Foundation is dependent on potential candidates, and I'm grateful that the Georg August University of Göttingen and the Municipal Museum of Alfeld, with support of the Provenance Research Network in Lower Saxony, have submitted a convincing application out of which this volume originated.

Welcome

Claudia Andratschke

Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony,
Lower Saxony State Museum Hanover

Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture and the Network for Provenance Research, I would also like to welcome you to this volume.

The Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony was initiated in 2014 with the aims of pooling existing forces and competencies in the field of provenance research, raising awareness for the questions, issues and challenges of provenance research and extending systematic research to all museums in Lower Saxony that are affected by it. Since then, the Network has grown from twenty to around seventy members and partners, including museum and university collections of all types as well as libraries, archives and several associations.[1]

This is due, at least in part, to the fact that we have transferred the model of the so-called "First Check for Provenance Research", which had previously only been practiced in Brandenburg, to Lower Saxony in 2016. The "First Check" is aimed particularly at medium-sized and small museums that are not able to conduct provenance research themselves – mainly for financial or staff reasons.

The Museum of the City of Alfeld was and still is such an institution, and luckily it was one of the first museums in Lower Saxony that dared to participate in our project.[2] As a result, numerous objects suspected of being Nazi looted cultural goods were found there and in other collections.[3] In Alfeld, however, researcher Christian Riemenschneider found much more besides Nazi looted cultural goods, namely human remains, a huge ethnographic collection and natural history specimens.[4] This highlighted the need for a follow-up project to research the animal trade companies of Charles Reiche and of Hermann Ruhe, who both operated out of Alfeld. It is most likely that the largest part of the collections that are still preserved in the Alfeld museum today were brought there through the trade networks of Reiche and Ruhe. Although the two companies delivered animals and objects to many other institutions around the world, little is known about them – which will hopefully change soon.[5]

This is how the idea for the project *The Global Trade Networks of the Alfeld Animal Trading Companies Reiche und Ruhe – Provenance Research on the Circulation of Animals, Humans and Ethnographica in the 19th and 20th Centuries* was developed. Since 2021, the project was led by the late Rebekka Habermas, Chair of Modern History at the Georg August University of Göttingen, and funded by the German Lost Art Foundation. Many thanks for their help, advice and support while drafting the proposal go to her and Richard Hölzl from the University of Göttingen as well as to Jan Hüsgen from the German Lost Art Foundation.[6] I also thank the director of the Alfeld Museum, Ina Gravenkamp, who has always been open to provenance research and has willingly opened up her museum and archive to all our research questions since 2016.

I further want to thank Gudrun Bucher, who has supported the project with her anthropological expertise in the further cataloguing of the ethnographic collection in Alfeld.

My very special thanks, however, go to the scientific project research assistant, Charlotte Hoes, for the trustful cooperation so far and the preparation of the conference as well as for her efforts in publishing this volume. She was further assisted by Sophia Annweiler, who has supported the project in many ways. Then, I would like to thank my colleague Annekathrin Krieger for supporting the coordination of the Network and the publishing of this volume.

Furthermore, the research results of the project will be connected to the infrastructures that were created with the PAESE joint project of the five largest ethnographic collections in Lower Saxony, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation from 2018 to 2022.[7] The Network for Provenance Research has continued the project's website and database, which will include the ethnographic collection and animal preparations of the Museum in Alfeld in the future.[8]

The conference and this volume demonstrate how small municipal museums may become part of an international project in cooperation with universities – only because they took part in a "First Check" that aimed to find Nazi looted art. Finally, the example of the Museum in Alfeld also shows how provenance research can lead not only to the reappraisal of the origin of objects and animals, but also to new encounters and collaborative cooperation. In this regard, the conference was an important milestone for the "Global Animal Trade" project, as it has broadened our perspective and embedded the animal trade in Lower Saxony, Alfeld, in international research. Finally, I want to thank all the authors for preparing their contributions for this volume and wish you all an inspiring read!

1 See https://www.provenienzforschung-niedersachsen.de/; Andratschke, Claudia; Schönfuß, Florian: "Interview mit Dr. Claudia Andratschke, Koordinatorin des Netzwerks Provenienzforschung in Niedersachsen", in: *transfer – Zeitschrift für Provenienzforschung und Sammlungsgeschichte / Journal for Provenance Research and the History of Collection*, vol. 1, p. 9–11, on: https://doi.org/10.48640/tf.2022.1.91507, both accessed 29 September 2023.

2 The project was initiated by the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony and carried out by the Landscape Association in Southern Lower Saxony, see https://landschaftsverband.org/museumsberatung/provenienzforschung/forschung-und-museen.html; for the Municipal and Animal Museum in Alfeld, see ibid., https://landschaftsverband.org/museumsfoerderung/provenienzforschung/alfeld.html; https://www.alfeld.de/leben-lernen/stadtmuseum-tiermuseum/stadtmuseum, all accessed 29 September 2023.

3 Riemenschneider, Christian (2017): *Provenienzforschung in fünf südniedersächsischen Museen. Ein Erst-Check auf unrechtmäßige Kulturgüter*, Duderstadt; Riemenschneider, Christian (2019): "Provenienz/Geschichte erzählen. Ergebnisse der Provenienzforschung in den Museen Alfeld, Duderstadt, Einbeck und Hann. Münden", in: Claudia Andratschke, Maik Jachens (Eds): *Nach dem Erstcheck. Provenienzforschung nachhaltig vermitteln*, Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net (Series of the Network for Provenance Research, vol. 1), p. 26–64, on: https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.696, accessed 29 September 2023.

4 Riemenschneider, Christian (2019): "Ethnografica, Naturalia und human remains in stadtgeschichtlichen Museen Südniedersachsens. Bericht einer regionalen Bestandsaufnahme", in: Landscape Association of Brandenburg (Ed.): *Museumsblätter*, p. 80–83, on: https://landschaftsverband.org/service/publikationen/publikationen-zur-provenienzforschung.html#ethnografica, accessed 29 September 2023.

5 The application was developed by the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony, namely by the author in support of Lars Müller. See also Andratschke, Claudia; Müller, Lars (2021): "'Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände'. Die Alfelder Tierhändler Reiche und Ruhe als Ausstatter von Völkerschauen", in: Lars Frühsorge, Sonja Riehn, Michael Schütte (Eds): *Völkerschau-Objekte*, Lübeck, p. 131–143.

6 For further information about the project, see https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/659291.html, accessed 29 September 2023.

7 Andratschke, Claudia; Müller, Lars; Lembke, Katja (2023) (Eds): *Provenance Research in Collections from Colonial Contexts. Principles, Approaches, Challenges* (Publications of the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony, vol. 6), on: https://books.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/arthistoricum/catalog/book/1270, accessed 14 February 2024.

8 See https://www.postcolonial-provenance-research.com/database/?lang=en, accessed 29 September 2023; Andratschke, Claudia; Jachens, Maik (2022): "Transparenz durch Digitalisierung. Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten in Niedersachsen", in: *museums:zeit*, p. 19–20.

Introduction

Traces of the Global Wildlife Trade in Today's Natural History Collections and Beyond

Introduction

Traces of the Global Wildlife Trade in Today's Natural History Collections and Beyond

Charlotte Marlene Hoes,
Georg August University Göttingen

The Far-Reaching Entanglements of the Wildlife Trade

Natural history museums offer many attractions for the public, be they geology exhibits, fossil collections or representations of our solar system. Some of their greatest allures are the taxidermically prepared bodies of dead animals. Particularly impressive specimens – such as the skeleton of a blue whale or the taxidermical remains of an elephant – are often flaunted in the entrance hall, where they are supposed to greet and awe the visitors.[1] Sometimes, the bodies of species that are already extinct are also on display. One of these individuals (Fig. 1) looks at us through the glass of its showcase in the *Tiermuseum* ("animal museum") of Alfeld, a small town in Lower Saxony, Germany. Its figure is relatively unspectacular at first and can be easily overlooked in the

Figure 1 | The pride of the Alfeld museum is this thylacine, a species that today is extinct. Only a hundred institutions worldwide hold similar remains. © Municipal Museum Alfeld, Photo: Martin Liebetruth

densely stocked display. Only about twenty inches tall, in a slightly crouched position, it looks shyly to its left, the tail stretched out behind in a straight line. The fur – remnants of the once living being – is a sandy brown and barely stands out against the artificial ground, also brown in colour.

It is the remains of a thylacine, a species that was wiped out by European settlers on the island of Tasmania. There are some ambiguities as to when exactly these marsupial carnivores became extinct, but it is well-documented that their decimation and, eventually, extinction was caused by the colonial conditions they were subjected to, whether through the bounties placed on them, which triggered relentless hunting, or the structural agricultural changes that curtailed their habitat.[2] While invading colonists classified them as pests in the 19th century, they were with time more and more valued by natural scientists due to their increasing rarity. And so for the Alfeld museum today, the taxidermy is one of their treasures[3] – understandably so: The last known individual died in captivity in 1936, and only about a hundred institutions worldwide still hold remains of the otherwise vanished creatures.[4] So how did a small provincial museum get its hands on one of these rare specimens, and furthermore, on a relatively big collection of two hundred other, non-European animal taxidermy?

As I will explain in more detail below, the collection in Alfeld would not be possible without the wildlife trade that intensified in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. In fact, rarely any taxidermy collection would exist in the current scale if wild animals hadn't been systematically hunted, caught and traded for their bodies. It is therefore worthy to put the spotlight on this global wildlife trade: on its material as well as discursive side, and on its colonial dimensions as the example of the thylacine alone stresses. As mentioned above, the value of the thylacine as a natural history object rose because the live animal became rare in the natural world, while its physical appropriation was enabled by the access to colonised spaces. Colonisation, precisely, had led to the species becoming rare in the first place, and hence influenced environmental developments in the region. The captured animals were used for scientific and entertainment purposes, be it first while alive in zoological gardens or later as dead bodily remains in a museum context. Consequently, the global wildlife trade combines various aspects of colonial, scientific, environmental and economic history, and simultaneously touches on collection economies and display practices. As such, it is also related to the trade in ethnographic objects, which worked similarly in some ways while differing in others.

The edited volume at hand aims to tackle this varied field of research questions and to thereby historicise the wildlife trade further. Moreover, it understands the wildlife, i.e., the animals, as an integral part of this history. Fortunately, and necessarily, non-human animals have been brought into the centre of recent historical analyses. Important studies have illustrated that animals played various roles in the colonial structure, whether as resources for food and transport; as a means of exercising symbolic power; to manifest control over land; or as elements to negotiate identity constructions.[5] In particular, (colonial) hunting and its connection to the commodification of (dead) animal bodies has been a focus of investigation.[6] Recent works have further underlined why and how natural history museums are implicated in these colonial legacies.[7] Equally, the protection of nature and animals and its effects as well as the subtraction of certain species has been addressed.[8] In the "metropolis", non-European animals have been analysed primarily as zoo and circus animals in terms of their cultural significance or their function in the production of knowledge.[9] Various studies have outlined the effects of the organised and unintentional migration of animals, thereby also examining the cyclical movements of certain animal species or groups and the associated cultural and global historical processes.[10]

All these works highlight that animals cannot simply be seen as "addition" to human history, but as deeply integrated in it, especially in colonial contexts. However, the transnational trade in live and mostly non-European animals has only been addressed on the fringes, primarily analysing its significance for the development of zoological gardens or the evolution of circuses.[11] It is surprising how little the actual *movement* of animals, i.e., the way they took from one place to another, has been studied thus far. Which discursive processes paved the way, what practical means were required, and which social and political circumstances were necessary to enable this mobility? Though some works look closely at the interrelations between zoological gardens and the public that gets to visit these spaces in their leisure time, and hence give valuable insights as to the cultural, political and social influence of these places,[12] the actual economic dynamics behind the trade and its entrepreneurial networks and logistic processes remain somewhat of a blind spot on which this volume tries to shed some light.

Approaching these aspects, it was evident that we needed to go beyond not only a national, but also a thematic approach. This necessity was highlighted by the institutions themselves: zoological gardens employed various methods to acquire animals and museum collections did not restrict themselves to one discipline and neither did the collection practices of their stakeholders. What is more, the wildlife trade serves as good example to further complicate the division into "periphery" and "metropolis", since its webs form a transimperial mesh and reach into the corners of the colonial states as well as the "metropolis".[13] Crucially, we wanted to highlight the animal dimension of this trade, too: their corporeal individuality, their room for manoeuvre and their influence within the trade. Consequently, some contributions of this volume look closely at museum collections or conduct provenance research, while others highlight the means and aims available to the recipients of wild animals (for instance in Poland or the United States), and still others follow the actual wildlife labour and wildlife trade in former colonies (such as Indonesia or Myanmar).

The volume developed out of the homonymous conference that took place in November 2022 at the Georg August University in Göttingen, Germany, and that asked about the networks the wildlife trade produced and relied on. The contributions collected here go beyond the initial line-up, widening the lens by integrating contemporary questions of handling wildlife relations and museum collections of colonial contexts that (may) trace back to the wildlife trade. They follow the connections as well as the disruptions

in the trade flow. While at first glance it seems that animals moved first and foremost in one direction (from their habitat to the orchestrated places of zoological gardens, circus arenas, private paddocks and natural history museums), this one-directional idea has to be dropped when looking at the re-introduction of wildlife into the spaces of former colonies or the back-and-forth trading for zoological gardens in the colonies themselves, as is evident in Mieke Roscher's and Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari's contributions.

The movement of goods – which in this case were sentient beings – required more than just the material side of it. It demanded an exchange of knowledge that was at once dependent on the incorporation of otherwise often neglected knowledge systems, and hence created an amalgam of these different strands.[14] Not only humans had to work to meet the goal's end. Animals, too, had to lend their bodies, be it to carry humans or baggage, or to be used as food. Jonathan Saha illustrates what it means to *employ* animal labour in general and what this required of the human counterparts, while Barrie Ryne Blatchford points out at what cost the wildlife trade in particular came for the species traded. The strenuous journeys and very practices of the trade often led to the death of the animals. Yet, dealers tried diligently and with differing success to keep their protégés alive – that is, as long as they bore certain characteristics. Indeed, animal catchers drew distinct lines on which species and individuals they wanted to save. Factors such as gender, age, beauty, and rarity played a role.[15] In order to understand the animal trade, it is thus important to think about species-related value assignments, as Marianna Szczygielska does in her contribution.

Even dead animal bodies could retain value as potential museum "objects", as Sophia Annweiler exemplifies in the case of the Alfeld collection. Callum Fisher elaborates how animals as museum "objects" are not restricted to natural history museums, looking at the link between ethnographic and zoological collections and their connection to colonial economies. The very same museums and scientific approaches often did facilitate the acquiring of human remains, too. The purportedly scientific aim and hierarchically structured colonial mindset led to millions of human remains being forcefully taken and transported to European institutions. This troubling legacy is still present today, as Te Herekiekie Herewini as well as Holger Stoecker and Katharina Stötzel show in their contributions. Thus, the global wildlife trade is linked to colonial projects in myriad ways, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly.

Alfeld's Role in the Global Wildlife Trade

One example where these threads become entangled is Alfeld, the city that holds the above-introduced thylacine. Alfeld lies in the middle of Germany, over 150 kilometres south of Hamburg and 250 kilometres west of Berlin. With just under two thousand inhabitants in the middle of the 19th century, the district town prospered into a regionally important industrial location in the following decades, thanks in part to the shoe last industry, which culminated in the construction of *Fagus-Werk,* a factory building that was designed by Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius. More importantly, from 1853 onwards, Alfeld was serviced by the *Hannöversche Südbahn*, a railroad line that ran through the regional junctions, connecting Alfeld with Hanover, 50 kilometres away, and thus, to the international ports of Bremen and Hamburg. The integration in the supra-regional infrastructure was crucial for Alfeld's rise in economic and social terms. Nonetheless, how did a large collection of more than two hundred non-European taxidermies end up in a regionally important, though still provincial town far from the usual trading hubs such as Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp or London?

This question was at the heart of a provenance research project that started in January 2021. The project was funded by the German Lost Art Foundation, pulled together by a cooperation of the municipal museum in Alfeld and the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony, and settled at the Chair for Modern History in Göttingen of the late Professor Rebekka Habermas. The aim was to research the colonial backstory of the collection of taxidermy, but also of more than one hundred ethnographic objects that are stored away from the public eye. Both collections are housed by the municipal museum that was founded in 1928 and has, so far, seen four directors during its history, who oversaw most work connected to the museum and had little staff, if any. While only a fraction of the ethnographica is displayed, the specimens can be viewed in dioramas that have been installed since the 1930s. They depict fauna from around the world, with animals that live – or used to live – on the African, Australian, Asian or the two American continents.

Alfeld is not only the stage of these dioramas but had also been the epicentre of the global wildlife trade for several decades. Two animal dealing companies – those of the Reiche and the Ruhe families – kept their headquarters in the city, in Ruhe's case for over a century. Though both shaped the history and the memory

of the city, very little was known about the history of the two firms aside from anecdotal stories when the project started. The same goes for the museum: Despite its substantial collection, it is not known far beyond the region.

The animal trading business of C. Reiche & Brother was established by Charles (1827–1885) and his brother Henry Reiche (1833–1887) around 1844. The company started by dealing in canaries and other songbirds that they first traded to the East as far as St. Petersburg, and then later to North America. The trade of canaries within the United States of America proved so profitable that it quickly rose in volume,[16] and caused the company to establish branches in New York City and Boston. These branches, however, only existed until the end of the 19th century. The two founders were succeeded by their sons, Charles Junior (1854–1925) and Hermann Reiche (unknown, son of Henry). The latter of the two managed the dealings of their U.S. business, while Charles Reiche Junior focused his dealings on the animal trade within Europe, only occasionally sending animals to North America. Hermann Reiche, after first trying to keep their business afloat in New York City, left the trade around 1900. Decades before, the company had added live wild animals to their portfolio and transported them mainly from the Americas and Africa to Europe. There, they sported business ties to several zoological gardens in and outside the German Empire, most notably the one in Antwerp.[17]

Meanwhile in Alfeld, they were operating next to their rival animal dealership Ruhe – with which they seem to not have made any attempts to cooperate. Yet, in 1910 and somewhat surprisingly,[18] Charles Reiche Junior decided to sell the business to his rival Ruhe, and with it not only the remaining animals in his possession, but also his business connections and employees such as animal caretakers and animal hunters. Buying these substantial resources of knowledge and work power while at the same time losing one of its major rivals, the Ruhe company secured a leading spot in the still-growing wildlife trade. The business had been founded by Ludwig (or Louis) Ruhe (1828–1883) in the 1860s, and they too had started by globally distributing canaries that were bred in the Harz region. Indeed, its development reads like a blueprint of the business model pursued by Reiche. Ruhe transported their birds to North America and established a short-lived office in New Orleans and an enduring one in New York City. Around that time towards the end of the 19th century, Ruhe started to deal in larger and wild animals, too.[19]

Taking over the Reiche business, Ruhe solidified their pole position and, although hampered during the First World War, the business experienced its heydays in the 1920s and 1930s, when the German Empire ceased to

exercise political control over colonial territories. Having two independent and yet closely connected businesses on the North American and on the European continent proved to be advantageous.[20] During the interwar years, they grew to be one of the biggest animal dealers worldwide and owned so-called "collection depots" for animals at different strategic points around the globe. One of their main posts was nestled in Dire Dawa in Ethiopia, where wildlife was collected to be shipped to other places in the world.[21] Ruhe truly operated a worldwide network and enterprise, and supplied a variety of clients with wild animals. Prominently among them were European and U.S. zoological gardens and circuses, as well as private buyers and zoos of (formerly) colonised places.[22] The business was successful enough to grant Hermann Ruhe (1895–1978), the grandson of the founder, a luxurious life in Alfeld, and the company was passed on to his sons. It ended when the oldest, Hermann Ruhe Junior (1924–2003), had to file for bankruptcy in 1993 – nearly one-hundred-fifty years after its foundation.

Interestingly, both companies started out by dealing in birds that were not wild but bred. The canary trade was extremely important to generate the necessary capital to start dealing in larger animals. Trading wildlife was essentially a high-risk undertaking, because many animals died due to mishandling, neglect, and the long journeys.[23] Agents needed a high capital volume to enter it, having to provide prepayment to collect and transport the animals that only later, and not always, could be cashed in by selling. The money made in the bird trade provided this capital to the Ruhe and Reiche businesses. And they did not only accumulate capital, but also knowledge. They had to continuously transfer both money and knowledge into new spaces in the interest of growth and expansion of the business as well as their expertise.[24]

Regarding the risk/reward ratio, it is noteworthy that the potential gain made it lucrative to invest that money beforehand. Indeed, this period saw a number of agents trying to establish themselves on the growing wildlife market, among them, notably, the famous Hamburg animal dealer Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913), who dominated – at least the narrative around – the wildlife trade for several decades.[25] The rise of animal dealers in Western European countries, and later the United States, coincided with the foundation of multiple zoological gardens.[26] The increasing numbers of customers not only led to an increasing number of animals moved, but also to a professionalisation of the trade (Fig. 2). And as much as companies such as Ruhe and Reiche purported that they were "animal lovers"[27], the animals mostly contained value for them in their potential to create cashflows.

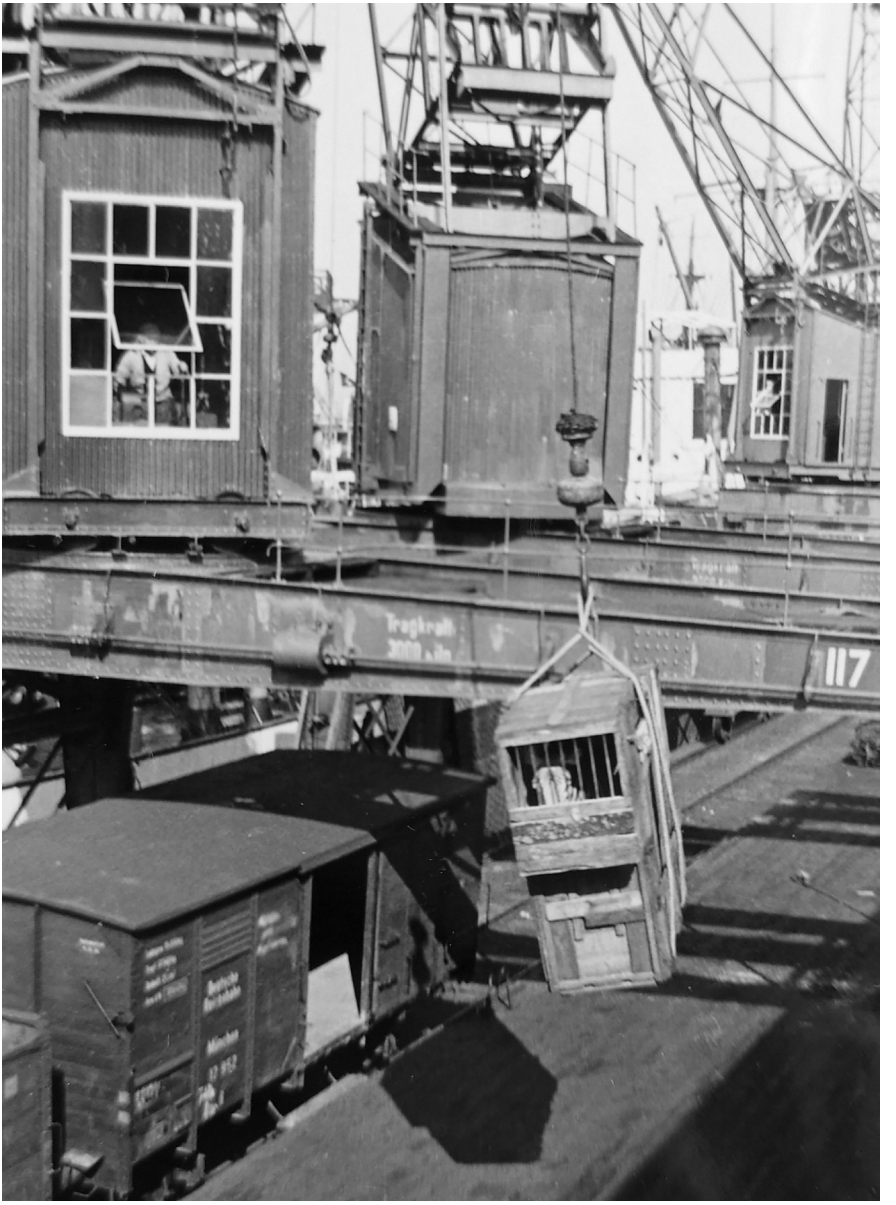

Figure 2 | Trading wild animals or indeed any live animal was a huge challenge, also logistically. Many of them lost their lives on the journeys alone. © Municipal Archive Alfeld

Looking at the collection in general and at Reiche and Ruhe in particular, the colonial entanglements of their businesses, networks, and structures become apparent. One site where these interconnections surface is at the display of animals. Reiche and Ruhe did not only hunt and catch animals, they also actively took part in their exhibition. In fact, the boundary of the animal "dealer" and the "impresario" was fluid and interrelated with other businesses. If Reiche and Ruhe described themselves as animal trading companies, they also acted as organisers of animal shows and "ethnographic shows". To do so, they collaborated closely with circuses and locations that put animals on view. In 1876, Reiche founded the first, albeit short-lived aquarium in New York City, and – like many other animal dealers active in the city at the time – he also organised exhibitions in the Central Park Menagerie.[28] In addition, zoos and circuses themselves acted as animal dealers when they sold or exchanged individuals.

The conflation of trade and exhibition spaces is even more striking on an institutional level in Ruhe's case: from 1931 onwards, the company managed the business of the zoo in the provincial capital of Hanover and remained the managing firm for over forty years. The animals on the zoo premises continued to be available to the market not only for exchange, but also as "goods" for sale: they were simultaneously "commodities" and "zoo animals".[29] Their exhibition value remained even after their death. The bodies of deceased animals were not only given to the local Alfeld teacher Alois Brandmüller (1867–1939), but also to surrounding institutions, which then led to them being displayed once more: as taxidermies in museums.[30]

This period also saw Ruhe's first verifiable "human zoo" (*"Völkerschau"*), which he initially organised together with John Hagenbeck (1866–1940).[31] It was performed at the Hanover Zoo, where Ruhe was the leaseholder. These shows were a common and popular spectacle of the time and were displayed in zoological gardens as well as in fairs, festivities, and world exhibitions. The people "exhibited" in these shows were presented as allegedly different from the audience "observing", and hence supposedly natural norms were emphasised through these practices.[32] At the same time, "human zoos" were tools of entertainment that were mixed with scientific claims and used as means to self-assert the audience with a feeling of superiority vis-à-vis the colonised "other". They were highly staged, yet their organisers claimed to offer authenticity and to pursue educational purposes while embedding them deeply into entertainment aims.[33] The Reiche company engaged even earlier than Ruhe in this practice, at the same time as the Hagenbeck

company made them vastly popular in the 1870s and 1880s.[34] One of Reiche's first staged shows was a so-called "Nubia Caravan" in 1879, where people of the region of Sudan and Egypt were presented on camels.[35]

The shows clearly created a space for othering, in which the people on display were contrasted to the ones visiting. The practice and the underlying tone manifested the idea that the "exhibited" people were somehow closer to "nature", an idea emphasised further by placing these shows within the realms of zoological gardens, i.e., in the proximity of animals. Thereby, they constructed and reinforced racialised stereotypes and hierarchical ideas of supposed human "races". While the structure and output of the shows transported these messages (sometimes covertly), the roles and positions of the people involved could vary. Roles could even conflate. One of the persons that was part of the "Nubia caravan", Jacub Ismail, also supported Reiche's expedition as a hunter while in the region.[36] He fulfilled two roles for the Reiche company, at once helping them acquire the animals while also participating in their exhibition practices. Indeed, hunting practices were often emphasised and sensationalised in the shows, a testimony to the fact that these shows could incorporate circus traditions and were meant to be entertainment and audience magnets.

Since taking part in the shows was often only one facet of their involvement in the trade, the importance of people whom animal dealers hired onsite cannot be overstated (Fig. 3). They were not only instrumental in the capture of the animals, but also in their transport and care. Consequently, workers hired in the hunting region frequently accompanied animals on their trips to Europe.[37] Moreover, non-European actors such as *mahouts* (elephant trainers) from India sometimes stayed in Germany to continue caring for the animals. While we can find and trace their involvement, it is much harder to judge and understand their motivation and reasons to join the trade, the influence of the trade on their individual as well as community biographies, and the circumstances and conditions under which their work was acquired at all. Though the agency of actors employed needs to be taken seriously and further investigated, it should not simply be assumed that labour was offered voluntarily, especially seeing the colonial settings under which their skills and knowledge were acquired.

Figure 3 | Caretakers accompanied the animals to their destinations in Europe, and sometimes stayed to train and care for them. © Archive Alt-Alfeld

What is more, these entanglements reinforce the fact that the wildlife trade was intimately interwoven with colonial – and often imperial – practices. Dealers were active in a variety of places and engaged in the aim to accumulate as many animals as they could get their hands on and sell. At the same time, companies such as Ruhe were present in places that had not (yet) been colonised (e.g., Ethiopia), and in Ruhe's case, their main success came at a point when the German Empire no longer controlled colonial territories. Still, they profited from colonial infrastructure, imperial ideas and racially informed hierarchies. The wildlife trade thus presents a good case study to investigate global entanglements and colonial continuities beyond "the" colonial state, and to rather examine how companies used and travelled along transimperial connections and transcended national affiliations.

Thinking Animals Global

The Alfeld case exemplifies how provincial places on the margin of the empire were still deeply imbedded in colonial contexts. These dynamics need to be further interrogated, for example by investigating in which ways networks were globally or more locally bounded and what resources institutions needed in order to become a part of these networks. As global entanglements have repercussions in local contexts, in the case of Alfeld, they become visible in the municipal museum. The museum's specimens are arranged in dioramas that largely follow the original vision of the collection's founder. Therefore, the museum gives an impressive opportunity to examine the practices and discursive ideas of the time as they played out in smaller museums. In her contribution, **Sophia Annweiler** showcases how Alfeld mirrored the fashion and ideas of the time of its conception, but moreover, how these arrangements purport racialised and hierarchical ideas of the world and its regions; underscore gender constructs such as family relations; and how museums' collections and exhibitions keep these ideas alive. Looking closely at the dioramas and the way the exhibition is drafted, the paper shows that gendered, racialised, and deeply colonial ideas are hidden – and sometimes very visible – in between the specimens that look at us through the display windows.

The benefits of a local study with a global perspective are also visible in **Jonathan Saha**'s contribution, albeit in a different context and different fashion. By looking closely at the elephant trade in British Burma, he is able to trace the ways these elephants become commodities through the discursive and very material practices that the timber industry in the region brought about. As Jonathan Saha is able to show, elephants – or indeed, any animal – do not simply subdue to work or the signification as a commodity: rather, this process requires constant human labour. That labour is often delivered by colonised people, which creates an interdependence, albeit still asymmetric, during colonial rule. These interrelations surface only when watching these dynamics up close. That way, the friction arising through the behaviour and needs of the sentient beings that are being traded, as well as the subtle and sometimes hidden changes in working practices and power relations, become clearer.

While still indebted to a local focus, **Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari** paints a broader picture of the global wildlife trade in Indonesia, and especially the role European merchants played in it. By following the trade of

different Western European animal dealers, her contribution shows the important role the Dutch East Indies, and later Indonesia, played as a hub in the global wildlife trade as a whole, and that the traders were able to carry out their ambitions despite the aims of natural protection movements in Indonesia to limit this trade specifically. Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari unfolds a big panorama of European animal dealers active in the region and all, more or less, circumventing regulations. Interestingly, the importance of their role in the creation of the local zoological gardens is highlighted, too, along with how they profited from the colonial asymmetry between them and their locally employed workers.

As Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari scrutinises the actions of wildlife dealers in Indonesia, **Barrie Ryne Blatchford** casts our view on one of the key consumer markets: The United States. Following the career of Henry Trefflich, the chapter follows the developments within the U.S. towards a mass exotic pet ownership, and thus the shift from public institutions to private persons as clients of animal dealers. Through his investigation, he is able to show that the recipients do not alter the practices of the wildlife dealers, that is, practices that are not only based on the exploitation of (post-)colonial spaces, but that also caused a vast extent of animal suffering. However, as his contribution illustrates, animal dealers must both adapt and work with regulations in the countries of origin as well as negotiate with the national legislators of the buyer markets. The, at times, fierce reactions towards these laws by animal dealers and their private clients illuminates that the animal trade was not only fuelled by economic desires but also emotionally charged.

The wildlife trade was guided by much more than just economic interests, and often, it was practiced even in times of economic hardship. Regardless, it was a field of competition and the institutions involved sometimes had to find ways around their limited resources. **Marianna Szczygielska** demonstrates what that could mean. Zooming in on the zoological garden in Poznan in Western Poland, this contribution traces not only the financial limits and lack of business connections of a comparatively small zoo, but also investigates what strategies they adopted to still ensure that they could offer a zoological garden as they deemed it worthy. Marianna Szczygielska's examination of the Poznan Zoo stresses to what extent zoos and dealers were dependent on each other, and how much even the zoos on the fringes of empire were reliant on colonial hierarchies. The chapter also highlights how strategies such as the zoo breeding programmes – that later became common practice[38] – arose out of the wish to become less dependent on the fluctuation of the global wildlife market.

That these webs of relations and set of practices did not simply end with the formal colonial rule is argued by **Mieke Roscher**. In fact, when looking at the treatment and handling of cheetahs in South Africa, it becomes evident that colonial methods and ideas survive and resurface in the present-day treatment of wild animals and their ongoing "exchange" (though under different prefixes) as well as conservation efforts. Indeed, colonial hunting and trading often made the conservation necessary in the first place, which was then carried out without regard for communities living in areas of national parks or dependent on trade. Scrutinising the relations of the cheetah conservation programmes and its aims to paint cheetahs as sympathetic and thus, worthy of protection, Mieke Roscher exemplifies how colonial legacies survive through institutional and ideational continuities.

As theses contributions demonstrate, the global wildlife trade had myriad effects in different regions which last until today. Yet the trade did not only concern institutions that dealt with live animals, but was also related to the trading of animal parts or dead specimens. The trade, thus, can be traced in museum collections not only of natural history collections (as Sophia Annweiler demonstrates) but also to ethnographic museums, as **Callum Fisher** illustrates. Indeed, as he exemplifies via the case of the Godeffroy company, the link between trade in ethnographic objects and the commercial exchange of animal specimens is more intimate than it first may seem. In the case of Oceania collections, Callum Fisher ties these entanglements back to the logic of plantations, i.e., how these systems of power and extraction had influences beyond the immediate trade and physical places. And indeed, when following this focus, it becomes clear that these collections need to be placed more evidently in connection with planation economies than previously, showing how closely they are connected to the colonial contexts in which human-made artefacts along with animals, plants and even human remains were expropriated.

This uneasy link between animal and human remains collections is evident in several natural history museums of the time, and its legacy lasts until today. The municipal museum in Alfeld was confronted with this uncomfortable truth, too, when first one and then later several remains were found that belong to human individuals that most likely did not live in Europe.[39] Their proximity to the storerooms of the ethnographic objects suggests that they, like ethnographic objects taken by animal dealers, are related to the wildlife trade. Indeed, as Fisher argues, museum collections cannot be compartmentalised and need to be viewed within the larger context that they developed in. This becomes tangible in the two last chapters of our volume.

Te Herekiekie Herewini points out that "collecting" human remains was a colonial practice deeply embedded in ethnographic work and science. Even though limitations were – at least officially – put in place by the colonial state, scholars could still forcefully abduct human remains from their resting places. What this chapter illustrates even further is the lasting shadow this legacy casts on international relations, politically as well as scientifically. The growing success that is the restitution and repatriation of human remains to their communities is made possible by the activism of these very communities, which started nearly as soon as the remains of their ancestors were abducted. How, now, is this connected to the wildlife trade? As Te Herekiekie Herwini convincingly shows, the connection not only lies within the attitude of superiority held by many contemporary scientists and the belief that the remains of the people they took were somehow "less than" European individuals, and abhorrently placed closer to animals, but also by the idea of science and the attitude of accumulation in general. Underlying this is an idealisation of Western science and the idea that whatever there is in a colony, or indeed, the natural world, is up for grabs and thus, needs to be grabbed, and that this accumulation will benefit and further scientific knowledge – which is to be placed above other moral considerations. While it is thanks to the decades-long activism of the communities of origin that ancestral remains are repatriated, what moral and legal status do the remains of animals have or should they have?

The last chapter, too, investigates how non-European human remains ended up in German collections, and like Te Herekiekie Herewini's, focuses on the cases in Göttingen. **Holger Stoecker** and **Katharina Stötzel** were part of the research programme "Sensitive Provenances" that Te Herekiekie Herewini participated in. Their contribution illustrates how today's interdisciplinary research approaches the difficult part of provenance research on human remains. Stoecker and Stötzel present case studies of Hawai'ian ancestral remains that were kept in Göttingen's university collections and repatriated in 2022. Their contribution allows a glimpse into the challenges faced not only when it comes to tracing the provenance, but also how to responsibly go forward once knowledge is acquired, and how to approach and permanently include communities of origin.

By ranging from regionally focused case studies to broader analyses of networks, from practices in zoological collections and gardens to the abduction of ancestral remains, this volume spans a wide panorama on topics connected,

though not exclusively limited, to the global wildlife trade. And it does not only focus on scientific or commercial centres, but asks how provincial places were integrated into imperial spaces or rather, how the colonial reached the provincial. As we hope to show, the wildlife trade is intimately entangled with colonial projects. Only blurry lines (if any) can be drawn between the economic efforts of transporting wild animals to entirely new regions where they are to be viewed (i.e., consumed); the collecting of specimens for natural history aims; or, even more crudely, the abduction of human remains for racialised science. Shining light on these entangled histories will allow for the further illumination of the provenance of natural history collections, and hopefully broaden the ongoing academic and public debates surrounding them. Most of all, these collections need to be placed in the broader context of colonial consumption and accumulation, and animals as part of it need to be further integrated in these studies, too.

Acknowledgments

This book is the proceedings of a conference held as part of the provenance research project *The Global Networks of the Animal Trading Companies Reiche and Ruhe*. With the completion of this edited volume, the project is also drawing to a close. Its task was to study the history of the taxidermy and ethnographic collection in the Museum Alfeld, and of the wildlife trade more broadly. This was made possible by the funding of the German Lost Art Foundation. We would especially like to thank Anna Wickes-Neira and Jan Hüsgen, who readily supported us whenever questions arose. Our project partner was the municipal museum in Alfeld, who we thank for their openness to provenance research and to address their past. The museum director Ina Gravenkamp was not only genuinely interested in the project's findings, but supported our research in every way she could and thus made it at all possible. The conception and carrying out of the project, and by extension this publication, would not have been thinkable without the support of the Network for Provenance Research in Lower Saxony: first and foremost, the tireless efforts of Claudia Andratschke, who also co-edited this volume, and likewise Annekathrin Krieger, who joined the project relatively late, but invested many hours of work to guarantee that the volume would see the light of day.

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The project was initiated and led by Rebekka Habermas, who died in December 2023. She guided the beginning of the project with verve and wit and was also actively participating in the conference. Though this volume would not exist without her, she was sadly no longer able to accompany the work on it due to a relentless illness that also prevented her from seeing the finished product. This book is dedicated to her – she is greatly missed.

1 Examples in point are the Natural History Museum in London, where a twenty-five-meter skeleton of a blue whale is hovering over the visitors. The American Museum of Natural History in New York displays such a specimen in their Ocean Hall, their entrance is graced by two dinosaur skeletons, much like at the *Naturhistorisches Museum* in Berlin. The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., opted for the taxidermy of an African Bush Elephant.

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4 International Thylacine Specimen Database (2013), cited on: The Thylacine Museum, http://www.naturalworlds.org/thylacine/mrp/itsd/itsd_1.htm, accessed 19 January 2024.

5 See for example Greiner, Andreas (2021): "Bio-Engineering across Empires. Mapping the Global Microhistory of Zebra Domestication in Colonial East Africa", in: *Journal of World History,* vol. 32, p. 127–159; Saha, Jonathan (2015): "Among the Beasts of Burma. Animals and the Politics of Colonial Sensibilities, c. 1840–1940", in: *Journal of Social History*, vol. 48, p. 910–932; Gissibl, Bernhard (2008): "Jagd und Herrschaft. Zur politischen Ökologie des deutschen Kolonialismus in Ostafrika", in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 56, p. 501–520.

6 As examples see Thompsell, Angela (2015): *Hunting Africa. British Sport, African Knowledge and the Nature of Empire*, London; Jones, Karen (2015): *Epiphany in the Wilderness. Hunting, Nature and Performance in the Nineteenth-Century American West*, Boulder; Marvin, Garry (2011): "Enlivened through Memory. Hunters and Hunting Trophies", in: Sam Alberti (Ed.): *The Afterlives of Animals. A Museum Menagerie*, Charlottesville, VA, p. 202–270.

7 Madruga, Catarina (2022): "'Authentic Provenance.' Locality and Colonial Collecting for the Lisbon Zoological Museum, 1860s–1880s", in: *Journal for the History of Knowledge*, vol. 3, no. 1, article 11, p. 1–13; Ashby, Jack; Machin, Rebecca (2021): "Legacies of Colonial Violence in Natural History Collections", in: *Journal of Natural Science Collections*, vol. 8, p. 44–54; Das, Subhadra; Lowe, Miranda (2018): "Nature Read in Black and White. Decolonial Approaches to Interpreting Natural History Collections", in: *Journal of Natural Science Collections*, vol. 6, p. 4–14.

8 For current examples see Dlamini, Jacob (2020): *Safari Nation. A Social History of the Kruger National Park*, Athens, Ohio; Lekan, Thomas (2019): *Our Gigantic Zoo. A German Quest to Save the Serengeti*, Oxford. For the legacy of these hunts and abductions, see Mkono, Mucha (2019): "Neo-colonialism and Greed. Africans' Views on Trophy Hunting in Social Media", in: *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, vol. 27, no. 5, p. 689–704; Hayward, Matt; Ripple, William J.; Kerley, Graham I. H. et al. (2018): "Neocolonial Conversation. Is Moving Rhinos to Australia Conservation or Intellectual Property Loss", in: *Conversation Letters*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 1–7.

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13 This division was famously first questioned by Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, see Stoler, Ann Laura; Cooper, Frederick (1997): "Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda", in: Ann Laura Stoler, Frederick Cooper (Eds): *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Oakland, CA, p. 1–56, here 34.
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18 See the letter of Reiche to the director of the zoo in Antwerp of 21 June 1910: Felixarchief, Collection Zoo Antwerp, C 4.4.1, 1#2416.
19 In local accords, it is often referred to that the business engaged in these activities in the 1880s, however, in an obituary on one of the family members, the venturing in wildlife trade is dated to the 1870s, the same years as Reiche and Hagenbeck started. See "Bernhard Ruhe Dies. Trained Wild Animals", in: *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 30 December 1930.
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21 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo*.
22 For the involvement of Ruhe with zoos in the Global South, refer to his own accounts in Ruhe, Hermann (1960): *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, München, p. 168. For an exemplary study on the formation of the zoos outside of Europe, see Hochadel, Oliver (2022): "A Global Player from the South. The Jardín Zoológico de Buenos Aires and the Transnational Network of Zoos in the Early Twentieth Century", in: *Manguinhos*, vol. 29, no. 3, p. 789–812. Also, see Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari's contribution in this volume.
23 The animal trade was deadly, this has been illustrated on several occasions, see for example Rothfels, Nigel (2002): *Savages and Beasts*, p. 55 as well as Barrie Ryne Blatchford's contribution in this volume.
24 This points to what Jonathan Saha theorises as accumulation in imperial settings, see Saha, Jonathan (2022): "On Accumulation and Empire", in: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 50, no. 3, p. 418–421.
25 Several animal dealers operated at the time, among them Julius Mohr, Charles Rice, August Fockelmann and Josef Menges. Carl Hagenbeck was one of the first prominent figures to emerge out of the trade, also due to his skill to promote and position himself within the media, see Rothfels (2002), *Savages and Beasts*.

26 Baratay, Eric; Elizabeth Hardouin-Fugier (2002): *Zoo. A History of Zoological Gardens in the West*, London.
27 As one among the many examples where animal dealers present themselves as animal lovers, see Ruhe (1960), *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, p. 306.
28 Hanson, Elizabeth (2002): *Animal Attractions. Nature on Display in American Zoos*, Princeton, p. 83.
29 See the many offers Ruhe made to sell the animals in the municipal archive of Hanover, box 1, HR. 10, Nr. 1586.
30 Animals that were handed over by either Reiche or Ruhe are stored to this day in such institutions as the State Museum Hanover or the zoological collection of the *Zentrale Kustodie* of the Georg August University in Göttingen. Bestowing deceased animals to zoological collections in the vicinity was a common practice at the time. To learn what happened to them in Alfeld, see Sophia Annweiler's contribution in this volume.
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32 Dreesbach, Anne (2005): *Gezähmte Wilde. Die Zurschaustellung "exotischer" Menschen in Deutschland, 1870–1940*, Frankfurt am Main.
33 Dreesbach (2005), *Gezähmte Wilde.*
34 Busch (1993), *Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*, p. 178–196.
35 For an overview see Andratschke, Claudia; Müller, Lars (2021): "Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände. Die Alfelder Tierhändler Reiche und Ruhe als Ausstatter von Völkerschauen", in: Lars Frühsorge, Michael Schütte, Sonja Riehn (Eds): *Völkerschau-Objekte*, Lübeck, p. 132–144. Additionally, Clemens Maier-Wolthausen (Berlin) will present his findings on "human zoos" that took place in the zoological garden in Hanover in April 2024.
36 Andratschke; Müller (2021): *Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände.* See also the municipal archive in Alfeld, box "Reiche", the booklet *Reiches Karawane nach Nubien*.
37 Visual sources are the first clue that many care takers accompanied the animals to Europe, see the municipal archive in Alfeld, box "Ruhe", several lose photographs. Additionally, see as an example the visa requested for one of the workers at the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, RAV 1/126, letter of Carl Steininger to the German Legation. Lastly, Ruhe himself mentions the numerous employees they needed, albeit not by name, e.g., in Ruhe (1960), *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, p. 218.
38 For the development and early attempts of zoo breedings, see Nicolodi, Sandra (2012): "Nachzucht. Eine relativ neue Sammelpraxis Zoologischer Gärten", in: *Traverse*, vol. 19, no. 3, p. 91–105 as well as another work by Szczygielska, Marianna (2022): "Undoing Extinction. The Role of Zoos in Breeding Back the Tarpan Wild Horse, 1912–1945", in: *Centaurus*, vol. 64, no. 3, p. 729–750.
39 Neef, Josefine (2021): *Klärung der Herkunft von menschlichen Überresten, vermutlich Aboriginal ancestral remains, im Museum der Stadt Alfeld* (unpublished report), German Lost Art Foundation, Proveana Database, https://www.proveana.de/de/link/pro00000109, accessed 19 January 2024.

Introduction

“Wild animals completely up close”

On the Genesis and Implicit Messages of the Natural History Dioramas in the Museum of Alfeld

Introduction

"Wild animals completely up close"[1]

On the Genesis and Implicit Messages of the Natural History Dioramas in the Museum of Alfeld

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Abstract

In the Municipal Museum in Alfeld (Leine), a surprisingly large collection of taxidermic animals is presented in dioramas, thereby staging constructed illusions of natural habitats. In Alfeld, the origin of the collection can be traced back to the global wildlife trade which connected the small town to global trading networks. Next to the origin of the animal bodies, the dioramas and their representations of nature are subject to this analysis due to their close links to the traditional exhibition styles of natural history museums during the time of their emergence. Natural history museums were connected to the colonial expansion of Europe and the rationalistic ideologies of that time. Following, they were also reproducing colonial gazes. This chapter approaches this exhibition by analysing the history of the museum and the traditions it follows to elaborate on the implicit messages that exist 'between the lines' and the omitted stories of this complex past.

Introduction

A relatively large collection of non-European animal specimens can be viewed at a seemingly unlikely place: Alfeld, a small city in the southern part of Lower-Saxony, Germany. These taxidermically prepared animals are presented to the interested visitors in dioramas – a display practice that is meant to create the illusion of natural habitats (Fig. 1).

The Municipal Museum advertises their collection with the goal that "visitors, young and old, feel transported to the African savannah when they observe cranes at the waterhole, they see tigers prowling through the Indonesian jungle and discover colourful parrots in South America."[2] It is, thus, implied that the aim of the museum is to generate a bodily experience: to create the impression as if one is travelling the world. Yet, in their pursuit of creating these immersive experiences, the museum unwillingly creates stereotypical images and exoticised versions of world regions outside of Europe, as I will discuss below.

The Alfeld Museum holds over two hundred mounted animals and over one hundred ethnographic objects whose origins are uncertain, though they are likely of non-European origin.[3] The establishment of both collections is most probably linked to two leading trading companies of the city: C. Reiche & Brother and the L. Ruhe KG. These two companies specialised in trading animals, and they had their headquarters in Alfeld, thus connecting the small town to global trading networks. Animals from around the globe arrived in Alfeld, where they had to quarantine and were sometimes also trained.[4] As Claudia Andratschke and Lars Müller highlighted in their study of the Reiche as well as the Ruhe companies, not only animals moved along the networks of the global wildlife trade, but objects and – in part forcibly – humans, too. So-called ethnographic exhibitions (a phenomenon known as *"Völkerschauen"* or "Human Zoos" in the 19th and beginning of 20th century) act as good examples to showcase how the movement of animals, objects and humans went hand in hand. In these exhibitions, non-European humans were "displayed" in racialised and stereotypical ways, often alongside animals and

Figure 1 | Municipal Museum Alfeld, Diorama. © Municipal Museum Alfeld, Photo: Martin Liebetruth

objects that were meant to illustrate their supposed way of life. These shows were highly staged, and both Alfeld companies engaged in their enterprise.[5]

The origin of the Alfeld collection and its presentation must be understood within this wider context. This chapter will focus on the *Tiermuseum* (Animal Museum), which is part of the Municipal Museum and which sports the aforementioned dioramas. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, museums played an integral role in transferring ideas of empire and "race" – a legacy that is still felt today. As historian Subhadra Das and curator Miranda Lowe have illustrated, natural history museums were no exception: Objects and specimens from around the world were exhibited in museums, often to legitimise colonial endeavours – also in the name of science and education.[6] According to art historian Tim Barringer, museums were part of a "three-dimensional imperial archive"; they were "a fantasy of knowledge made into power."[7] According to Barringer, this consisted of three aspects: firstly in collection (often under violent or at least problematic circumstances, where colonial or proto-colonial interests of the empire were executed) and secondly, through enforcement of colonial power through the collected knowledge and the display of objects that formed controlled images of "the other". Lastly, having the power to display these objects perpetuated the idea of the metropole as the centre of a global empire.[8]

While Barringer was looking at the ethnographic collections of the South Kensington Museum (today's Victoria and Albert Museum), his observation is equally true for natural history museums.[9] With this in mind, not only the origins of the animal bodies but also the dioramas and their representations of nature become interesting. In dioramas, the different taxidermy animals are grouped together and presented in a supposed "authentic" surrounding. To this aim, not only a lively appearance of these animals is created, but also an "illusory landscape" (Geraldine Howie) as its background. These three-dimensional museum exhibits have to be understood as constructs between fact and fiction, and defined as an idealised representation of nature that is not "nature" itself.[10] This chapter approaches the exhibition form by first elaborating on the history of the museum and the traditions it follows, and then analysing the dioramas themselves, asking how they are displaying the animals and which explicit and implicit narratives are thereby conveyed.

The History and Exhibition of the *Tiermuseum*

The *Tiermuseum* in Alfeld was opened in 1933 as part of the Municipal Museum, which had been founded five years earlier. Plans for the museum were already made in 1917, but a suitable exhibition location was missing at the time. It was to showcase the geology, culture, craftsmanship and religion of the region.[11] As was common at the time,[12] the local history society (*Verein für Heimatkunde des Kreises Alfeld*) was instrumental in pushing for its own regional museum.[13]

At first, a collection of mounted specimens of the local fauna became part of the permanent exhibition. It consisted of 220 birds, 42 mammals and some amphibians.[14] No animal of non-European origin was exhibited at the beginning. Only when additional space was acquired could an exhibition exclusively about non-European animals be realised. It was opened to the public in 1933.[15] Over two hundred taxidermically prepared animal bodies were moved into the newly acquired building at Kirchplatz 4 – where they can still be viewed today. The foundation of this collection can be traced back to the local teacher Alois Brandmüller (1867–1939), who was an active member of the history society from 1917 onwards.[16] He initiated and prepared both collections of animals (the local and the non-European fauna) and designed the dioramas for their presentation – in part with his former student and later employee Carl Bartels. While he had initially built the collection for his natural history lessons, he later donated it to the museum. Meanwhile, his students had received a "hands-on" education by practicing taxidermy on many of the animals themselves.[17]

It is unclear how Brandmüller acquired the animal bodies. Their origins can only be speculated about as no written accounts of Brandmüller's have been preserved. It seems likely that he received at least some of the bodies from Reiche and/or Ruhe.[18] As a picture shows Brandmüller outside of Europe, he may also have acquired animals during his travels. Furthermore, he could have received material through his connections with staff of the University of Göttingen.[19] He may have additionally bought bodies from individual Alfeld animal dealers who returned from their voyages (and not through the companies they worked for).[20] As it is not uncommon for small museums, the individual animal biographies cannot be reconstructed. Most certainly, however, Alfeld's position as a centre for wildlife trade created the conditions under which this collection could be acquired.

Two animal trading companies, Carl Reiche and L. Ruhe KG, were located in Alfeld. The success of their businesses allowed them both to operate around

the globe.[21] After taking over the C. Reiche company in 1910, Hermann Ruhe II expanded the L. Ruhe KG in the 1920s, and it became one of the biggest animal dealerships in Europe and North America.[22] The arrival of humans, animals, and objects from different world regions to Alfeld influenced everyday life in the small town. Alfred Glenewinkel, an employee of Ruhe, described how the animal transport brought "a lot of excitement to all of the citizens."[23] Alfeld employees, Indigenous caretakers and the animals marched from the train station to the enclosures of the Ruhe company, passing through the city centre. The global entanglements of the trade in general and the company in particular were therefore visible in the city itself.[24] Similarly, Charlotte Hoes argues that in Alfeld the animal trade is a local memory space perpetuating until today the idea of successful business and global adventures (see also her introduction to this volume).[25] Surprisingly, the trade itself was not part of the *Tiermuseum's* exhibition until the 1990s.

When Brandmüller donated his collection of taxidermic specimens to the museum in 1933, he also designed their display for dioramas,[26] a practice that had already become somewhat old-fashioned in the 1930s.[27] The *Tiermuseum* moved out of focus during the rule of National Socialism and did not reopen after the Second World War. Only due to a change in the museum management did the exhibition become publicly accessible again in 1977. The specimens had been restored, though the dioramas little changed: the general exhibition style was retained. Twenty years later, the exhibition saw a thorough remodelling. The taxidermy was restored once more, and the history of its genesis and its connections to the wildlife trade were researched more in-depth. The *Tiermuseum* reopened its doors in 1996, with new accompanying information about the trade, which is still part of the exhibition today. However, the dioramas themselves remained, again, nearly unchanged and resemble closely the display that Brandmüller designed in 1933 – even as of now. Small rearrangements in the dioramas as well as the addition of information were thus the only changes conducted within the last century.[28] However, the museum has been actively engaged in several provenance research projects on its collections and exhibitions, signalling that it is open and indeed eager to address the objects' and its own past.[29]

As for the arrangement of the animal specimens, they are presented in three-dimensional dioramas exemplifying their natural habitats. Some species are shown in groups. The primates are mainly presented in bigger groups as families, and the cougars are featuring one mother animal with several younger ones. Thus, they are shown as if they would engage in social interaction (Fig. 2). However, in most of the cases, one animal of each species is presented.

The dioramas are organised geographically and meant to represent five world regions (Africa, Asia, Australia, South and North America) and their "characteristic" animals. Different species are fused together in the dioramas as part of one "community" and thus create an idealised version of the regional nature. In addition, a canary bird, a Brown bear, two Mississippi alligators, a Galápagos giant tortoise, and a Komodo dragon are shown outside the dioramas. The descriptions of the dioramas include the continent of origin, and the German names of the animals. There is also a key of the diorama so that visitors can find the corresponding animals in the display.

The diorama called "Africa" is the biggest (Fig. 3); it fills the whole ground floor. The other imagined four continents share the space on the second floor. In the "Australia" diorama, a Tasmanian tiger specimen (thylacine) can be seen, a today extinct animal of which the museum is especially proud.[30] The information on the animals and especially on their regions of origin is scarce: only the continents are named.[31] The question if these regrouped animals actually lived close to each other or were scattered about different regions of huge continents remains unanswered. Instead, a classical image of "peaceful nature" is created. Considering that representations of supposedly "objective" sciences are also constructed and presented to the public, museums in themselves are a "staging of science", i.e., they intentionally connect facts with the imaginary in order to convey a message.[32] Thus, the dioramas in Alfeld do not represent "the nature", but a construction of a specific knowledge about it. The animal bodies and their bodily position are adjusted in a deliberate way to create a certain image in accordance with that construction. At the same time, they are placed in a fictional habitat to generate a sense of reality. This "authentic" image is shaped by the curator Brandmüller, and the knowledge and ideas of the time. The fictionality of these dioramas is hidden behind the seemingly "natural" and "authentic" presentation of the animal bodies. In the following paragraphs, I will further examine how the scientific knowledge and museum practices of the time influenced the exhibition style of the Alfeld Museum.

Figure 2 | Municipal Museum Alfeld, Diorama, group of baboons.

Figure 3 | The "Africa-Diorama" in Alfeld's *Tiermuseum*.

The "Biological Turn" at the Roots of the Exhibition Style

Brandmüller's way of presenting nature and animals cannot be understood without reference to the reform movement of the German natural history museums in the late 19th century. Natural history museums were simultaneously authors and objects of a paradigmatic shift: the scientific focus shifted from taxonomy to biology, and with it, the style of exhibition also changed.[33] Where previously a sober systematic alignment of natural history objects was the fashion, a preference for staged groups of animals prevailed. This "biological turn" around 1900 was triggered by new scientific findings. The best-known new established forms of representation were so-called "biological groups" and dioramas.[34] The former set out to represent the "life" of animals. Therefore, "biological groups" were supposed to show where animals lived, what they ate, and their offspring, as well as the different stages of aging. These representations also contained plants, soil and stone, and aimed to simulate an "authentic" depiction of the animal in their natural habitat.[35]
To this aim, scientists tried to determine ranges of distributions of animals, thus defining clearly separate regions with their stereotypical animals.[36] The idea of defined regions connected to characteristic animals proved to be an especially persistent scientific base for the re-organisation of exhibitions, and proved equally attractive to visitors.[37] Alongside the rearrangement from clear systematic taxonomy to staged group arrangement, taxidermy was an important factor in the "biological turn". Taxidermy made it possible to form the animal bodies around a core of clay, wood, straw, mesh, or plaster and to create an allusion of corporeality, movement, and liveliness. This form of presentation became dominant in German natural history museums without bigger disputes or controversies.[38]

A further development or subcategory of these "biological groups" were dioramas, featuring not only the direct surroundings of one species, but whole landscapes.[39] In German natural history museums, the focus was laid on smaller "biological groups" that became the dominant form of presentation – in contrast to the USA and Sweden, where the wider presentations of whole landscapes in the form of dioramas became the norm.[40] Both forms were – and are – far from authentic. They need to be seen as constructed illusions of animals in their habitat, located in between fact and fiction, which are highly idealised; e.g., only healthy animals without any "unsatisfied"

characteristics were deemed suitable to represent their conspecifics.[41] While these forms of presentation were highly innovative at the beginning, they became dominant and therefore more and more static. Exhibition styles were scarcely revised and determined display in natural history museums for decades to come, and in some cases, up until today.[42]

It is thus no surprise that we can still find the same exhibition style in Alfeld. After all, it is a small local museum at the periphery. Many of the aforementioned aspects can be found here, too: animals are supposed to represent their kind. The dioramas were created to depict geographical regions through the display of their "characteristic" animals, and the surroundings at least evoke the impression that an "authentic" habitat was meant to be presented. Additionally, the chosen positions depict the animals as seemingly alive. As previously mentioned, different species are displayed alongside each other even if their proximity would not occur in their habitats. One scene showcases a "hunting" moment, further purporting the illusion of liveliness and authenticity. All of these exhibition choices are at once representative of the time they were created in as well as of the therein constructed vision of "nature". However, the question of why Brandmüller chose the less-widespread dioramas over the more popular (in Germany) "biological groups" remains unanswered, as no accounts of Brandmüller's are preserved.

Colonial Gaze and Heteronormativity in Natural History Museums

Seeing that the display methods of many natural history museums have not changed fundamentally, it is important to ask what remnants of the 19th-century scientific discourse remain. The roles of 19th-century natural history museums within colonial mindsets are slowly being debated. As Das and Lowe elaborate, natural history museums transported ideas about the "hierarchies of races" and thereby scientifically legitimised global collecting strategies and colonial endeavours. A core element of these procedures were the exhibiting and "othering" of non-European people and regions. Since "race" as a biological category was disproved after the Second World War, the concept of "race" was removed from the museum plates. However, with it, the topics of racism and its socio-political consequences were erased from the debate as well. Colonial entanglements and forceful methods of science

were not mentioned either. Consequently, racist structures did not vanish from museums, they just became less visible. Implicitly, they still shape exhibition styles and the stories that are told, and determine what is silenced or rendered invisible.[43]

Natural history museums are not the only museums tied to a colonial and racist past,[44] but they are slower in reckoning with their legacy. Natural Sciences had been defined as "neutral" and, accordingly, "free of ideology", making them less obvious agents than, for instance, ethnographic museums. Nevertheless, natural history museums played a crucial role in spreading and legitimising the now falsified ideas of "race sciences", a fact that is often not addressed in current exhibitions.[45] What is more, the colonial contexts of collecting are commonly not part of the museal knowledge and presentation, which leads to selective and depoliticised stories about how these objects came to Europe, and in consequence, to a "provenance amnesia" (Holger Stoecker).[46] Colonial expeditions collected, purchased, and stole vast quantities of objects and specimens, even if the collection was not their primary concern. Those so neutrally called "expeditions" were most often linked to violence and to the subjugation of the local population.[47] Establishment of natural history museums and the imperial expansions thus belonged together, the former supposedly honouring the latter's assumed deeds, while colonial hierarchies allowed vast amounts of objects and animals to be amassed.[48] At the same time, scientific knowledge about different regions was necessary to enforce colonial power.[49] Collections were not only documenting landscapes, they also implied a claim over the region, even symbolising possession of it.[50] The omission of scientific racism and colonial entanglements from the official museum narratives reproduces colonial narratives and causes gaps in the museums' and collections' pasts and stories.[51]

Natural history museums worked with clear dichotomies that contributed to the "othering" of regions and people. They put reason in opposition to nature, male to female, human to animal, civilisation to wilderness. In many ways, today's museums still systematically present non-European cultures in this way, thereby reproducing colonial hierarchies. Natural history museums in particular followed 19th-century anthropological ideas. Non-Europeans were presented as part of nature, whereas Europeans stood for civilisation, enabling the differentiation between "us" and "them". Colonised regions and peoples were often naturalised and exoticised.[52]

Furthermore, exhibited taxidermic animals tell stories about the white people who brought their bodies to the museum. Mainly, the white male hunter is put centre stage. His adventures, the dangers he seemingly overcame, and the

wilderness and the rarity of these animals were crucial parts of the marketing strategy of the museums, as spectacular exhibits attracted visitors. [53] Therefore, racism was not only in the gaps between the displays, but also in the heroisation of the white man and in stories about his supposed superiority over nature. Moreover, circa 1900, German natural history museums contributed – alongside other types of museums – to the imperialistic discourse of "*Heimat*", a patriotic term for homeland. Most natural history museums in Germany at the time displayed taxidermy of regional animals that were meant to represent an illusion of the undamaged nature at home. This romantic idea of an ideal homeland was prioritised and exhibited initially. Mostly later on, representations of more remote areas were added. These displays were complementary and interrelated to each other, creating images of "the homeland" and "the colony" and thus, strengthening the hierarchical dichotomy.[54]

Many of these aspects – "provenance amnesia", dichotomies, othering, idealisation of the white agent, the concept of "*Heimat*" – can be found in the exhibition of Alfeld's *Tiermuseum*, too. In line with the fashion of the 1930s, the Alfeld Museum focused first on the representation of "*Heimat*", exhibiting taxidermically prepared regional animals. This was according to the aim to become a *Heimatmuseum* to the city and region. Only afterwards and with larger display space available could non-European animals move in and accordingly were seen as complementary to the "homeland" animals. The separation between "homeland" and the "exotic" had a spatial component, too: the two collections were displayed in two different houses, furthering the "othering" aspect. This opposition may have emphasised the dualism of "us" and "them" to the visitors. Additionally, the exhibition of ethnographica from non-European peoples alongside animals in the *Tiermuseum* contributes to the falsely assumed idea that these artifacts would somehow belong more to nature than to civilisation.

In the accompanying exhibition material that was added in the 1990s, the focus was laid on the Alfeld protagonists, especially on taxidermist and founder Alois Brandmüller. His biography is presented alongside a portrait and another photo of him at his desk where he is studying a human skull. It emphasises his scientific aspirations while at the same time stressing the close entanglements between rationality, natural history, and the racist anthropological study of humans. This connection, however, is not further contextualised. The other plates introduce the two trading companies (and their European protagonists) and detail their hunting procedures. Combined with the big taxidermies of crocodiles that are on the ceiling in the staircase –

hovering over and gazing at the visitors – and the emphasised focus on the rare, now extinct Tasmanian tiger, the narrative of a wild, potentially threatening (and at the same time vanishing) nature that is opposed to European civilisation is enforced. Those narratives strengthen the idea that science and the hunt by white men would conquer those animals and nature. In much the same vein, the other dioramas reduce whole continents to naturalised groups of animals who are themselves idealised and stereotyped. The dioramas are not telling stories about the colonial entanglements of the collecting, but they represent one-sided interpretations of a multifaceted space.

Some of the animal specimens, especially monkeys and primates, are arranged in families or in groups of mothers with their offspring. There are also masculine animals who seem more aggressive and protective of their group. In some cases, it could also be the mother animal who fiercely defends her offspring. In that way, dioramas and "biologic groups" showcase heteronormativity and gender roles. Animals were – and often still are – presented as families, consisting of father, mother, and offspring, but these presented families probably did not exist in real life. Even if the individual animals' stories cannot be reconstructed, it seems unlikely that they lived and died together before being shown in the dioramas, given that Brandmüller collected the animal bodies over a prolonged period and on various occasions. This underlines how this arrangement follows patriarchal norms and roles of the idealised family that was seen as the origin of life. The idea that the family represents the ideal shelter filled with love and care was reinforced and promoted to the visitors. Accordingly, the animal groups symbolised social relations between men and women, children and elders, friends and foes. The imagined inner safe space could easily be extended to the nation and homeland.[55] These political as well as social categories were staged as "natural" and thereby legitimised, as well in the case of the *Tiermuseum*.[56]

Forgotten Agents: Gaps and Silences in the Museum

To fully examine the museum's exhibition, it is crucial to consider not only the stories told, but also the gaps and silences these narratives produce. Silences need to be seen – according to Rhiannon Mason and Joanne Saynor – as performative and productive, and therefore as being an integral part of

communicated knowledge.[57] Consequently, being left out denies the individual recognition and can lead to their erasure from collective memory. Recent museum studies have detailed how less privileged voices in society are often excluded on a structural basis from museum narratives.[58] Natural history museums are no exception. The skills, knowledge, and scientific contribution of Indigenous actors are seldomly fully acknowledged and their names and biographies often obliviated – even though the colonial and collecting endeavours relied heavily on them.[59] Equally, animal hunters mention Indigenous aid only in passing as "loyal helpers"; achievements were mostly attributed to the so-called leader of the mission. [60] These gaps and silences are hard to recover since this information was not preserved. Not only exhibitions, but also archives followed a colonial logic. Their pre-selection of facts and objects influenced and guided – sometimes unconsciously – the narratives in the museums.[61]

This negligence can also be seen in the histories around the animal trading companies in Alfeld. The role of non-European actors cannot be underestimated (Fig. 4): They were crucial for the acquisition, capture, and transport of the animals, and many continued to care for them in Germany, too. Non-European actors often travelled back and forth from the regions of capture to the destination where the animals were to be sold.[62] Yet, while their help was necessary for the trade to work, they are, for the most part, scarcely mentioned in sources and by extension, in today's exhibition. An exception are photographs that depict the hunt of a giraffe and a zebra. These photos show that during capture, the physical work of Indigenous agents was required, though further contextualisation of these images is missing. However, the importance of Indigenous help for capturing animals in general is mentioned in the texts, though there is no further information on their personal stories, nor on their involvement in the transport and care for the animals. In consequence, beyond their "usefulness" for the hunt, their individual agendas and biographies disappear.

Another often-criticised aspect of natural history museums is that information on non-white humans or their objects is frequently presented alongside fauna and flora of the regions. This reinforces the dichotomy between civilisation and nature, placing non-Europeans closer to nature.[63] Sadly, Alfeld, too, shows non-European ethnographica only in the *Tiermuseum*, thus aligning them with flora and fauna (as opposed to being shown alongside the European artefacts that can be found in the main complex). The objects

Figure 4 | This photograph shows the hunt and is presented in the *Tiermuseum*. A remodelling of the exhibition is planned for 2024. © Museum der Stadt Alfeld

are not further contextualised, and information on the places and peoples from whom they were taken is lacking. A possible hint on the provenance of these objects is a photograph of Ruhe employee Alfred Glenewinkel, who most likely brought them as souvenirs from his trips to South America. Even if this connection remains vague, the photograph links these objects back to only the "collector". Not unusual for exhibition foci of the 1990s in regional museums, the *Tiermuseum*, too, misses the chance to critically engage with the missing information.

The stereotypical way of presenting non-white agents next to "primitive" practices or "nature" did not stop at the museum. Animal companies such as Reiche and Ruhe also engaged in the display of live animals in zoological gardens and organised several "*Völkerschauen*".[64] These shows instated colonial gazes and reinforced "racial" and cultural hierarchies.[65] Andratschke and Müller illustrate how in the case of Reiche and Ruhe, objects, animals and humans were all part of the same shows and how, consequently, provenance research will help to untangle these histories and to understand them better.[66] Meanwhile, "*Völkerschauen*" are mentioned only briefly in the Alfeld

exhibition. Their story is not omitted, even though it is presented solely from an economic point of view, and only the animal trading companies are presented as agents. A critical assessment of their colonial and racist history is missing, as are the imperial networks they worked in. Also, the imperial networks linked to the animal trade[67] are (as of now) not mentioned in the exhibition.

Another perspective is absent in the museum which might not spring to mind immediately. It is the stories and biographies of the exhibited animals themselves and their agency and role within the trade.[68] In this respect, many natural history museums today (and museums in general) do not consider the perspective and role of animals in society – except for dedicated exhibitions. In the case of the Alfeld trade, it would be especially worthwhile to examine their role more closely. Their "embodied agency" (Gesine Krüger) influenced and interfered with the trade in multiple ways, e.g., through resistance or through their death.[69] Accordingly, animal reactions needed to be considered and trade practices adapted. As their life was linked to the profit of the enterprise, their survival and well-being was of utmost importance. Their corporality rendered it impossible to treat them like mere commodities.[70] The exhibition offers a glimpse into the plight of the animals as well as how they resisted their capture and suffered under the living conditions and the transport. The trade also had a high mortality rate, resulting in many animals dying before even reaching European shores.[71] Looking more closely at them individually would open up new stories. As the *Tiermuseum* focuses on them as representations of nature and species, very much like natural history museums at the beginning, these histories are buried. The dioramas only express human imaginations about nature, but they do not represent the animal. Their individual stories, resistances, and suffering remain unknown to us. To include the individual biographies of the specimens would be a chance to show the vast global networks of the animal trade and the often-violent human-animal-interactions. To this end, the dioramas could then be deconstructed and seen more easily as a testimony of the human society of that time, instead as representative of an authentic nature.

Conclusion and Prospects

The Alfeld wildlife trade was deeply entangled in colonial contexts, a fact that is not highlighted enough in the exhibition of the *Tiermuseum* that was reworked in the 1990s. The dioramas and the simultaneous display of ethnographic objects inadvertently replicates the implicit colonial gaze. This is not surprising as the exhibition style can be related back to the "biological turn" and the modernisation processes in 19th-century natural history museums. The dualism and the simplifications of nature and non-European regions reproduce racism, too, by failing to include the agency of non-European actors. Furthermore, including a focus on animal agency would allow for new approaches to this complicated history. At the current state, the lack of either of these perspectives leaves room only for a strong focus on the white male animal hunters, traders, and scientists.

To battle the status quo means to shift the focus – toward the colonial aspects. This opens up the webbed trading networks that not only heavily depended on colonial infrastructure, but also on the help of Indigenous people and animals. Deepening these histories will help visitors to comprehend the full historical context of the dioramas. The colonial aspects of the global wildlife trade in the late 19th and 20th centuries should be established as the context of formation of the *Tiermuseum* and its collection. While it is often argued that dioramas are in themselves documents of the museum's history,[72] their implicit messages and the power of their images need to be scrutinised, deconstructed, and clearly communicated to the visitors. To follow Das and Lowe's demand, the history of Natural Sciences and natural history museums should be told including their colonial legacy. Indigenous people's contribution to scientific knowledge as well as their agency should be made visible, and the provenance of the collections examined.[73]

Yet, a shift in focus can only go so far: sources and information to include new perspectives are lacking, as the archive and the preservation of historical sources are also shaped by colonial thinking, which makes it hard to reconstruct them – also in Alfeld's case. Additionally, research and rearranging require resources which are often scarce in small museums. Despite these challenges, the museum of Alfeld actively took measures in order to meet these demands. A first major step was to include the history of the animal trade in the *Tiermuseum* for the re-opening in 1996, even if this – as detailed above –

is still wrapped up in the colonial past of the collection. To move beyond this, the museum allowed for so-called "First Checks" to be conducted in its collections in 2016 and 2019, examining whether there were possible Nazi loot in its depots.[74] With a long-term project dedicated to researching the origins of the taxidermy collections, further contextualisation is on the way.[75]

An important next step is to consider how these findings can be incorporated into the exhibitions, and thus be communicated to the public. Countering the colonial gaze should be paramount. In the special case of Alfeld, the ethnographic and natural history objects need to be seen as interconnected, especially because they are in part exhibited jointly, categorising the non-European cultures falsely along with fauna and flora. First steps could be to include the perspective of non-European agents and secondly animals' biographies, thereby also challenging the currently persisting focus on the agency of white men. What is more, the artificiality of the dioramas and the illusion of an untouched and pristine nature should be deconstructed. These steps would help to counter the outdated narratives that still prevail in today's exhibition style of the museum. The museum's openness to dialogue, actions in addressing its past, and interest in adapting the current exhibition (which is planned for 2024) give hope for a more complete representation of the collection's history in the future – a striking feat for a small museum.

1 „Wilde Tiere ganz aus der Nähe", translation by the author. Stadt Alfeld (Leine) (Ed.): Tiermuseum - Alfeld (Leine), on: *Website Stadt Alfeld (Leine)*, https://www.alfeld.de/leben-lernen/stadtmuseum-tiermuseum/tiermuseum, accessed 19 November 2023.
2 „Große und kleine Besucher fühlen sich in die afrikanische Savanne versetzt, wenn sie Kraniche am Wasserloch beobachten, sie sehen Tiger durch den indonesischen Dschungel schleichen und entdecken bunte Papageien in Südamerika", translation by the author. Ibid.
3 Hoes, Charlotte Marlene (2021): *Zwischenbericht* (unpublished), Deutsches Zentrum für Kulturgutverluste, Proveana Database, p. 3.
4 Andratschke, Claudia; Müller, Lars (2021): "'Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände.' Die Alfelder Tierhändler Reiche und Ruhe als Ausstatter von Völkerschauen", in: Lars Frühsorge, Sonja Riehn, Michael Schütte (Eds): *Völkerschau-Objekte. Beiträge der Tagung vom 27. bis 29.10.2020 in Lübeck*, Lübeck, p. 131–143, here 131f.
5 Ibid., p. 141. For more information on the history of these two animal trading companies, see also the introduction to this volume by Charlotte Hoes.
6 Das, Subhadra; Lowe, Miranda (2018): "Nature Read in Black and White: Decolonial Approaches to Interpreting Natural History Collections", in: *Journal of Natural Science Collections,* vol. 6, p. 4–14, here 5f.
7 Barringer, Tim (1998): "The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project", in: Tim Barringer, Tom Flynn (Eds): *Colonialism and the Object. Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum*, London; New York [Museum meanings], p. 11–27, here 11.
8 Ibid., p. 11.
9 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 6.
10 Howie, Geraldine (2015): "Dioramas as Constructs of Reality: Art, Photography, and the Discursive Space", in: Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, Annette Scheersoi (Eds): *Natural History Dioramas. History, Construction and Educational Role*, Dordrecht, p. 39–65, here 62.
11 Gravenkamp, Ina (1996): *Museum der Stadt Alfeld. Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, Alfeld (Leine), p. 11.
12 Scheidegger, Tobias (2017): *'Petite Science'. Außeruniversitäre Naturforschung in der Schweiz um 1900*, Göttingen, p. 29–31.
13 Gravenkamp (1996): *Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, p. 11.
14 This collection was not preserved until today.
15 Gravenkamp (1996), *Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, p. 11.
16 Riemenschneider, Christian (2019): *Abschlussbericht. Nach dem Erstcheck – Provenienzforschung zu Verdachtsfällen und ausgewählten Beständen in den Stadt- und Regionalmuseen Südniedersachsens. Das Heimatmuseum Duderstadt und das Stadt- und Tiermuseum Alfeld an der Leine*, Göttingen, p. 277.
17 Gravenkamp (1996), *Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, p. 9. Glenewinkel, an employee of the Ruhe company, reports in his memoirs that he helped Brandmüller as his former student to prepare animals. See Glenewinkel, Alfred (1983): *Zoodirektor Alfred Glenewinkel erzählt!* (unpublished), Mallorca, p. 15.
18 Hoes (2021), *Zwischenbericht*, p. 24. Hermann Ruhe II himself states in his memoirs explicitly that Brandmüller received deceased animals from the company. See Ruhe, Hermann (1960): *Wilde Tiere frei Haus*, München, p. 201.
19 Hoes (2021), *Zwischenbericht*, p. 24.
20 Gravenkamp (1996), *Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, p. 11.
21 Andratschke; Müller (2021), *„Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände"*, p. 131f.
22 Especially in their self-promotion, but also supported by contemporary testimonies, they claimed to be the biggest animal trader in the world. Hoes, Charlotte Marlene (2022): "Live Cargo, Dead Ends: The German Wildlife Trade in Global Perspective", in: *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute,* vol. 70, p. 67–96, here 73.
23 "[…] immer die ganze Bürgerschaft in Aufregung [brachte]." Translation by the author. Glenewinkel (1983), *Zoodirektor Alfred Glenewinkel erzählt!*, p. 10.
24 Ibid.

25 Hoes outlines the heroism and focus on the own success in the reports or memoirs of the men engaged in the animal trade. See Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 68.
26 Gravenkamp (1996), *Sammlung exotischer Tierpräparate*, p. 9.
27 Nyhart, Lynn K. (2018): "Publics and Practices", in: Helen Anne Curry, Nicholas Jardine, James Andrew Secord, Emma C. Spary (Eds): *Worlds of Natural History*, Cambridge, p. 335–347, here 347.
28 Hoes (2021), *Zwischenbericht*, p. 33.
29 On these projects, see Hoes (2021), *Zwischenbericht;* Neef, Josefine (2021): *Klärung der Herkunft von menschlichen Überresten, vermutlich Aboriginal ancestral remains, im Museum der Stadt Alfeld* (unpublished), Deutsches Zentrum für Kulturgutverluste, Proveana Database; Riemenschneider (2019), *Nach dem Erstcheck*.
30 Stadt Alfeld (Leine), *Tiermuseum*.
31 Informations on the animals are only provided next to the big specimen who are presented in the hallway.
32 Samida, Stefanie (2011): "'Inszenierte Wissenschaft'. Einführung in die Thematik", in: Stefanie Saminda (Ed.): *Inszenierte Wissenschaft. Zur Popularisierung von Wissen im 19. Jahrhundert*, Bielefeld, p. 11–23, here 12f.
33 The term "biological" dominantly referred to the way of animal life between 1840 and 1900 and therefore needs to be understood accordingly in this context. Köstering, Susanne (2003): *Natur zum Anschauen. Das Naturkundemuseum des deutschen Kaiserreichs 1871–1914*, Köln, p. 108.
34 Ibid., p. 1–3.
35 Kretschmann, Carsten (2006): *Räume öffnen sich. Naturhistorische Museen im Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, p. 84f.
36 The definite amount and borders of these animal geographic regions were still object of scientific dispute. Most of the German Natural History Museums oriented themselves according to "The Geographical Distribution of Animals" from A.R. Wallace (1876). He established six regions which each had four subregions: the Palaearctic region (Northern Europe, Mediterranean, Siberia, Manchuria), the Ethiopian region (East, West, and South Africa, Madagascar), the Oriental region (Central India, Ceylon, Indochina, Indo-Malaya), the Australian region (Austro-Malaya, Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia), the Neotropical region (Antilles, Brazil, Chile, Mexio), and the Nearctic region (California, Eastern USA, Canada). Ibid., p. 81.
37 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 97; Kretschmann (2006), *Räume öffnen sich*, p. 81.
38 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 167–169.
39 Kretschmann (2006), *Räume öffnen sich*, p. 84f.
40 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 173.
41 Howie (2015), *"Dioramas as Constructs of Reality"*, p. 62.
42 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 280f.
43 This paragraph is mainly based on Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 5f.
44 Supplementary to other studies focusing on Natural History Museums, Aldrich demonstrates this also for „colonial museums" which needed a realignment after formal decolonisation that lead at first to the complete eradication of the colonial past and the topic itself. See Aldrich, Robert (2009): "Colonial Museums in a postcolonial Europe", in: *African and Black diaspora,* vol. 2, no. 2, p. 137–156, here 143.
45 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 7.
46 Holger Stoecker establishes this term in his analysis of the exhibition of the *Brachiosaurus brancai* in the Natural History Museum in Berlin. Translation by the author. See Stoecker, Holger (2018): "Ein afrikanischer Dinosaurier in Berlin. Der *Brachiosaurus brancai* als deutscher und tansanischer Erinnerungsort", in: Christiane Berh (Ed.): *Umstrittene Objekte*, Essen, p. 65–83, here 78.
47 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 6.
48 Aldrich (2009), *Colonial Museums in a Postcolonial Europe*, p. 138.
49 Adams, William M.; Mulligan, Martin (2003): "Introduction", in: William M. Adams, Martin Mulligan (Eds): *Decolonizing Nature. Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*, London, p. 1–15, p. 1–4.

50 Gröpl, Myriam (2021): "Von kolonialen Sammlungen und Dekolonisierungsversuchen. Das (ehemalige) Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg als (post-)kolonialer Erinnerungsort", in: Jürgen Zimmerer, Sebastian Todzi (Eds): *Hamburg. Tor zur kolonialen Welt. Erinnerungsorte der (post)kolonialen Globalisierung,* vol. 1, Göttingen, p. 279–292, here 290.
51 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 8.
52 This paragraph is mainly based on Rodriguez, Julia E. (2020): "Decolonizing or Recolonizing? The (Mis) Representation of Humanity in Natural History Museums, in: *History of Anthropology Review online,* vol. 44, https://histanthro.org/notes/decolonizing-or-recolonizing/, accessed 25 November 2023.
53 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 204f.
54 Kretschmann (2006), *Räume öffnen sich*, p. 273–275.
55 This paragraph is mainly based on Kretschmann (2006), *Räume öffnen sich*, p. 290 and Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 278.
56 Köstering (2003), *Natur zum Anschauen*, p. 278.
57 Mason, Rhiannon; Sayner, Joanne (2019): "Bringing Museal Silence into Focus. Eight Ways of Thinking about Silence in Museums", in: *International Journal of Heritage Studies,* vol. 25, no. 1, p. 5–20, here 6f.
58 Ibid.
59 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 8.
60 Haraway has illustrated this for Carl Akeley in 1984. See Haraway, Donna (1984): "Teddy Bear Patriarchy. Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936", in: *Social Text,* vol. 11, p. 20–64, here 49–51.
61 Stoler, Ann Laura (2002): "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance", in: *Archival Science,* vol. 2, p. 87–109, here 90f.
62 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 72; 81.
63 Rodriguez (2020), *Decolonizing or Recolonizing?*
64 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 74.
65 Susann Lewerenz analysed that these strategies didn't always work out, also because actors were interfering and using their limited room for maneuver. See Lewerenz, Susann (2007): "Völkerschauen und die Konstituierung rassifizierter Körper", in: Torsten Junge, Imke Schmincke (Eds): *Marginalisierte Körper. Zur Soziologie und Geschichte des Körpers*, Münster, p. 135–153, here 135–138.
66 Andratschke; Müller (2021), *"Menschen, Thiere und leblose Gegenstände",* p. 140f.
67 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 94.
68 Human-Animal-Studies argue that, since animals are an important part of our society, we need to examine the relations and interactions between humans and other animals in order to fully understand the inner workings of our society. Thereby, animals should be regarded as agents that have the ability to produce their own history. See Chimaira-Arbeitskreis für Human-Animal Studies (2011): *Human-Animal Studies. Über die gesellschaftliche Natur von Mensch-Tier-Verhältnissen,* Bielefeld, p. 18–20.
69 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 89.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 94.
72 Hutterer, Rainer (2015): "Habitat Dioramas as Historical Documents. A Case Study", in: Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, Annette Scheersoi (Eds): *Natural History Dioramas. History, Construction and Educational Role*, Dordrecht, p. 23–32, here 29; Munsch, Mareike et al. (2015): "Conservative Restoration and Reconstruction of Historical Natural History Dioramas", in: Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, Annette Scheersoi (Eds): *Natural History Dioramas. History, Construction and Educational Role*, Dordrecht, p. 114–130, here 128f.
73 Das; Lowe (2018), *Nature Read in Black and White*, p. 11f.
74 Riemenschneider (2019), *Nach dem Erstcheck*, p. 16.
75 Initiated by the museum itself, a research project was conducted in cooperation between the museum, the Network for Provenance Research in Lower-Saxony and the Chair for Modern History at the Georg August University in Göttingen.

Contributions

Global Capital, Local Animal

Some Notes on the Elephant Trade in Colonial Southeast Asia

Global Capital, Local Animal

Some Notes on the Elephant Trade in Colonial Southeast Asia

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Abstract

Studies of the wildlife trade often take a global ambit. In this essay I argue that, alongside this planetary scale, in order to better understand the colonial transformations that were attendant to the sale of animals, historians should pay close attention to the local contexts for the capture and sale of nonhuman creatures. Such a focus enables a keener analysis of the ways animals were commodified and the role of subordinated human labour in the trade. The case of the elephant trade in British dominated southeast Asia during the 1910s provides a rich example to explore these processes and through which to demonstrate the utility of a local focus.

Small Histories of the Colonial Animal Trade

The trade in wildlife, particularly in its illegal forms, is mostly framed in scholarship as being transnational and intercontinental in scope. There are compelling reasons for this geographic focus in our current moment. The capture, movement, and use of endangered animals is widely understood as a threat to conservation efforts as well as a source of emergent new diseases for humans.[1] The former is underscored by the growing recognition that we are living through a socio-ecological crisis of biodiversity depletion amounting to a Sixth Extinction.[2] The latter has come into sharp focus following outbreaks of Ebola and swine flu, and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. These are inherently planetary problems. In addition to these contemporary imperatives, the global focus of studies may also be due to the wide spatial framing of research into the history of particular commodities. Historical examinations of certain goods – perhaps most famously cotton, tea, and sugar – have drawn out the world-spanning networks of activities entailed in cultivating, commercialising, and consuming them; arrangements that were overseen and orchestrated by modern imperial formations that were themselves sustained by the resulting practices and profits.[3] Animals have started to be included among the histories of goods enrolled in the making and expansion of imperialism.[4] In the light of this it may seem counterintuitive to encourage a focus on local contexts and the movement of animals over comparatively short distances. But, in this essay, this is precisely my intention.

To understand the relationship between colonialism and the traffic in animals fully, it is necessary to first uncover how it was that certain species of nonhuman creatures came to be tradeable at all. In other words, we need to be alert to the material and imaginative processes through which sentient beings became rendered into commodities. We also need to be attentive to the political economic arrangements that fostered markets where these captive living commodities could be bought and sold. Only then can we appreciate the foundational arrangements that made the trade in wildlife possible.

Much of the focus of historical studies on the capture or killing of animals under auspices of the British Empire is on the movement and eventual use of their bodies, particularly when their destination was located in the metropole. The appearance of living exhibits of Asian and African fauna in

Europe and North America, in zoos or travelling shows, or more banally as pets, has attracted a considerable scholarship.[5] So, too, has the history of hunting and the subsequent circulation of 'exotic' animal remains often incorporated into new commodities, such as ivory piano keys or macabre furniture, and sometimes transformed into scientific specimens, artefacts that now crowd the storage rooms of museums.[6] At their best, these studies reveal the cultural roles played by animals as they contributed to novel discourses and dispositions in imperial societies.[7] More mundanely, perhaps, historians of empire have also examined the movement of livestock animals, whose flesh sated imperial hungers and whose rearing sometimes wrought ecological transformations.[8] Less work delves into the knotty histories of animals' commodification and sale, save for some literature on the intermediary oceanic entrepôts where creatures from colonised hinterlands passed through, such as Singapore.[9]

Without wanting to diminish the importance of such studies, which are demonstrably valuable in themselves, the primacy accorded to circulation and consumption in the field makes it difficult to discern the deeper changes that are attributable to colonial rule. There are several unanswered, or perhaps unasked, questions when it comes to colonial animal trading. What continuities existed between pre-colonial and colonial trading practices and animal knowledges?[10] To what extent did the animal trade necessitate new or altered relations between colonised humans and animals? To what extent were practices of capturing and selling animals for an imperial market 'embedded' in colonised society? And how sustained and sustainable were these relations and practices? In some ways, these questions challenge historians to get closer to the lives of the subaltern peoples who worked closely in the trade. This has been a longer challenge in the historiography, where there has been something of a tendency to focus on the experience of the animal at the expense of the humans they lived alongside.[11] This is a tendency that is being redressed by historians, particularly where colonised humans and large predator creatures have been placed in greater proximity and antagonism.[12] In the context of British India, excellent work has been done exploring how the physical vulnerabilities of animals contributed to the economic precarity of human livelihoods.[13] These studies are of particular value for our discussion, as they draw attention to the forms of subaltern dependence on animals that either emerged or were embedded by the experience of colonialism. But as intrinsically valuable recovering the lives of marginalised peoples is, the redirection of attention to local contexts has useful additional implications

for shedding more light on both the lives of the animals involved in the animal trade, as well as for expanding the ambit of the activities we consider to have been a part of the animal trade.

To start with the animals, focusing on the capture and *in situ* sale of wildlife over its long-distance transportation and imperial consumption reminds us that most of these animals were not born commodities but became commoditised through the work of others. Nicole Shukin's now classic work, *Animal Capital*, makes precisely this point amongst its many generative theoretical contributions to Animal Studies. The deceptive appearance of animals as naturally occurring beings can mask the often-complex material arrangements that made their reproduction for human use possible, at the same time hiding the cultural work necessary to cast creatures in an anthropocentric naturalism.[14] These processes of naturalisation might be even further heightened with undomesticated or rare creatures not subject to mass-scale breeding or marketing. It might seem self-evident that, as apparently 'wild' creatures, lions or parrots are ahistorical animals, in spite of their accelerating historical entanglement in human affairs during the last century and a half.[15] Focusing on the labour involved in turning wildlife into commodities reminds us that living, sentient beings are unique forms of commodity with often species-specific needs and individual capabilities. A wild animal is never a readymade product. Often, capturing is not enough to prepare the creatures for the market. Factors such as docility, health, size, gender, and familiarity with humans might all shape the price of a captured creature, or even determine whether they could be sold at all. The bodily characteristics, abilities and capacities of animals were salient factors in shaping how they were commoditised, and focusing on the local contexts of capture and sale enables historians to keep these factors in their sights.

As well as centring subaltern human labour and encouraging an attunement to the commoditisation of animals, the focus on the local can also expand the ambit of what is encompassed by the animal trade. In some cases, the trade in certain species was ancillary to a wider economic activity. A commonly occurring example across the colonial world was the trade of oxen and buffalo to work in agricultural production, an essential part of peasant production even during the accelerated subsumption of cultivators to capitalism.[16] In other words, the trade of animals was not always to meet an imperial desire for the creatures *in and of themselves*, but for their utility in the making of other commodities. This might include their deployment as workers in labour processes (such as elephants in the timber industry) – what I have termed

elsewhere "undead capital" (of which more below) –, or the use of their bodily processes to produce raw materials (such as silk worms) – what has been described by others as "metabolic capital".[17] Including the trade in animals to service other imperial enterprises enables us to understand the multifarious drives behind the commoditisation of animals and to think about the animal trade not as a distinct and discreet activity, but as one integrated into a multitude of labour processes, commercial activities, and supply-chains.

By grounding our studies in local particularities, the complexity of colonial change can be better apprehended. It was not always unidirectional or intentional. While undoubtedly an important agent for change, imperial powers were rarely juggernauts capable of transforming the world to their whims. Notwithstanding the ways that colonialism frequently facilitated the expansion of capitalist extractivistism and monocultural plantations – all hallmarks of so-called "primitive accumulation" through which places were coercively brought into capitalist relations[18] – the requirements for animals in service of these industries exposed imperial commercial firms' reliance on subaltern peoples and their relations with nonhuman creatures. Colonised humans and animals contributed to what the anthropologist Anna Tsing has aptly called the "frictions" of global capitalism: the ubiquitous, uneven, asymmetrical contestations to the establishment of hegemonic social relations.[19] To illustrate the ways that, at times, the "dog" of global capital could be wagged by the "tail" of local animals – to borrow an Anglophone animal idiom – this essay looks at the case of working elephants in colonial southeast Asia.

Gentlemanly Capitalists, Animal Capital, Primitive Accumulation

The history of the trade in elephants in southeast Asia during the colonial era is one intimately connected to the timber industry. Across south and southeast Asia, Asian elephants have been captured from the wild and used for labour, transportation, military power, pageantry, and religious ceremonies for over a millennium. Thomas Trautmann has argued that the continuing utility of these powerful large mammals to pre-colonial polities was a significant factor in the survival of the species in the region, in contrast to their diminishing numbers in east Asia. As this suggests, living and working alongside captive elephants was already well established for significant populations in

pre-colonial southeast Asia.[20] The growing influence of imperially financed timber companies in both 19th century Myanmar and Thailand, ruled respectively by the Konbaung and Chakri dynasties, both built on and expanded these pre-existing relationships between humans and elephants. There are three concepts that are helpful to think through these changes: gentlemanly capitalism; animal capital; and primitive accumulation. In this section, I set out the emergence of a market for elephants as an aspect of British imperialism by examining these key concepts.

Tectona grandis, commonly known as teak, was the plant species that enticed British entrepreneurs into the forests of Myanmar and Thailand during the second half of the 19th century. This tropical hardwood was desired for its remarkable strength and durability, characteristics that lent it to shipbuilding, railway sleepers, and luxury furniture. The strategies through which imperial-financed firms, most prominently the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation run by the Scottish Wallace family, sought to get access to the tree have been productively characterised as "gentlemanly capitalism", following the work of Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins.[21] The term draws attention to the informal and kinship ties between British politicians and financiers that shaped imperial policies from London.[22] As Anthony Webster has shown, the manner through which British timber-firm owners with operations in Myanmar mobilised their connections in Parliament and the press to encourage the Government of India to colonise the remaining territory of the Konbaung regime is, in many ways, a quintessential example of gentlemanly capitalism.[23] The independent Burmese empire had already been significantly eaten away by the East India Company as a result of two expensive and, in the case of the second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, controversial wars. The Third and final Anglo-Burmese War was brought about in no small part due to the machinations of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation who took advantage of fines levelled against them by the Konbaung court for harvesting teak in excess of the terms of their leases to create a scandal about the oppression of the Burmese state – claims whose questionable veracity became something of a minor imperial scandal itself. While there was no such formal imperial expansion over the border with Thailand, the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation used its contacts in Westminster and the Government of India to facilitate structures that provided them with preferential access to the country's upland forests.[24] By the end of the 19th century, British timber firms had gained extensive long-term leases over swathes of forests in mainland southeast Asia.[25]

But getting favourable access to work the forests through upper-class political connections that linked the financial industry with parliament was only part of the job. The logistical arrangements for harvesting, transporting, and cutting the teak trees – then turning them into timbers – required animal capital: especially, elephant workers.[26] There was no better technology then elephants for extracting teak from the harder to reach forests of Myanmar and Thailand. Indeed, having the amounts of capital necessary to purchase substantial herds of elephants was one of the key factors that gave British timber firms a competitive advantage over smaller Burmese and Thai outfits. Elephants were deployed in almost all aspects of the teak industry. They were used to help fell the trees, to remove the logs from the forest, to transport the logs to the ports along the coast, and to manoeuvre the timbers in the firms' dockyards.[27] The elephants' strength, stamina, dexterity, and aptitude for working alongside humans made them irreplaceable and essential elements in the labour process. But as well as being vital assets (vital both in a sense of their importance and in the sense that they were living beings), elephants' biological needs placed constraints on the operations of the timber firms. They required access to adequate fodder and clean water for their consumption. They needed water to wash themselves. In addition, these highly social and intelligent creatures also had psychological needs that needed to be met, or at a minimum accounted for. This was most apparent in their training during which, through a regimen of privation and violence tempered by reward and care, these powerful creatures forged interspecies relationships with their drivers. Throughout elephants' lives the timber firms documented their behaviours to be able to manage them as individuals.[28] Within all this monitoring and control, a degree of freedom was permitted for these conscripted workers. When residing in the jungle camps where great teak trees were being felled, the elephant workforce was allowed to roam in the forests at night, albeit limited in their wanderings by fetters.[29] In these ways, working timber elephants represented a particular form of animal capital. Their value was found in the particular physical and mental characteristics and capabilities of their species, and, on this basis, they might be considered "lively capital".[30] However, they would not produce surplus capital of their own volition. They needed to be coerced and corralled into the labour process, and as such they required near constant attendant human labour to control and direct their activities. The working elephant was, in this sense, the product of spent labour that demanded ongoing labour to be productive, a status that Karl Marx described as being "constant capital", or occasionally, "dead

labour".[31] As both lively and dead capital, we might conceive of working elephants as "undead capital" – valued for their living traits but requiring the labour of others to tether their lives to commodity production.[32]

Bringing elephants and teak into market relations was not a simple process. Gentlemanly capitalists were not able to acquire their necessary animal capital easily. There were essential imaginative shifts and material arrangements to be made for this to occur,[33] and these shifts and arrangements required the firms to build connections with communities in the border-worlds of eastern Myanmar, western Thailand, and southwest China.[34] This was a border where the movement of commodities, both legal sales and illicit smuggling, brought increasingly bureaucratic states into diplomatic dialogue to demarcate and police borders, albeit without always establishing effective control.[35] The movement of elephants across these border-worlds can be thought of as part of this history. In this sense, the trade in elephants did not just cross borders, but contributed to the making of imperial borders. Attempts to monitor and restrict the movement of elephants entailed new border controls and technologies, such as track laws and elephant passports, which were introduced on the Myanmar-Thai border in the 1920s.[36]

This was a region that, due to its mountainous topography, was historically a space of resistance to the intrusion of powerful imperial polities, being a zone of refuge for some folks fleeing lowland dynastic authorities' demands for manpower.[37] These border-worlds were characterised by a patchwork of different ethno-linguistic groups, varying degrees of social stratification with and between groups (from monarchical Shan Sawbwa rulers to the more egalitarian forest Karen communities), and degrees of wider economic connections. Historians of the pre-colonial period in Myanmar have tended to view ethnic difference as a fluid category entangled with notions of political belonging.[38] The extent to which British rule altered this in terms of people's identities remains a point of debate,[39] but the encroachment of European timber firms into the border-worlds from the late-19th century marked an important shift in the political economy and ecology for some communities. The extensive leases to forests in these upland regions on either side of the embryonic border between Myanmar and Thailand brought about a growing conflict over resources between the timber firms' large-scale extractive activities and the indigenous communities longstanding use of the forest as a site of shifting agriculture, hunting, and the collection of natural materials; a clash between property and commons. This was compounded by the development of state forestry departments that sought to manage forest access and

use on self-consciously scientific principles, although these were marked by pejorative perceptions of local forest communities. In this process, some Karen communities were being alienated from their forests with the support of state power.[40] At the same time, the activities of the timber firms had developed a demand for wage labour in elephant camps to drive their animals and extract teak, a demand met by (mostly) men from those same displaced communities. This was "primitive accumulation": the expansion of capitalist relations through the acquisition of formerly commonly held resources through, in part, "extra-economic means".[41]

The juxtaposition of the adjectives "gentlemanly", "animal", and "primitive" *itself* reveals some of the tensions and apparent contradictions of the colonial teak industry in southeast Asia. The polite conversations in the rarefied atmosphere of London's clubs were entangled with the punitive raids of the Indian army on recalcitrant Shan rulers and unruly Karen villages, as well as the violent methods through which wild elephants were caught and conscripted. This was the context in which elephants became commodities and in which a local market for them was formed. Ritu Birla has argued with regards to the economic behaviours of Indian capitalists, following Karl Polanyi's foundational work, that the British Raj had to deploy its legal and material power in its attempts to inculcate the rationality of a market society – that is, a society governed and structured by market logics.[42] The same insight helps us to elucidate the arrangements for trading elephants in colonial southeast Asia. Even though a demand for elephants existed in the labour processes of the timber firms, a market for elephants did not spontaneously spring forth in response to it. In the next section of this paper, I look closely at the arrangements for the capture, buying, and selling of elephants between the 1910s and 1920s.

Purchasing an Elephant

The details of how timber firms acquired elephants is difficult to glean. For the period before 1914, the internal records of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation are incomplete and sparse when it comes to elephants. The official archives of the colonial state pick up on aspects of how the firms managed their elephants, albeit mostly where the firms' ownership of elephants

was either legally contested or directly challenged through theft. As a result of this paucity, this section focuses on the arrangements that were established during the 1910s, through which the Corporation built up a substantial herd of working elephants that it directly owned (although the previously prevalent practice of contracting a smaller number of elephants and foresters continued throughout the period, albeit significantly reduced). I contextualise this snapshot of the arrangements for purchasing elephants in the difficulties faced by the state and the firms in acquiring and keeping elephant workers that preceded this period. I then briefly sketch out the continuing challenges posed to the firms by the shifting local arrangements for capturing and selling elephants. The purpose of this case study is not to make a grand empirical claim regarding the elephant trade across time, but it is instead to illustrate the methodological utility of a focus on the local. In this case, it reveals the ways that colonised actors were able to successfully exert their own will on the considerably more wealthy and connected timber firms. At the same time, it shows the continued fragility of the arrangements for securing an elephant workforce, a fragility created in no small part due to the needs and capabilities of elephants themselves: namely, the changes across their life cycles and their ability to traverse long distances over difficult terrain.

During the 1870s and 1880s, the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation and others found themselves in jurisdictional disputes with the landlocked rump of the once great Konbaung Dynasty over elephants that it claimed had been stolen. On at least one occasion, a timber firm claimed that Burmese ministers were conniving with the thefts.[43] When the monarchy was deposed and the country annexed to British India in 1885–1886, these difficulties did not disappear. During the rebellions that broke out across Myanmar following annexation, elephants were frequently being stolen from the Corporation's herds and taken over the border with Thailand. Often, the elephants were taken over the restive Shan territories. The Corporation appealed to the Government of Burma to support their attempts to recover their lost animal capital over the border, mostly with little effect.[44] They also courted local powerbrokers, and their own agents, on occasion, installed themselves as representatives of Karen communities in the Corporation's attempts to secure its property rights in the border-worlds.[45] It is hard to be certain in the absence of documents but based on the patterns of growth within the industry and the numbers of elephants employed from the 1910s, it is possible that the Corporation's own herd was somewhere between five hundred and nine hundred elephants at around 1900. The centrality of what the

Corporation termed its "elephant power" to the firm's productivity, in addition to the value of the animal itself, meant that these thefts were keenly felt and a point of significant disquiet – particularly as the numbers of stolen elephants could be as many as 150, as it was in one case located in Karen-majority border regions.[46] Over the early-20th century greater controls on the movement of elephants between Myanmar and Thailand were established, although these were not well enforced and smuggling continued to be a perennial, if reduced, concern into the interwar years.[47] Nevertheless, the porosity of the border with Thailand was also beneficial to the Corporation, enabling them to frequently transfer elephants across from their Thai forests to work in their Burmese leases. While the centre of gravity for the Corporations' activities was Myanmar, the border-world that straddled the imperial boundary between Myanmar and Thailand was the nexus for the legal and illicit acquisition and movement of elephants by the start of the 20th century.

Documents from 1915 suggest that in the preceding years elephants had been purchased by the Corporation directly from local capturing firms. This arrangement was superseded in the 1910s by a growing reliance, even dependency, on an intermediary – for reasons that will be unpacked shortly. The teak trade was undergoing an acceleration during these opening decades of the century, creating a greater demand for elephants, a demand that was recognised by the colonial state which had hitherto been pessimistic about prospects of systematically capturing elephants for sale itself.[48] Building on the practices of the Konbaung Dynasty, the colonial regime claimed the right to all wild elephants in the territory.[49] There was thought to be such an abundance that the population was inexhaustible and that there was no need to enact elephant protection legislation that had been promulgated across the rest of British India, although this was eventually extended to British Burma, too.[50] In practice, the state delegated its right to capture wild elephants to local outfits through licences. But in the 1900s, the Government of India was so impressed by the opportunities to sell captive elephants to the teak industry in Myanmar as to move its entire elephant capturing operations to the colony. This was, however, an unmitigated failure that ended in a drawn out and embarrassing corruption scandal as the head of operation, one Ian Dalrymple-Clark, was found to have been faking the deaths of elephants in order to sell them to firms through his alter ego, Mr Green, thereby embezzling the profits. Nevertheless, even without these extensive and costly frauds, there was little benefit to the experiment. Crucially, the elephants that were captured by the state-run enterprise – some four hundred plus

animals, if the fraudulent documents can be trusted at all – when sold to timber firms had mortality rates of over fifty percent within the first two years after purchase. The kheddah method of capturing, which entails corralling the wild elephants into a wooden stockade, resulted in large numbers of captured animals being kept in inadequate conditions and with no arrangements for enabling them to acculturate to their new lives. They were weakened by outbreaks of disease, violence (both from being captured and from being captive among unfamiliar conspecifics), and listlessness.[51] It was unsurprising that the Corporation should turn to local actors to supply its growing demand for elephants, given this disastrous attempt by the state to commodify elephants and the logistical challenges of acquiring them in large numbers that it exposed.

This was an important moment in the development of the firm's elephant power and, consequently, in the scale of their teak extraction. The Corporation's early historians suggest that it was the firm's ability to corner the elephant market that provided it with a dominant position in the industry and enabled it to move away from relying on contracted foresters in its leased forests, instead employing its own staff and owning its own elephants.[52] Although I have not found an exact figure in the records, based on the numbers of purchases made between 1907 and 1918, by which time more reliable figures on the size of the herd are available, in 1906 they had no fewer than 1,084 elephants. By the end of 1918, they now owned approximately 1,900, not including those in Thailand. Factoring in mortality rates of an estimated five percent, this was a period of intensive elephant purchasing.[53] By the time of the Japanese occupation in 1942, the Corporation's elephant work force was not much higher than this figure, at 1,972.[54] Evidently, the early 1910s were a transitory phase of building up elephant power that remained fairly stable, with continued purchases amounting to roughly five hundred individuals throughout the 1920s and 1930s to maintain this strength.[55] Given that elephants live long lives, even in semi-captivity and despite the demanding conditions of timber extraction operations, that the 1910s purchases set the Corporation up for the next twenty years is perhaps not so surprising. According to the Corporation's accounts for its Burmese operations, excluding teak held as stock-in-trade, elephants represented the largest assets they owned for at least the period between 1919 and 1924. During this same period, they exported over half a million tons of teak from Myanmar alone.[56] Their elephant capital was evidently being exploited fully.

The early history of the elephant trade that supplied the teak industry – a history that, as we have seen, was marked by theft, smuggling, and corruption – reveals two important aspects of elephants that needed to be accommodated in the process of capturing them for sale. Elephants had physical and psychological needs that had to be met, requiring a degree of care in the unavoidably violent and traumatic process of capture. They were also highly mobile animal commodities, and securing possession of them in the febrile context of the Myanmar-Thailand border-worlds proved to be a perpetual challenge. The arrangements that the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation adopted for purchasing elephants during the 1910s allowed for the newly captured elephants' needs and was embedded in local communities, mitigating the risk of theft.

These arrangements hinged on one enterprising Burmese man called U Bah Oh. His ability to acquire batches of working elephants with docile temperaments and strong constitutions was looked upon with some wonder by the Corporation's in-country management. The extent to which the Corporation came to rely upon U Bah Oh for their elephants was a growing cause for concern during the late 1910s, particularly from managers located in Britain. There was also some worry that his operations had the effect of inflating prices in Thailand, as well as reorientating the local market to the Myanmar side of the border. But his elephant purchasing prowess was such that it overrode these concerns. He was engaged by the Corporation through a series of contracts during the 1910s, culminating in a contract to supply them with 120 elephants in 1917, with a further separate engagement with him to purchase up to fifty elephants from Assam in northeast India. U Bah Oh was evidently a capable negotiator, possibly aware of the strength of his position, and able to sell these animals to the Corporation for around 1,500 to 2,000 rupees above the estimated market price of around 6,000 rupees per animal. In addition, the Corporation provided him with capital for him to invest in his own elephant herd to enable him to meet the demands of the contract – a sign of their reliance on U Bah Oh's operations. As we shall see, U Bah Oh's own capital formation has its own wider historical effects.[57]

To persuade their managers in Britain of the efficacy and even the necessity of working with U Bah Oh, the Rangoon office of the Corporation wrote a detailed description of how his operation worked in May 1915. Their intention was to show the cost and complexity of U Bah Oh's operations so as to reassure their more remotely located colleagues that in agreeing to a contract for 140 elephants with him they were getting good value.

Nevertheless, they were still compelled to acknowledge that U Bah Oh, "makes a very fine profit" (emphasis in the original) and to concede that ultimately, "we cannot get him to do it for less."[58] This letter revealed the near monopoly that U Bah Oh held on knowledge of and networks for elephant care, and is perhaps also indicative of his monopoly on connections to the Corporation for Karen villagers. Having purchased elephants directly from elephant capturing firms from as far as Thailand and Assam, U Bah Oh would arrange for them to be looked after by Karen communities. He used the advances from the Corporation to pay 100 rupees annually to the village headmen of Karen villages in the borders to look after elephants, with similar payments being made to key villagers charged with looking after individual creatures. These payments were made after it was confirmed that the elephants were thriving. To oversee these arrangements, U Bah Oh also employed a man reportedly known as Hla Baw of Shwigyin at a rate of 50 rupees a month. U Bah Oh's operation worked, in effect, by tapping into the expertise of local communities with long experience of working alongside elephants and practiced in training them.[59] If contemporary elephant keeping practices among Karen mahouts are a guide to past practices, then a high degree of attenuated care and of freedom to roam were afforded to their charges.[60] At the same time, U Bah Oh's monetary incentives were commodifying these practices, revealing another route through which a cash economy was penetrating the border-worlds. But the key point is that this subtle further incorporation of Karen communities into capitalist relationships was not directly driven by the timber firms themselves. Instead, it was a result of the firm's inability, or at least unwillingness, to replicate U Bah Oh's network for looking after procured elephants themselves.

It was briefly mentioned in the letter that U Bah Oh's scheme and operations had recently expanded and were diversifying, and through this he moved out of the elephant capturing business. During the year he had acquired an elephant capturing operation from a man who had recently gone bankrupt.[61] While the details behind the failure of the previous operator's concern were not given, there were some self-evident risks in running elephant capturing operations. Kheddah operations required a team of trained elephants, which as we have seen could represent a significant outlay of capital. Nevertheless, this was an enterprise that some were able to make profitable. An example of this would be San Durmay Po, who during the interwar years had been able to acquire enough financial and social capital from capturing elephants to be considered a Karen man of some fame and

consequence. He became an advocate for Karen loyalist nationalism, a position perhaps best embodied in the gesture of sending a supposedly auspicious white elephant that his firm had captured to London, where the elephant took part in the British Empire exhibition in Wembley in 1924.[62] U Bah Oh's own trajectory was not dissimilar to this. At the end of the 1910s, he decided to move into the teak industry himself. While never rivalling the tight grip that British firms had on the sector, he was successful in establishing himself as a person of considerable means. Like San Durmay Po, he, too, used the position that he had established to finance a political advocacy group, in his case called the Burma Moslem Society, U Bah Oh being himself Muslim. His generous backing of this group, among the first to claim to represent this constituency in the colony, resulted in his being elected president for life in the mid-1930s, a time when anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence was on the rise in some urban centres.[63] U Bah Oh would have been all too familiar with these threats to personal security, as his timber operations had been attacked during the Hsaya San peasant rebellion in 1930 and dozens of his elephants seized.[64] These two brief biographies of people who were able to successfully accumulate capital from the ancillary economic activity of providing elephants for the teak industry indicate how funds could support a range of wider social and political movements.

With U Bah Oh out of the elephant purchasing business by 1920, the Corporation found itself intermittently entering the elephant market directly throughout the interwar years. Transfers of elephants from Thailand were frequently made, and there was some use of contracted foresters, although this, too, was difficult. Replenishing the working herds through captive-born calves was explored as a method of meeting some of the demand, but was deemed unprofitable, as it took other female elephants out of the labour process to care for the young animals in their juvenile years. Instead, calves were often sold or loaned out until they were old enough to work themselves. Even if the Corporation had been willing to absorb the gendered costs of what we might term 'social reproduction', these births would not have been sufficient to make up the losses of elephants through mortality. While their semi-captive state meant that working females did fall pregnant from wild elephants, research into contemporary Burmese timber elephants shows that the strenuous labour regime results in faster reproductive aging. And it was not just aging that reduced their elephant power. It is likely that the elephants were stressed by the labour regime, particularly in the hot season when natural fodder was

less available. Their strength and vulnerability to disease was heightened as a result. Bouts of anthrax were a recurring concern until a vaccine was successfully trialled and rolled out during the 1930s, the result of years of delicate negotiations. Discipline among the elephant herds was also a problem, particularly with male elephants in musth. In this often-frenzied state, even once docile individuals could become dangerous to their riders and other elephants. Maintaining an elephant work force was a constant challenge for the Corporation.[65]

The connection with Karen communities remained central to the Corporation's working practices, echoing the connections that were formed by U Bah Oh's network of Karen villagers. When confronted with the Hsaya San rebellion, the Corporation raised its own levies of Karen fighters to protect themselves.[66] But things were not always harmonious. There were tensions within the labour force, and at times the Corporation struggled to recruit Karen foresters.[67] The Corporation's arrangements for replenishing and keeping their herds fell apart dramatically as a result of the Japanese occupation in early 1942. The fleeing British managers left much of their nearly 2,000 elephants in the care of their drivers, but on return with the British reoccupation in 1944, fewer than half could be recovered. Approximately 200 had been taken over the border with Thailand and were being owned by villagers reluctant to return them, a situation that the Corporation and its fellow teak firms found intractable. Without being able to recover their working herds, their timber operations did not find anything close to their pre-War levels of productivity, in spite of some considerable support from the returning colonial state. Shortly after Myanmar attained its independence in 1948, the British timber firms – including the elephants – were nationalised.[68] Set in this longer sweep, the period during which the Corporation held its relationship with U Bah Oh represents the highwater mark of the teak industry's power to intervene and shape the economic context it operated within. Secure in its leases and replete in elephant power, they were able to extract teak at levels not previously witnessed. But even in this period, they found themselves dependent on a Burmese intermediary capable of mobilising local community connections to meet the needs of elephants in ways that they could not themselves, in order to supply them with their vital animal workers.

Tricks of the Trade

In a lively and vivid contribution to *The English Illustrated Magazine* in the summer of 1900, Charles Makin described the Kheddah method of capturing elephants and their subsequent training for a metropolitan audience. Passing quickly over the periodic sales where timber firms could purchase elephants, he nevertheless drew attention to the "tricks and subterfuges" that were apparently common to elephant-dealers. He noted that, "A vicious elephant, that by its very nature baffles all attempts to subdue it, is frequently heavily dosed with drugs before attempting to sell it."[69] This concern over the doping of elephants was echoed in imperial veterinarian George Evans' *Elephants and their Diseases*, published a decade later.[70] Regardless of the veracity of these claims – certainly, the use of opium to manage restive elephants was not unheard of in the period – these anxieties over purchasing elephants suggest broader unease at the firms' dependence on colonised peoples and the uncertainty of animal behaviours. The elephant trade, in one of its most active periods in southeast Asia, revealed an interdependence between colonised intermediaries able to acquire elephants to meet the timber firms' growing demand for animal capital. The arrangement put in place by the elephant-buyer U Bah Oh drew upon the skill and culture of Karen communities to ensure that his purchases were properly cared for and trained before they were sold on to work in forest camps. But this interdependence does not negate the asymmetries of colonial rule. Nor should it obscure the transformative role colonial interventions had on societies in the border-worlds of Myanmar and Thailand. The domination of the timber firms over forestry, as well as the resulting encroachment of market economics into the borders, were operating through these attenuated interconnections.

The trade in animals inevitably takes many forms, often entailing species-specific arrangements. In colonial contexts, this diversity is compounded by the nuances of the local intercultural dynamics to the trade, as well as the particulars of labour processes. But this complexity and contingency does not mean that historians are unable to identify deeper processes that may prove to be common across different contexts. There are two such insights that might be gleaned from this short history of the elephant trade in colonial southeast Asia. This first is that, although it was driven by the extractivist operations of imperial firms, the animal trade was one that generated

'friction' through the behaviours and needs of the creatures being traded and an unavoidable reliance on colonised peoples. The second is that the transformations brought about by the animal trade could be subtle and insidious rather than dramatic and overt. In this case, the effect was to introduce cash-incentives into practices of caring for elephants, furthering the commodification of the animals beyond the immediate spaces where they were bought, sold, and worked.

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Global Animal Dealers in Colonial Indonesia

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Abstract

During the 19th century, the increasing number of circuses, zoological gardens, and pet stores across the globe catalysed the global commerce of live animals. The latter part of the 1800s saw animal dealers from Europe and the United States establish a presence in the wildlife trade of Southeast Asia. This contribution explores the history of global animal dealers in colonial Indonesia from the latter part of the 1800s to the initial half of the 1900s. Primary sources rely mostly on colonial newspapers and memoirs. Charles Mayer, Frank Buck, Albert Meems, P.G.J Riemens, and Karl Kreth were some international animal dealers operating in the Archipelago. During the expansion of zoological gardens worldwide and the emergence of the global movement to protect wildlife by using colonial infrastructures and networks in the Netherlands Indies, these international animal dealers engaged in the hunting, exporting, and exchanging of animals for pleasure and scientific study.

The Flourishing of Zoological Gardens and the Dynamics of Wildlife Trade

The popularity and number of zoological gardens grew significantly in Europe and the United States during the 19th century. The inception of the modern version of zoological gardens took place in Europe, with London pioneering the concept in 1828, succeeded by Amsterdam in 1838 and Berlin in 1844.[1] However, the model of such institutions extended to colonial territories as well, particularly across Asia, Africa, and Australia, gaining prominence during the latter half of the 19th century.

For centuries, the establishment and maintenance of wildlife collections have represented an enduring and integral aspect of human societies, particularly for the upper echelons of social strata.[2] For many people today, zoological gardens are their first and most extensive encounter with wildlife. Seeing wild creatures up close provides comfort, pleasure, and sanctuary, which has significant spiritual value. These intangible values can help people to foster a positive sense of belonging to all life.[3] In this light, zoos offer a more easily accessible substitute for the observation of free roaming animals in their natural habitats. Consequently, zoological gardens must capture wild animals.

In the late 19th century, European and U.S. merchants began to gain a foothold in Southeast Asia's wildlife trade. During that era, several central markets had already been established as hubs for the commerce involving wild animals in Asia, with particular prominence attributed to the markets located in Calcutta and Singapore.[4] The trade in wildlife within the region of insular Southeast Asia has a history predating the era of colonisation. During the early period of Southeast Asia, a variety of valuable commodities including spices, prized wood types, items derived from forests, animal-based products, as well as rare birds were transported from the archipelago for trade purposes.[5] These trade routes extended through the Sulu Sea, reaching destinations in the northern regions such as China and Thailand, while also stretching along the central Vietnam coastline, and further westward encompassing Java and Melaka.[6]

Several professions were linked with the wildlife trade, including animal dealers, hunters, keepers, and veterinarians. For the existence of zoological gardens, animal dealers were inevitable.[7] An animal dealer is an individual who receives compensation for either the transportation or distribution of an animal, be it dead or alive. This person is also involved in the procurement, vending, or facilitation of transactions related to living or deceased animals,

which may be intended for purposes such as research, education, display, or biological supply.[8] Taking this definition into account, Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913) was arguably the first well-known animal dealer operating in colonial Indonesia. He was based in Hamburg, Germany, and supplied animals to almost every significant zoo, circus, and individual collector worldwide.

At the time of the rise of the wildlife trade, contemporaries witnessed the disappearance of several species such as the quagga and the blue antelope in Southern Africa, as well as the great auk in the North Atlantic. Concurrently, the North American bison and the passenger pigeon were perilously close to vanishing.[9] This trend engendered widespread apprehension within global scientific circles, with concerns over the imminent decline of additional species. The efforts of wildlife conservation emerged as a worldwide phenomenon, originating at the onset of the 20th century. Propelled by European and U.S. policies, this movement aimed to safeguard all aspects of natural life, encompassing both flora and fauna, against avoidable devastation largely attributable to human mismanagement of the environment.[10]

The natural protection movement started from Africa and then gained momentum to preserve natural habitats and wilderness in the colonised regions. The Netherlands faced the pressure of demonstrating their commitment of being a "responsible" coloniser by adhering to global standards in their colony.[11] This led to some wildlife regulations being introduced in the Dutch East Indies in the early 20th century. The Dutch colonial administration claimed that the exacerbation of environmental degradation was due to the actions of the native population.[12] The Dutch colonial administration claimed that the exacerbation of environmental degradation was due to the actions of the native population – a claim massively unfounded seeing that, in fact, *European* hunting activity in the Dutch East Indies appeared to have escalated significantly after 1870, and was thus a prominent force in the wildlife endangerment.[13] Nonetheless, the assertion of attributing environmental deterioration to non-European entities was not uncommon, and was a phenomenon that, for instance, also occurred in British Singapore.[14]

The central argument of this contribution is that despite the initiatives undertaken by the natural protection movement in colonial Indonesia, animal dealers maintained their practice of acquiring wildlife creatures for global zoological establishments. The temporal framework encompasses the late 19th century through the early 20th century, particularly the 1920s and 1930s. These two decades are widely regarded as the pinnacle of the global wildlife trade. On a global scale, the proliferation of zoos and circuses during this

era paralleled the significant demand for living species, marking the zenith of the international animal trade.[15] The trade of orang-utans, for example, advanced significantly during this period, manifesting in a notable expansion that was seen by the presence of mature orang-utan specimens in nearly every European zoo. This marked a departure from the situation of a few years prior, wherein the presence of such adult orang-utan specimens in Europe was sporadic.[16] By utilising colonial infrastructure and networks in the Dutch East Indies, international animal dealers engaged in hunting, exporting, and exchanging animals, which they did for profit, even if the animals were meant for pleasure and scientific studies.

The tropical regions are widely known for their extraordinary biodiversity and as the origin of many endemic animal species. The majority of regions encompassing the equatorial belt were under European colonial rule, creating opportunities for global animal dealers to access these territories, often in collaboration with indigenous hunters. Consequently, some actors of the global animal trading business were also active in Indonesia, including: Charles Mayer (1862–1927), a well-known author from the United States; Frank Buck (1884–1950), a wilderness filmmaker also from the United States; Albert Meems (1888–1957), who worked with the van Dijk firm in Tilburg, the Netherlands, and the Ruhe company in Alfeld, Germany; P.G.J. Riemens, who represented Gebroeder Blazer in Rotterdam; and Karl Kreth, who was a representative of the Ruhe company. According to the late Peter Boomgaard, Buck, Hagenbeck, and Mayer were pioneering animal dealers who spent one to two decades within a specific region. They purchased animals from specialised local markets, organised their own hunting expeditions, and established networks with indigenous communities to capture animals for them. Their focus was on live animals, the capture of which required adjusted hunting techniques that resulted in local environmental consequences such as the diminishing of the species population.[17] Besides the above-mentioned prominent figures, other noteworthy animal dealers were based in the Dutch East Indies and had a global reach, too, including A.C. van der Valk and J.F. van Geuns of the firm van Geuns & Valk.

Wildlife stands as a valuable resource within the global ecosystem. For example, carnivores and large mammals hold a crucial responsibility in maintaining the well-being and functionality of ecosystems. Ironically, these are the very species that have been most susceptible to eradication as a result of historical human actions.[18] This susceptibility becomes strikingly apparent

when examining the turn of the 20th century, a period marked by species endangerment due to insufficient conservation practices.[19] Thoroughly examining that period, historian Matthew Minarchek argues that the wildlife trade in northern Sumatra underwent a rapid and substantial expansion, parallel to the growth of plantations in the area. His paper moreover reveals that colonial actors served as the principal initiators of this growing trade, orchestrating the procurement, sale, and transport of non-human species from the island to institutions such as zoos, research establishments, and private owners in Europe and North America. Paradoxically, instead of acknowledging the pivotal role played by these colonial actors in the wildlife trade, Dutch authorities attributed responsibility to local hunters and indigenous communities who engaged with the system by capturing animals for the European and American dealers.[20]

While there are several studies about the history of human-animal relations in colonial Indonesia,[21] little attention has been given to animal dealers specifically. Another work of Matthew Minarchek provides an insightful historical analysis of the underlying causes of the orang-utan crisis in Indonesia, shedding light on the intricate interplay of economic, social, and political forces that have led to the decline of this species. He states that during the early 1900s, the northern region of Sumatra had emerged as a significant hub within the global wildlife trade. Thus, several renowned animal dealers, including German suppliers of Hagenbeck and Ruhe as well as of the U.S. animal dealers Frank Buck and Charler Mayer, visited Sumatra's east coast in search of endemic fauna. Minarchek primarily discusses van Geuns, an animal dealer closely tied to the Ruhe company, and illustrates his involvement in the transnational origins of Indonesia's orang-utan crisis, as well as the brutal capture and harrowing export of orang-utans.[22]

Similarly, Roland Braddell and Fiona Tan discuss how both local and global animal dealers shaped the wildlife trade in colonial Singapore. Braddell's account states that the inception of the animal trade in Singapore can be attributed to Haji Marip, a Malay figure who set the wheels in motion in 1880.[23] However, Tan proposes that Singapore had served as a bustling hub for wildlife commerce even prior to that period.[24] Many other people, particularly Chinese dealers, followed suit. The most prominent animal dealers were Herbert de Souza, whose collection was exhibited along the East Coast Road, and W. L. S. Basapa, notable for being the owner of the Singapore Zoo located in Ponggol. Although European and North American animal dealers also engaged in the business in the late 19th century, local animal traders continued

to hold significant importance. Interestingly, historical records show that in British Singapore, a mutually beneficial association often existed between foreign and domestic animal dealers.[25]

This contribution sheds light on the little studied operations of global animal traders in colonial Indonesia by looking mainly at newspapers published in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands during the early 20th century.[26] In addition, memoirs authored by the animal dealers Charles Mayer[27] and A.C. van der Valk have been consulted.[28] Another important source was written by Paul Eipper,[29] a German romancier who encountered orang-utans in Alfeld, where they had been imported to Germany from Sumatra by the Ruhe company. Regrettably, no indigenous records about the trafficking of wildlife by animal dealers in the Dutch East Indies could be found so far, nor were any official documents regarding wildlife business by the colonial authorities. Following Fiona Tan's assessment of wildlife trade in British Singapore,[30] this might be due to the fact that the colonial government considered the international trade of living animals as an inappropriate practice, and therefore did not prioritise its documentation during the Dutch colonisation period.

From Pleasure Hunting to Generating Large Income

According to Alfred Russel Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago*,[31] Sumatra is, from a zoological perspective, more closely connected to Borneo than Java. The rich volcanic soil in northern Sumatra became the most productive plantation area in the archipelago between the middle of the 19th century and the Second World War, with tobacco, rubber, tea, and palm oil being the primary commodities, causing new modern transport options to expand in the surrounding area.[32] The conversion of tropical forests into plantations drastically changed the landscape, and at the same time created new habitats for both human and non-human creatures. The main influx of European settlers occurred in the 1870s and 1880s. The primary motivation for their migration was economic gain, with many intending to return to their home countries after accumulating wealth. Notably, the majority were employed as estate managers and supervisors rather than operating as independent planters.[33]

In addition to snakes, binturongs, siamangs, monkeys, and several other smaller animals, Sumatra is home to well-known larger animal species such

as orang-utans, elephants, tigers, and rhinoceroses. Orang-utans are mainly sighted in northern Sumatra, while elephants, tigers and rhinoceroses are more widely distributed on the island. The first Sumatran rhinoceros was imported to Europe in 1872 by the Hagenbeck dealership.[34] In 1912, Karl Kreth of the Ruhe company transported a diverse collection of animals from Sumatra to Singapore, from where they were distributed on a global market. The collection included five elephants, five tigers, six tapirs, one clouded leopard, five black monkeys, five sultan fowls, a specimen of the exceedingly rare "fishing alligator", and five armadillos.[35]

The Ruhe company also facilitated the transfer of two wild elephants, who they named "Kechil" and "Hitam", to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park in the United States by December 1918. These young pachyderms had been captured in Sumatra in 1915 and 1916, yet details concerning their transportation from Sumatra to North America during the tumultuous First World War period remained unknown. Recent record, however, illuminates that Kechil and Hitam were procured by the National Zoological Park in Washington DC from the Ruhe company in 1918.[36] Established in 1860, the German company L. Ruhe had its origins in animal trading and, by 1869, established an American branch in New York City.[37] Presumably, these two elephants underwent a two-year hiatus in Sumatra before embarking on their journey to the United States due to wartime disruptions. The global impact of the First World War was strongly felt in shipping operations, extending to the Dutch East Indies. Export logistics, particularly those connected to German businesses within the archipelago, experienced substantial turmoil during this period.[38]

On an occasion in Vlissingen, the Netherlands, E. Roodhuijzen, a former overseer of a tobacco plantation in Deli, northern Sumatra, reflected upon the existence of a planter within the dense jungles of Sumatra. He highlighted the routine and arduous nature of this life, which was punctuated by a profound monotony. The narrative underscored that the sole factor lending intrigue to this challenging lifestyle lay in the exhilarating interactions with the wildlife.[39] As a result, a substantial number of planters in the Deli area and its vicinities began to engage in hunting pursuits, perceiving it not only as a recreational activity driven by the allure of thrilling wildlife encounters, but also as a mechanism for asserting their societal status. Animal dealer Abraham Cornelie van der Valk purported that he was born in Sumatra and received his education in the Netherlands, only to return to Sumatra to work on a tobacco plantation. Besides his plantation job, he enjoyed hunting wildlife. He was fluent in English, French and German and, more importantly, six

Sumatran dialects.[40] In the mid-1920s, he had started the wildlife business with a partner, most likely van Geuns, and set up a basecamp in Langsa, Aceh. Langsa was a prominent commercial spot that witnessed significant growth during the early 20th century, primarily attributed to the rapid expansion of European plantations, notably those cultivating rubber. The burgeoning economy of Langsa was markedly bolstered by the strategic establishment of the Aceh Tram line traversing the city.

When European and U.S. agents entered the wildlife trade, they mostly collaborated with the natives. Van der Valk employed 200 local assistants in his quest to hunt for wild animals. Among the numerous local aides, van der Valk identified several individuals as close associates, such as Guyurseng, Jalip, and Ludin. Their responsibilities encompassed a range of tasks, including accompanying van der Valk on hunting ventures, procuring animals from indigenous hunters, overseeing the transportation of animals, and attending to their care. Besides collaborating with the local populace, van der Valk also engaged with the Chinese community, primarily for the purpose of supplying feed for the animals and constructing cages.[41]

In only three years, between 1925 to 1928, van der Valk captured 200 orangutans, 29 elephants, and 40 tigers. According to him, he caught most of the animals himself and only purchased a few wild animals from locals, earning him the poetic moniker of "*tuan Binatang*", which can be translated as "lord of the beasts".[42] His partner, van Geuns, who was his assistant in earlier times, had arrived in the Dutch East Indies as a rubber planter, and became involved in animal hunting in his spare time. Van Geuns' inclination towards the pursuit of live animal capture emerged following one of his visits to the Netherlands, during which he shared a photo compilation of trophy images with his acquaintances. In response, his friends posed a question regarding his omission of live animal capture, thereby sparking his interest in this endeavour. Later, the Artis Zoo of Amsterdam tasked him to hunt for wild animals and gave him the money to get started.[43] Apparently, upfront payment was imperative to initiate involvement in the animal trade, a requirement stemming from the essential financial provisions mandated for funding hunting expeditions and facilitating the subsequent transportation logistics. Van Geuns then worked for prominent European animal dealers such as C. A. Périn in Amsterdam and the Ruhe company.[44]

Foreign animal traders relied on local employees to acquire local hunting expertise, thereby enabling them to capitalise on this newfound knowledge for economic gain. This scenario diverged from the typical colonial practice characterised by a heavy reliance on European knowledge and proficiency.[45]

The intricate network of animal trade during the colonial era in Indonesia showcased a remarkable dissemination of indigenous knowledge that proved pivotal in effectively managing the lucrative wildlife commerce. Most Dutch in Indonesia were neither the hunters they were back home nor the enthusiastic hunters that the British were in India – possibly because even the most elite classes of the Dutch in the Indies lacked the aristocratic tradition usually connected with hunting activity.[46] Van der Valk observed the hunting methods of the Gayo, Batak, and Malay people, who frequently accompanied him on hunting expeditions.[47] Charles Mayer travelled to Southern Sumatra, too, in order to acquaint himself with the local culture, language, and animal trapping techniques. He aimed to source live animals directly from the field, and to subsequently sell them with more profit. To do so, he acquired authorization from the Dutch consul general in Singapore and spent eighteen months in the field in Sumatra.[48] These phenomena mirror the historical reliance of European colonisers on native knowledge for navigating wilderness environments, particularly in the realm of hunting, as exemplified by the historical precedence of the Canadian fur trade.[49]

Despite being a U.S. citizen, Mayer transported relatively few animals to the United States due to the high import tax of 25 % imposed on landed animals.[50] Mayer's strategic choice to primarily target the Australian market for the sale of captured animals was also driven by a desire to mitigate transportation risks due to shorter travel distances. Long journeys posed significant dangers and hardships on the animals, resulting in numerous animal fatalities en route. This adversity undermined the profitability of the venture, despite occasional successful deliveries. Mayer emerged as a crucial intermediary for Australian zoological gardens, which had established public zoos in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney during the late 19th century. Beyond the Australian market, Mayer's influence extended to international realms as he supplied animals to Hagenbeck and William Cross, a Liverpool-based animal dealership, and the Antwerp Zoological Garden. Nonetheless, some of Mayer's animals did make their way to the U.S. through Hagenbeck.[51] This shows that the animal trade was not necessarily bound to national affiliation, but rather to opportunities and transnational connections.

Sumatra was not only a place for hunting and trapping wild animals, but also for filming wildlife movies. Global animal trade found itself intricately interwoven with various entertainment sectors, extending beyond just zoological gardens. This complex interplay between the trade and entertainment industries reflects the animal trade's impact on leisure and amusement.

U.S. animal dealer Frank Buck filmed the fight between wild animals in Sumatran jungles to gain success for his live-action-adventure films. His movies tapped into the fascination of a supposedly wild and ferocious nature. In 1932, *Bring 'Em Back Alive*, which was based on Buck's book that he had published earlier, was one of the most successful films in the United States that year, grossing over one million U.S. dollars.[52] It was followed by Buck's 1933 film *Wild Cargo*, in which orang-utans figured prominently.

Shipping Animals on a Global Scale

In 1926, van Geuns brought an orang-utan to Alfled, the German headquarter of the Ruhe company. While there is no detailed personal account on van Geuns' voyage from Aceh to Europe, it is highly plausible that he took a similar route as that of van der Valk's.[53] In Alfeld, negotiations began to sell the orang-utan onwards. While the orang-utan was initially offered to Moscow, he was eventually sent to the Dresden Zoo, and sold for 20,000 German Reichsmark.[54] Gustav Brandes, the director of the Dresden Zoo, named him "Goliath". Goliath's presence in Dresden triggered a series of long-term behavioural studies of the species, which are still considered classic accounts even today.[55]

In the following year, van Geuns returned to Amsterdam with the largest group of orang-utans to reach Europe alive. Overall, 25 specimens arrived in the Netherlands, including six adult pairs, each with a young one. Upon arrival, the group was taken to the Palm House at Amsterdam Zoo to acclimatise. News of their safe arrival reached the Ruhe company, and their transport was arranged. The animals reached Alfeld at the end of April. Ruhe offered the pairs for 25,000 Reichsmark to interested European zoo directors, who each took as many as their budget allowed.[56] Primates were a sought-after species at the time. Van Geuns reportedly lost only one animal on the passage from Sumatra to the Netherlands.[57] One offspring was even born onboard and later sold, together with the mother, Suma, to the Dresden Zoo where Brandes named the baby "Buschi".[58]

The shipment of animals from colonial Indonesia to Europe was made possible by several technological advancements, including steamships, railroads, and the telegraph. These numerous external occurrences made it

feasible for animal dealers to dispatch animals to international markets, which was previously more difficult. It was not until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 that steamships were extensively used in trade in the Dutch East Indies. These developments were of crucial importance in determining how animals should be transported to Europe. The duration of the voyage, originally spanning three to four months, was significantly abbreviated to just thirty to forty days.[59] This truncation served the purpose of minimising the likelihood of animal fatalities, a risk that was markedly amplified during the prolonged journey. The reduction in travel time underscores a pragmatic approach aimed at safeguarding the well-being of the transported animals, which aligns with the overarching objective of ensuring their successful arrival and subsequent transactions. In the meantime, the original telegraph lines in the Dutch East Indies were utilised primarily to administrate the islands more swiftly and efficiently.[60] The telegraph was employed by the animal dealers to communicate with their buyers abroad.

With the rapid growth of plantation enterprises in North Sumatra towards the end of the 19th century, the railway network was constructed to facilitate transportation. Similarly, the expansion of Belawan as a port for shipping plantation products to Europe has spurred the development of the northern Sumatra train network linking plantation sites. The main goal was to market tobacco more quickly and more cheaply. In the early 20th century, the relations between technology and state-building were more evident than ever.[61] The Dutch colonial government built the first parts of a steam tram in Aceh to transport military logistics during the Aceh War and help the colonisers solidify power in Aceh, which took more than thirty years. After the Dutch Aceh War ended, the Aceh Tram was utilised mainly to transport passengers, cargo, and wildlife within the plantation belt.[62]

The benefit of the advanced technology for animal dealers is written in the memoirs of A. C. van der Valk.[63] Van der Valk wrote that he organised the animal delivery of orang-utans, tigers, an elephant and other smaller animals and birds after getting confirmation from the authorities that no rabies had been detected in the previous three months, since animal dealers would not acquire shipping licences without this paper. Once he secured the health certificates, van der Valk asked to rent four wagons from Aceh Tram that were dispatched from his headquarters in Langsa. The cargo was transferred to the larger Deli-Rail train at the Aceh tram terminus in Besitang and promptly proceeded to Medan. Van der Valk and his indigenous assistant Jalip consistently provided food and hydration to the animals.

A minimum of 10,000 bananas was necessary to provide sustenance for the animals en route to London, and in addition to the meat for the tigers, they carried rice, flour, corn, eggs, peanuts and sugarcane. After arriving at the seaport of Belawan, the carts were transported to the quay where the Rotterdam Lloyd's vessel *Garut* was moored. The rear section of the vessel was designated to deliver animals. Van der Valk adhered to a specific timeframe allocated for the loading of his cargo, with the stern section of the ship designated for his use. Notably, a spacious hut originally intended as a hospital remained unused throughout the voyage and instead provided additional cover. The aft deck presented a scene of disorder, characterised by an assortment of boxes, crates, food supplies, and logistical arrangements. Each day, following sunset, tarpaulins were utilised to shield the lofts.

The onwards journey took the party through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, by passing through the Suez Canal. From Port Said in Egypt, van der Valk sent a telegram to the animal dealer Bruce Chapman in London. Chapman expected Van der Valk and his cargo when they arrived in Rotterdam. He came to the Netherlands to observe the animals and expressed appreciation towards Van der Valk for ensuring the secure transportation of the wildlife. Together with the animals, both Chapman and van der Valk embarked on a vessel belonging to the Batavier Line commencing their journey towards London.

Animals were especially vulnerable during the ocean excursions. Thus, the transportation and maintenance of living animals during the trip posed significant difficulties and financial burdens, particularly in the case of orang-utans. The reason for their short survival in captivity stemmed from their vulnerability and sensitivity to climate alterations. A caged orang-utan rapidly lost its spirit and frequently refused all meals. On one occasion, Charles Mayer sent eighteen little and medium-sized orang-utans to San Francisco in hopes of landing two or three alive, but they all perished en route. If he had succeeded in delivering a live specimen, he could have sold it for 5,000 U.S. dollars.[64] As this incidence shows, even though it was in the interest of animal dealers to keep the captured animals alive, they often struggled to do so.

Wildlife Protection in Colonial Indonesia

The depletion of natural resources, mostly mammals and bird species, was a grave concern globally at the turn of the 20th century. This situation was attributed to the expansion of human cultural areas, the excessive hunting of animals for sport or financial gain, and the capture and killing of rare animal species for display in zoos, circuses, and museums.[65] In various regions of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia, cultural areas subjected to colonisation or uncontrolled hunting practices witnessed a steady decline in their rare and distinctive animal life. During the early 20th century, there were resurgences in nature conservation efforts as individuals (mostly scholars and scientists) began to recognise the significant impact of human activities on the demise and destruction of the environment leading to a concerning decline in animal species. It was estimated that many animal species were at risk of extinction and could only survive for a limited time without prompt and effective government intervention.[66]

The first regulation to safeguard wild animals in the Dutch East Indies was the 1909 ordinance, Official Gazette No. 497 and 594, which compiled an exhaustive list of all animal species that, according to the stakeholders, warranted legal protection.[67] Thus, except for a few species specified by the governor-general, all wild mammals and birds in the Dutch East Indies were covered by these rules. However, according to K. W. Dammerman (the Chairman of the Netherlands Indies Society for the Protection of Nature), the outcome of the legislation proved to be highly dissatisfactory. Given the vast extent of the archipelago, the existing police force was grossly inadequate in its capacity to manage the widespread slaughter of animals. A primary adversary to the preservation of wildlife was represented by the traders specialising in skins, feathers, and various other animal-derived commodities. These traders operated ubiquitously, with the animal dealers spread throughout the region. Apparently, even after the enactment of the prevailing regulation in 1909, the export of hundreds of thousands of mammal and bird skins persisted annually from the Dutch East Indies.[68] Therefore, the need for a revision of existing regulations became pressing, not least due to the near unrestricted hunting of the species that had been excluded from protection, and the continued threat to many of the protected species.[69]

In 1924, a new ordinance was implemented using an approach that differed from the regulation in 1909 as indicated in Official Gazette No. 234.[70] The revised ordinance introduced a paradigm shift by mandating the specific

listing of protected species. The new regulation additionally instituted that licenses would be necessary for hunting. Thus, solely those who received a valid license and had remitted the required fee – the costs of which spanned from ten to two hundred guilders – were authorised to hunt. This progressive framework, however, exclusively took effect within Java and Madura, with its extension to other islands deemed imprudent, thereby upholding the unsatisfactory 1909 regulations.[71]

Chief among the criticisms directed at the new ordinance was the inhumane treatment of man-like apes, particularly orang-utans and gibbons, often subjected to needless experimentation. The burgeoning demand for orang-utans for zoological gardens and transplant experiments spurred the urgency for hunting restrictions.[72] Concurrently, precautions were deemed essential to counter the fervour of museums avidly amassing specimens of rare creatures. Consequently, a separate ordinance in 1925 specifically exempted the orang-utan from the category of other monkeys unaffected by the provisions against capture and killing. Despite this measure, exports of orang-utans persisted. Animal dealers managed to still transport the animals abroad. Meanwhile, a parallel trajectory unfolded for the Javanese rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), whose numbers plummeted, estimating only a few dozen individuals, while its Sumatran counterpart (*Rhinoceros sumatrensis*) also faced steep decline. Besieged by big-game hunting, indigenous populations additionally targeted these creatures for their prized horns.[73]

During the late 1920s, the animal trade to European countries and commercialisation of endangered fauna, including orang-utans, gibbons, tapirs, and rhinoceroses, resulted in a significant public outcry. In the Dutch East Indies, some newspapers made explicit accusations against animal dealers and professional hunters, labelling them as agents of environmental destruction.[74] Van der Valk and van Geuns faced condemnation for sending great quantities of orang-utans to Europe during the second half of the 1920s. The arrival of orang-utans at the London Zoo was met with opposition from Sir Heskett Bell (1864–1952), a former British colonial official. Bell disapproved of the capture techniques and, in his view, reckless export of the endangered species.

Bell was a seasoned civil servant with extensive experience in Africa. He had assumed governance roles across diverse regions in the British colonies on the continent and was thus well-acquainted with wildlife regulations. Following his 1924 retirement, Bell embarked on journeys, notably a visit to Dutch East Indies in 1925 and 1926 to learn Dutch colonial governance techniques, culminating in a published work. His engagement with and comprehension

of Dutch colonial administrations seemingly informed his impassioned support for orang-utan safeguarding and his evident enthusiasm for the Dutch East Indies' wildlife policies and conservation.[75]

The London Zoo also sought clarification from van der Valk regarding the method employed in the animal's capture, ostensibly with the intention of safeguarding their reputation.[76] A Rotterdam newspaper published an article questioning why the Minister of Colonies in The Hague was not acting to forbid the hunt and the trade in their colony in Asia. There was a growing public concern about the uncontrolled export of endangered creatures and fear of their extinction. Moreover, the article emphasised the need to cease large-scale animal theft without further delay.[77] Since the late 1800s the media emerged as a platform for advocating animal welfare in the United States, a practice that eventually gained global attraction.[78]

Some natural scientists in the Dutch East Indies believed that the efficacy of the legislation prohibiting the possession of endangered species under the ordinance of 1924 would only be rendered adequate through a ban on the export of such species. Issues on the decline in wildlife population had been reported in newspapers across both the colony and in the Netherlands.[79] Subsequently, the colonial government tackled the matter of wildlife exploitation in the Dutch East Indies through the implementation of *The Game Protection Regulation and Hunting Ordinance*, as documented in Official Gazette No. 134 and 266 of 1931. These regulations made it illegal to export any protected species, whether dead or alive, along with their fur, feathers, and ivory.[80]

However, in contrast to nature regulations that provided complete protection, the regulations of 1931 still permitted small- to medium-scale exploitation of wildlife. The Ruhe employee Karl Kreth, for instance, was granted permission to capture, possess, and export a restricted number of animals. The approved animals included a juvenile Sumatra elephant, an orang-utan, a pair of tapirs, three crocodiles, five iguanas, five squirrels, and five cockatoos of each species, including the Komodo, all of which were meant to be delivered to the Berlin Zoo.[81]

Moreover, according to one report, Frank Buck obtained export licenses from the Department of Government Businesses in 1935, aiming to procure several orang-utans for the St. Louis Zoo in the U.S. This was financially rewarding as some U.S. zoos were willing to pay high prices for rare animals.[82] An article (Fig. 1) stated that a juvenile rhinoceros could cost 18,000 guilders, excluding transport costs, and that an elephant cost the same amount. A family of orang-utans would be worth 15,000 guilders.[83]

DIEREN TE KOOP!

—o—

Duitsch dierenpark de leverancier.

Weet u voor hoeveel je een Afrikaansche olifant kunt koopen? En een jonge neushoorn? Of een heele orangoetan-familie? Het is een kleinigheidje om het even te zeggen. Een jonge neushoorn kost 18 000 gulden, ongerekend de transportkosten in Europa, een olifant, indien het een mooi exemplaar met groote ooren is, eveneens. De orangoetanfamilie zal voor f 15.000 kunnen worden geleverd en wie er dan nog een giraffe of een nijlpaard bij wil hebben, zal er nog f 7200 aan toe moeten voegen?

In het dorpje Alfeld, gelegen tusschen Hannover en Göttingen, is de firma L. Ruhe gevestigd. De firma Ruhe handelt in wilde dieren. Zij beschikt daar over een ontzaglijk dierenpark, dat verscheidene Europeesche dierentuinen in den schaduw stelt, en dat onder die stervelingen, die iets te maken hebben met dieren, zij het dan dierentuin-of circusdirecteuren zijn, een zeer goede naam bezit. Men kan het zoo gek niet bedenken, of de fa. Ruhe kan het leveren. Men doet een bestelling en prompt wordt afgeleverd wat er besteld is. Slechts in enkele gevallen moet het dier aangevoerd worden, en dan is dat alleen voor zeer bijzondere exemplaren. Wanneer het om betrekkelijk gewone dieren gaat, zooals deze in circussen worden gevonden, zijn ze „uit voorraad leverbaar".

Figure 1 | An article related to the Ruhe animal dealership published in Dutch East Indies. Common Source from: Algemeen handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië, 26 February 1932, p. 9. Retrieved from: https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMKB19:000462107:mpeg21:p00009

After implementing wildlife legislation in 1931, several foreign animal dealers persisted in getting specific protected animals, including orang-utans, from colonial Indonesia and transporting them to various global destinations. This was made possible by their prior relationships with government officials, which allowed them to circumvent legal restrictions.[84] In light of the attributes of colonialism, it was a commonly observed phenomenon that animal dealers found themselves beneficiaries of support and aid from their European counterparts acting in their capacity as local colonial authorities.

Animal Exchange: A Loophole in Wildlife Regulations

Acquisition of animals for zoos' collections occurred through purchases from animal dealers and exchanges with other zoos, with animal dealers playing a considerable role in these exchanges. Occasionally, animals from the colonies were sent to European zoos. Not only were animals from colonised regions introduced into European and North American zoological gardens, but colonial species were also added to zoological gardens that were established in the colonies in addition to European species that had been introduced, too.[85]

The Dutch East Indies also boosted zoos as tourist destinations. The first zoo in the region was established in Batavia in 1864 as part of an amusement complex built on land donated by the renowned Javanese artist Raden Saleh. Later, the Dutch upper class in Batavia developed the zoo with private funding from the Society for Plants and Animals. The amusement park as well as the zoo were popular because they were accessible to all city residents, not only Europeans but also non-Europeans, which was rare for the era.[86] Following Batavia, more zoological gardens were established in Surabaya, Bandung, Fort de Kock and Deli in the early 20th century.

The animal exchange was a particular way to obtain animals from the Dutch East Indies after the 1931 wildlife regulation. In Singapore, for instance, the British colonial administration banned capturing and selling live animals and birds in the Malay States in 1934. However, animal dealers found ways to continue trading by creating a system of animal exchange. One such dealer was William L. S. Basapa (1893–1943), also a proprietor of a private zoo in British Singapore, who sent a shipment of twelve elephants, twelve tigers, twenty black panthers, and over twenty pythons to Europe, America, Australia, and India in 1935. In exchange, he received three sea lions, two mountain lions, and two elks from California the following year.[87] The animal exchange system allowed dealers to continue trading and transporting live animals without contravening the new regulations.

At the end of 1935, the management of the Batavia Zoo, led by F. Bonte, forged partnerships with both zoological gardens abroad and animal dealers, resulting in an influx of animals brought from overseas. Bonte was able to exchange orang-utans for Chapman zebras, a deal he made with the zoo in Hanover run by the Ruhe company at that time. Numerous animals were

delivered to the Batavia Zoo in the following years. Bonte received lions, Russian bears, several smaller animals, and numerous birds, including ibises, swans, and cranes.[88]

In the first half of 1937, stakeholders of three dominant European animal dealerships visited Batavia to secure an agreement with Batavia Zoo. These were van Dijk & Zonen from Tilburg, Ruhe from Alfeld and the Gebroeder Blazer from Rotterdam. The Batavia Zoo was also supposed to receive two polar bears from Gebroeder Blazer, and it was assured that they could withstand the heat in the tropical islands since they were born in captivity and not in the Arctic. However, no further information related to the existence of polar bears in the Batavia Zoo. Nonetheless, Riemens of Gebroeder Blazer brought a variety of animals, including birds of paradise, Java monkeys, Malayan bears, orang-utans, and gibbons, giant snakes, two juvenile elephants, and various avian species, that they transported back to the Netherlands on the ship *Palembang*.[89] Some of the shipment had previously been vended in London, while the remaining creatures found lodging in the recently established animal facility in Overschie, a district located in the northern part of Rotterdam. This facility boasted specialised compartments for primates, enclosures for predatory species, and a collection of 65 aviaries. The pair of elephants were destined for a transient sojourn at the Hague Zoo, where they could convalesce following their arduous voyage. Subsequently, these animals were scheduled for transfer to Russia, having been purchased by the Moscow Zoo.[90]

Around the same time, Albert Meems, a representative of van Dijk & Zonen, embarked from Batavia aboard the vessel *Tawali*. He took a big shipment of animals with him, some of which he had acquired from exchange arrangements with the Batavia Zoo. His yield was impressive: he brought three orang-utans, five king tigers, two panthers, two chamois buffalo, two gibbons, twenty five Java monkeys, eight hundred birds of diverse plumage, two Malayan bears, tree ducks, and birds of prey, such as the uncommon harrier. In exchange, Meems would bestow the Batavia Zoo with non-Asian animals that they desired for their restocking.[91]

In addition to his involvement with van Dijk & Zonen, Albert Meems was also affiliated with the Ruhe company., He was a very influential person in the global animal trade, hunting and procuring animals in various regions in Asia. Born in Drente, Netherlands, in 1878, he became a sailor who, like many seafarers of the time, occasionally brought a monkey, parrot, or other animals with him, which he gave to his mother as a gift or sold at the port. He seized

the opportunity to participate in the animal trade when the chance arose to collaborate with Carl Hagenbeck in South America. In 1913, he joined one of Hagenbeck's expeditions as an assistant and accompanied an animal shipment to Hamburg. Eventually, he became an employee of the Ruhe company and kept this position for over forty years. He acted on behalf of Ruhe in various regions, where he facilitated deliveries and fulfilled the role of an intermediary for commercial transactions.[92]

Also in 1937, Batavia Zoo received hippopotamuses, ostriches, several monkeys, and a few other African species that were transported from Europe on board of the ship *Pulau Laut*. The shipment consisted of a substantial quantity of primarily African animals, with the majority intended for the Batavia Zoo.[93] The voyage was described as an "exchange transport" because the British animal dealer in charge of this shipment exchanged the given specimens for animals from the Dutch colony, which would then be transferred to European zoos.[94] While docking in Belawan, the *Pulau Laut* grabbed the attention of the management of the *Vereeniging Medans Dierenpark* in Deli, or Deli Zoo, due to its unique animal passengers. The British animal dealer and the Deli Zoo agreed to exchange two zebras and a few flamingos which would be arriving in Belawan from Port Said in December 1937 for four monkeys and some other animals from the Deli Zoo.[95]

The transportation of these animals from Port Said raised uncertainties regarding whether they would be directly delivered to Deli or be routed through Europe before reaching their final destination. However, tracing back to 1936, a scenario unfolded when the very same vessel docked at Tanjung Priok in Batavia, carrying a pair of zebras that were earmarked for the Batavia Zoo. The journey these animals undertook was marked by considerable challenges, originating in Africa and routing first through Hamburg and then onward to Batavia.[96] This sequence of events highlights the significant influence of European animal dealers, who exercised control over vast expanses of African and Asian fauna, and their pivotal role in orchestrating the exchange of animals between the colonial territories in both continents.

The zoos in the Dutch East Indies did not only exchange animals with European zoos, but also with zoos in other parts of the world. In 1935, the vessel *Nieuw-Holland* arrived in Java, carrying a pair of eagles intended for the Surabaya Zoo. As part of the exchange, an orang-utan was brought to the Sydney Zoo. Not only the Surabaya Zoo received animals, the *Nieuw-Holland* also transported a pair of kangaroos from Australia for the Batavia Zoo.[97]

Conclusion

Located on the equator, Indonesia is known for its unique wildlife, which was historically procured for use by royal courts and affluent households around the world. Endemic animals originating from tropical regions have been used commercially since before Western colonisation. Yet the demands for these animals increased significantly during the late 19th and early 20th century, coinciding with the expansion of zoological gardens globally. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues that the existence of ethnographic artefacts housed in Western museums is inextricably linked to multifaceted histories encompassing empire, science, the economic market, and Western public interest.[98] Concurrently, zoos can be classified as a variation of museums, differing from conventional museums by showcasing live animals for observation rather than watching them in their natural habitats.[99] The animals sourced from colonial Indonesia that found their place in zoological gardens across the globe in the early 20th century exemplify the interplay between colonialism and economic prospects enabled by the expansive global market to support cultural institutions in the Western society.

Analysing the global wildlife trade in Indonesia at the beginning of the 20th century not only illustrates how wild animals were increasingly commercialised, but also highlights how international animal dealers in the Dutch East Indies were able to operate by relying on colonial power. The wild animal trade was characterised by its volatility, requiring that the animal dealers possessed a broad range of commercial acumen and adeptness in cultivating relationships. European and U.S. animal dealers in colonial Indonesia exploited their privileged status to generate financial gain and prestige, all while indulging their enthusiasm for hunting and the adventurous lifestyle offered by colonial structures. The utilisation of colonial networks and infrastructure facilitated their participation in the global market and enabled them to engage in the distribution of wild animals from colonial Indonesia to the wider world.

In this specific context, animals also assumed a pivotal role, propelling individuals like van der Valk, van Geuns, and Albert Meems to transition into the emergent occupation of animal trading, which extended its influence on a global scale, yet to some extent, contributed to the decline of natural resources in the Dutch colony. This aligns with the premise proposed by

Harriet Ritvo, encapsulated in the term “animal turn”, which underscores the exploration of new perspectives on the historical and contemporary significance of animals.[100] Historiographically, scholars have documented influential institutions connected to animals, encompassing entities like humane societies and zoological gardens, within which individuals distinguished themselves by their involvement in roles such as breeders, animal dealers, scientists, and other affiliated capacities.

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“A Monkey in Every Home”

Henry Trefflich, Colonial Networks, and the American Commercial Animal Trade

"A Monkey in Every Home"

Henry Trefflich, Colonial Networks, and the American Commercial Animal Trade

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Abstract

This article explores the career of Henry Trefflich, America's most prolific twentieth-century animal merchant, by using previously unexamined historical media sources and Trefflich's autobiographical writing. Trefflich's outsized role within the twentieth-century global animal trade permits a uniquely penetrating view into a business rife with animal suffering and the exploitation of the Global South. Trefflich used European colonial networks in Africa and Asia for animal supply, relying heavily upon poorly-paid local labourers to carry out highly dangerous hunts. Scrutinising Trefflich's supply chain also reveals animal resistance and agency – many animals captured by his company vigorously resisted confinement and relocation. Finally, I analyse Trefflich's role in catalysing mass exotic pet ownership in mid-century America. Trefflich was the era's foremost advocate of exotic pet ownership and its primary supplier as he sought to realise his store motto: "a monkey in every home."

Introduction

In 1948, the journalist Leslie Lieber profiled New York City's pre-eminent animal dealer Henry Trefflich for the *Washington Evening Star*.[1] Dubbing Trefflich the "baboon tycoon," Lieber gushed about the expansion of Trefflich's unorthodox business in the decade and a half of its existence.[2] Headquartered on Fulton Street in downtown Manhattan, Trefflich sold a wide variety of animals to circuses, zoos, and the general public. His primary product, however, was primates, which he sold in immense quantities to meet the mid-century American biomedical establishment's ravenous need for research specimens. Upon Trefflich's death in 1978, the *New York Times* reported that Trefflich had imported a staggering 1.5 million monkeys to America, giving real weight to Lieber's flippant comment that Trefflich's store was "anthropoid Ellis Island."[3] Although his business fortunes would wax and wane over the rest of his life, by the close of the Second World War Trefflich had enduringly established himself as the largest and most famous animal dealer in the nation – a status he revelled in. As Trefflich told Lieber in 1948, immodestly but not inaccurately: "Today, I am considered the Monkey King."[4]

Oddly enough given the magnitude of his business, Henry Trefflich has received little attention from historians. The few works to take on aspects of the American animal trade either do not mention him, or discuss him only in passing.[5] This article remedies this scholarly void by piecing together Trefflich's career from previously unexamined historical media sources as well as Trefflich's autobiographical writing. What emerges is much greater than the story of merely one man or one business. Trefflich's life and work offer a rare glimpse into the shadowy, poorly-understood historical trade in animals. Trefflich's outsized role within the global animal trade of the 20th century – and his large contemporary media footprint – allows for a uniquely penetrating view into a business that was rife with animal suffering and the exploitation of the Global South. In so doing, I illuminate Trefflich's use of European colonies in Africa to facilitate his business. I also explore Trefflich's relationships to, and understanding of, the African and Asian labour that he employed. Sadly, this aspect of his business improved little on the exploitative practices of 19th-century American animal dealers.

The extent of Trefflich's business and celebrity, moreover, permits an unusually granular analysis of the experience – and resistance – of some animals to their capture, confinement, and relocation to and within America.

Individual animals themselves are usually mute in animal history, but because Trefflich often featured in the media for misadventures his animals endured in transit or at his New York City store, much about the animal experience of transport and confinement can be recovered. Trefflich suffered, for instance, many animal escapes from his Manhattan store, usually from unhappy monkeys. Large mammals also occasionally refused to cooperate in transport. Trefflich had grave difficulty in flying elephants from Asia after he separated a bonded pair, as we shall see. Finally, Trefflich's business even provoked the creation of unprecedented federal animal welfare laws, despite his objections. After a 1948 shipment of monkeys and elephants to Boston – consigned to but not overseen by Trefflich – ended with large-scale animal mortality owing to the crew's neglect, Congress intervened to outlaw "other than humane" conditions for animals in international shipments arriving in America. Thus, Congress closed a loophole which had left international animal shipments unregulated, whereas domestic animals had been protected – at least on paper – since 1873's 28-Hour Law, one of the first salient victories of the nascent American animal protection movement.[6]

I conclude by briefly assessing Trefflich's impact on evolving American mores toward exotic petkeeping.[7] Exact numbers are difficult to come by, but individual exotic pet ownership of creatures like monkeys, lions, tigers, and snakes seemingly reached new levels of mass popularity in America after the Second World War – the legacy of which still endures, despite the ardent disapproval of modern animal rights groups.[8] Trefflich played a major role in spearheading this trend. He was a vocal defender of Americans' right to exotic species ownership against legal prohibitions. Trefflich was equally important on the supply side. He boasted to the press of selling big cats to private households.[9] He was also quick to recommend monkeys for pet-seekers, not just research labs. After all, Trefflich's long-standing corporate motto – anticipating Bill Gates' famous slogan by many years – was "a monkey in every home."[10]

The Early American Commercial Animal Trade: The Reiche Brothers and the Exploitation of Humans and Animals

The expansion of European colonial empires, and the excitement generated by Euro-American encounters with animals that they had never seen before, produced a sizeable market for exotic animals in Europe and North America by the middle of the 19th century.[11] Meanwhile, increases in shipping speed and volume meant mass shipments of animals were much more viable, although significant mortality and morbidity always attended the animal trade. Caged tropical birds, primarily parrots, emerged around the mid-19th century as popular house pets on both sides of the Atlantic. In both America and Europe, zoos, menageries, circuses, and roadside attractions sprung up in the second half of the 19th century too, dazzling the public with the megafauna of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[12]

America's commercial animal trade was dominated from the start by Germans and German trading and imperial networks. The first American animal dealing firm of size was that of Charles and Henry Reiche, which enjoyed great success in selling tropical birds – usually canaries – sourced from their European base in Alfeld, Germany.[13] In America, the Reiches were primarily based in New York City and came to exert significant influence in the city as their capital grew. As early as 1853, Charles claimed to have sold 20,000 birds since the early-1840s founding of his American business, a tally that associates contended had risen to around half a million by 1875.[14] By the 1870s, the Reiches had expanded well beyond birds. The Reiches' firm was the major supplier as well as one of the public owners of the Great New-York Aquarium, founded in 1876 and shuttered in 1881 due to persistent disagreements among the principal owners.[15] The closure of the Aquarium did not spell the end of the Reiches' business, though. In the 1880s, the Reiches would go on supplying American menageries, circuses, and zoos with all manner of animals – elephants, big cats, snakes, giraffes, and more – often to the delight of New Yorkers who watched the animals debark and then march to Hoboken, New Jersey, where the Reiches maintained a game farm to store their creatures.[16]

The Reiches procured many of their non-avian animals from what they called "Nubia," likely modern-day Ethiopia and Sudan.[17] Animal acquisitions from this area allowed the Reiches to launch ambitious new endeavours – for example, the Reiches acquired ostriches from "Nubia" in order to set up

America's first commercial ostrich farm in Sylvan Lake, Florida, in 1883.[18] But the Reiches' activity in this area also revealed the sordid, often racialised, exploitation at the heart of the animal trade – a recurring theme in Trefflich's era, too. Reiche employee Chris Schauman, who led hunting trips in Africa, described a typical hunting expedition and voyage to the *Chicago Tribune* in 1882. Implying that he relied on unfree and unpaid labour, Schauman said that he obtained the services of sixty "natives" from "the sheiks or Arab chiefs of the place" in exchange for animal skins and elephant tusks.[19] The skins and tusks were then acquired when "plenty of animals are killed" – in addition to those taken alive for the company – by the white men with "native" assistance.[20] A lengthy 1878 account of the Reiches' operations in Africa is even more explicit about the racial hierarchy that prevailed there. White hunters lived in relative luxury while "distinctions of caste" relative to the "half-civilized natives" were "strictly maintained."[21] Many participating "natives" received payment in precious metals or animal products, but some received nothing. A white hunter employed by the Reiches, Paul Luhn, revealed that while paid "natives" did the brunt of the work of capturing and caring for the animals, "the menial duties [of camp life] are performed by Nubian slaves."[22]

The young animals captured alive for transport to Europe and America had to first march across forbidding desert climes to reach the nearest seaport, a gruelling odyssey that could take up to thirty or forty days.[23] Paul Luhn testified that here, too, the Reiches relied upon enslaved labour to feed and care for the animals.[24] After marching across the desert, an arduous sea voyage to America awaited, but not all creatures even made it that far. Schauman recounted that during his 1882 expedition, a lion cage broke on the dock, and the beast escaped into the Red Sea, where it was shot.[25] Schauman said most of the other animals handled the voyage well, but "the monkeys were seasick, however. They always are, and you never saw such miserable-looking objects in all your life."[26]

As their profile rose in the 1880s, the Reiches stirred up New Yorkers with publicity-seeking behaviour, much like Trefflich would in his heyday, though the Reiches were tawdrier. In 1884, the firm trumpeted to local newspapers that it had discovered live woolly mammoths in the forests of the Malay Peninsula. Met with scepticism by reporters who wondered how such colossal beasts could have previously eluded attention, Charles Reiche claimed that his discovery was made in the "Malay mountains," a remote area never before explored by "intelligent people from civilized lands."[27] The two mammals

brought to America, however, were surely just a hirsute pair of elephants, not the last survivors of the extinct pachyderm.[28] That did not stop the Reiches from displaying "Quedah" – the only "Mysterious Malay Mountain Mammoth" that long survived in America – with the travelling Van Amburgh Circus. Quedah received top billing in advertisements, as the Reiches contended that Quedah was "the Rarest Animal Alive," descendant of "prehistoric monsters" that cohabited with "the Pterodactyl," and the first of his kind discovered since "the deluge."[29]

The Reiches' interest in anthropological-evolutionary "discovery" could be even sleazier. In 1879, the Reiches displayed indigenous American people at the Great New-York Aquarium. The Reiches wanted, according to the *New-York Tribune*, to showcase "real full-blooded Indians belonging to an uncivilized tribe." For this, they had captured nine Iroquois and two Comanches, whom the Reiches eventually sent to Europe to be exhibited there.[30] Even uglier behaviour followed. In 1887, the Reiche firm obtained what the *New York Times* called "two queer African babies" courtesy of a trip Hermann Reiche – son of Henry – made to London.[31] In these "wild children from Africa," as Hermann Reiche put it, the *New York Times* hoped for living evidence for "the Missing Link" in human evolution.[32] Here the Reiches hoped to indulge in a sad trope of the "ethnographic" exhibition genre common to zoological display in this era: portraying supposedly less-advanced humans as evolutionary forebears.[33]

The Reiches' odious schemes, however, would be dashed by the physical and psychological rigors of their harsh trade, an especially poignant reminder of the physical and emotional trauma inflicted by the industry. Hermann bought the two male children, plus a third female child who died in London, from a South African hunter, Hunter Wilhelm, who claimed to have purchased the children from a previously uncontacted African people located on the Zambesi River. Wilhelm's story was that these three children were the offspring of a woman from the people he had met and a man of an unknown "fierce tribe of powerful hairy men."[34] After Hermann Reiche acquired the three children, he crassly named them She, He, and It, and shipped them to New York City. Only "He" and "It" made it alive to America, upon which Reiche sought "a good, reliable, colored woman" for a nurse and kept the one-year-old children in cages.[35] Soon after, "It" died, having sustained severe organ damage from unknown causes.[36] The *Times* described his death in vile, yet telling, terms: "It has been gathered unto his forefathers, *whoever or whatever they were* [emphasis mine]... but business is not suspended, and the traffic in

animals still goes on."[37] The fate of "He" – described by the *Times* as "inconsolable" over the death of "It" – is not known to me, but this person does not appear to have been exploited as an evolutionary curiosity hereafter.

Charles and Henry Reiche also passed away in the mid-1880s, but the epicenter of the American animal trade remained in New York City and in the hands of Germans or German-descended Americans. The Reiche business stayed in the family for a while, but eventually the competing Ruhe family firm, with its American headquarters also based in New York City, bought it in 1910.[38] The concern of Carl Hagenbeck – like Ruhe and Reiche, also a German company – rivalled the Reiches in supplying America with animals in the 19th century and remained prominent in the early years of the 20th.[39] Early 20th century New York City also saw the rise of Henry Bartels, another animal dealer of German extraction. Bartels' firm lasted until the early 1930s, but has left little historical trace. It is possibly most relevant, though, for playing a pivotal role in the early career of the young Henry Trefflich.

The Rise of the "Monkey King": Trefflich's Primate Provisioning and Global Business Network

Henry Trefflich was born in a zoo in Hamburg, Germany, in 1908.[40] The zoo was Fockelman's Tiergarten, to be precise, where Trefflich's father served as the zoo's manager. Trefflich's father was also in the animal trade in a "free lance" capacity, as his son put it, making frequent expeditions to Asia and Africa to amass creatures for Europe's burgeoning zoos and private menageries.[41] Thus born into the business, Trefflich would follow in his father's footsteps and then some, but not in Germany. As a fifteen-year-old, Trefflich parlayed working on the steamship *Thuringia* into illegally entering the United States, jumping ship upon *Thuringia*'s arrival in New York City.[42] After a few years working in a restaurant, he was persuaded by his mother to return to Germany in order to try to enter the United States legally—otherwise, he could never obtain citizenship and might be deported back to an increasingly volatile Germany. Although that process was complicated by Trefflich's earlier skulduggery, he was eventually permitted to enter the US legally in October 1928. He resided there until his death fifty years later.[43]

Once back on U.S. soil, Trefflich soon after set about emulating his father's "free lance" hunter-supplier role. Henry accompanied his father on an

animal-collecting expedition to Calcutta in 1930 and the two hatched plans to form a father-son exotic-animal-gathering business based in New York City, but fate intervened. Trefflich senior fell ill and died the following year. Meanwhile, Henry Trefflich returned to New York City, picked up a commission from the Bartels company to obtain animals in India, and returned to Calcutta to fulfil it. Unfortunately, Bartels folded while Trefflich was gone – perhaps a victim of the Great Depression – stranding Trefflich in Calcutta without pay for the animals he had secured. Trefflich spent a "dismal year" in Calcutta staying with a friend of his late father's before he could raise the money to get back to New York City. Once there, it seems, Trefflich reflected on his experience and decided that he would continue animal-collecting, but only for himself.[44]

Exact details of the early days of Trefflich's animal-dealing business are mysterious, but he was established at 215 Fulton Street in downtown Manhattan by at latest 1934.[45] From the beginning, Trefflich capitalised on the surging biomedical demand for small primates, usually rhesus monkeys, as research subjects for American polio vaccine trials. As early as 1935, Trefflich was acquiring monkeys for various American researchers and institutions, and this trade was the abiding engine of his business.[46] Indeed, by early 1936, local press had already dubbed him "Manhattan's monkey magnate."[47] Trefflich, however, sold a wide variety of animals even then. He sold birds, dogs, and cats to pet aficionados and stocked zoos and circuses with charismatic megafauna.[48] Yet small primates were his perennial seller – in 1967, Trefflich estimated that he had grossed 25 million dollars over the life of his business from their sale alone.[49]

Although candid about his youthful adventures in animal collecting in his 1967 autobiography, Trefflich offered few details about the supply side of his business in the decades after he went into business for himself. Trefflich was also careful to omit the violence often involved in animal capture, or to downplay the harrowing harms caused by intercontinental animal transport. Despite Trefflich's silence and the problem of fragmentary sources, though, Trefflich's reliance on pre-existing European colonial networks and norms to source his animals, particularly in Africa, is clear. In fact, Trefflich's methods in some cases seem little evolved from those of the Reiche brothers. Much as they did, Trefflich contracted with white hunters who would then assemble groups of "natives" to hunt key animals. In this way, Trefflich relied heavily on the labour of Africans and Asians, though they got little credit or remuneration and faced the greatest danger.

Trefflich's relationship with the hunter Philip Carroll is a case in point. Trefflich employed Carroll in the 1940s to mine French-controlled Equatorial Africa

for gorillas. Carroll was a major source of smaller monkeys, too.[50] Carroll was a white American, but his activities had the approval of the Free French colonial government. As the *New York Daily News* reported in 1942 in commenting on Carroll's (Trefflich-funded) capture and importation of eight baby gorillas to America,

> *prior to the entry of these animals, it took practically an international treaty to permit capture and shipment of a gorilla. Since the Free French have taken over that section of the Dark Continent, however, …* [they have] *loosened up a little in the interests of trade and good will.*[51]

Indeed, Trefflich's fauna-ransacking rarely met with the objection of colonial governments, although post-colonial national governments would sometimes object.[52]

Carroll's (Fig. 1) hunting techniques were bloody, dangerous, and completely reliant on African labourers. Reporter Charles Neville of the *El Paso Times* narrated a 1941 "jungle trek" in which Carroll assembled 400 "natives" – seemingly from the Teke people – to capture gorillas. The natives bore the brunt of the danger. Neville reports that three men had their skulls shattered by an enraged and encircled gorilla, a rampage ended only by Carroll's gunshots. Six other men were "gravely injured" by the beast. The endeavour was a success in Carroll's eyes, though. He obtained the eight baby gorillas referred to above and dispatched them to Trefflich. If Carroll's African helpers were compensated, it is unrecorded by Neville and unmentioned by Carroll, although Neville hints that their payment came in the form of gorilla carcasses and adult gorilla captives – the expedition captured 49 living gorillas in all.[53]

Trefflich's business had a number of key hubs around the world. He derived many of the one and a half million small monkeys he sold from India and Pakistan, although he zealously guarded the exact locations and the details of his arrangement with locals lest competitors undercut him.[54] He dispatched his collectors, like the charismatic New Jerseyite Genevieve "Jungle Jenny" Cuprys, to barter for animals in the "Chinese bazaars" of Singapore.[55] He also created a formal branch office in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This branch was run by Alieu Sesay, who was African, although I know nothing else about his background. While Trefflich mentions Sesay in his autobiography, and even includes a photograph of him, Trefflich does not discuss the financial or logistical details of their relationship.[56] Some

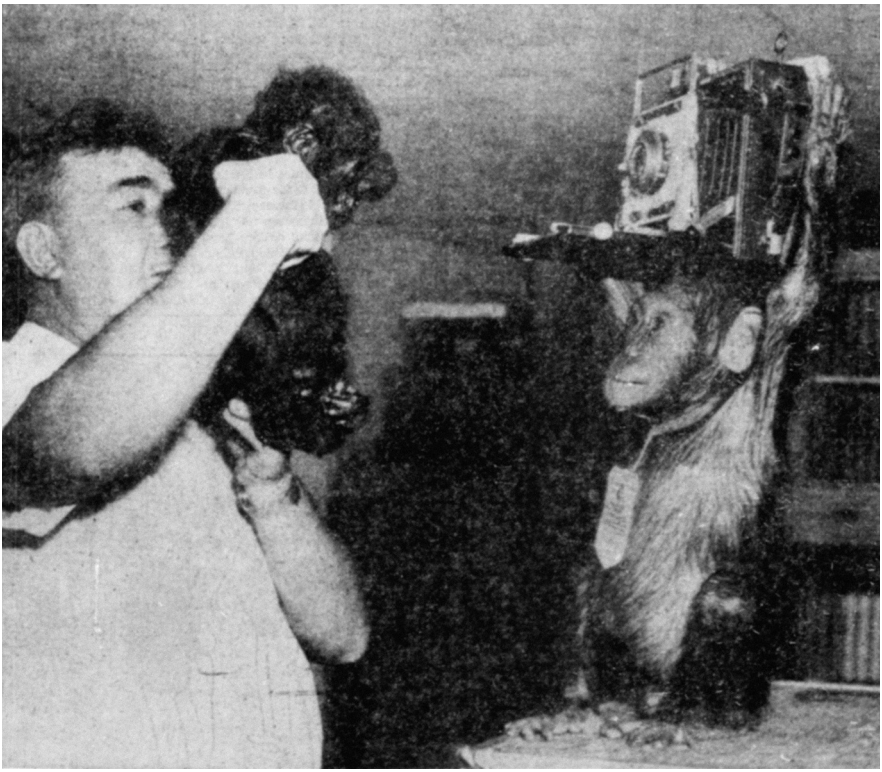

Figure 1 | Philip Carroll and "Pancho" photograph each other at Trefflich's store, 1949. The reality of capturing such animals was much less whimsical. Source: "Camera Monkey from Cameroon," in: *Southern Illinoisian*, 11 July 1949, p. 24. © Out of copyright

clue, however, might be derived from remarks that Trefflich made on the post-World War II increase in animal prices. Trefflich lamented the trend as early as 1946, when he blamed unwary American soldiers stationed in Asia for driving up costs by overpaying "natives" for exotic animals, thus altering the merchants' sense of their products' worth.[57] Trefflich thought similar processes were at work in other facets of the industry. In 1951, he complained that Africans could no longer be employed on the cheap: "The natives who trap the animals are getting smart, too smart. They've heard of the labour movement. It used to be that you could get a big gorilla for a song ... now you have to pay $2,000."[58]

Transport Trouble: Life, Death, and Resistance in the American Animal Trade

The power asymmetries between humans in the animal trade were large and long-standing, and they conformed to the dynamics of Western colonialism. The industry's greatest power differential, however, has always been between human and non-human. Animals unlucky enough to encounter the commercial animal trade faced grim prospects. If they survived capture unharmed – a major uncertainty – they were then subjected to confinement and transportation, often in wretched conditions. Animals were often poorly fed during transport, exposed to harsh weather, or roughly jostled about, leading to injuries and fatalities.[59] Many creatures suffered emotionally, too. Mammals are social, and separation from their kin can send them into depression or worse. Primates frequently suffer from depression upon being captured – some refuse all food and perish.[60] Juvenile animals, of course, are at even greater physical and emotional peril from separation.

Those who reach their final destination often obtain cruel rewards for their perseverance. The primates Henry Trefflich imported for medical research could look forward to a life confined to cages, subject to painful, isolating, or even fatal experiments.[61] Although some primate experiments have undeniably produced major advances in medicine and scientific knowledge, many creatures perished in repetitive or unnecessary experiments that accomplished very little.[62] Circus and zoo life, the destination for many more animals, could also be abysmal, although the potential for a pleasant existence was certainly greater. The same could be said for those animals sold into private pet ownership. Whatever the destination, animals resisted their entrapment, confinement, and transport. Their unwillingness to be reduced to inert objects highlighted their individuality while creating constant problems for Trefflich and his employees.

From the earliest days of Trefflich's establishment in lower Manhattan, animal escapes periodically enlivened the surrounding neighbourhood (Fig. 2). Usually the culprits were primates. "Jocko" – a rhesus macaque monkey – scrambled up a 15-story building in fall 1934 after fleeing Trefflich's attempts to have him sent to California.[63] He was eventually nabbed by the police after re-entering the building through a window the authorities had left ajar. A year later, "Mike" – another rhesus – went on the lam for five days, swinging from building to building in "death-defying leaps," the press reported.[64]

Figure 2 | Trefflich smokes a cigar with Joseph the chimpanzee, 1942. Perhaps this was one reason why chimpanzees sought escape, although Trefflich insisted that Joseph was already addicted to nicotine before he captured him. Source: *Akron Beacon Journal*, 13 December 1942, p. 113.

Finally apprehended by Trefflich himself, the *New York Times* reported that the captured Mike "still had happy memories of his escapade ... occasionally he shook the bars of his cage, hoping for another taste of liberty."[65]

Many other monkeys would pursue similar liberty from Trefflich's store, but he was not the only New Yorker with this problem. The exotic animal hunter and film star Frank Buck, based on Long Island, suffered the escape of 100 monkeys from his menagerie in the summer of 1935.[66] These roamed the south shore of Long Island for days – ironically, Trefflich assured the media that his monkeys would never do the same as he gathered a shipment of 448 monkeys from India shortly after Buck's misadventure.[67] His promise was empty. In 1936, Trefflich lost control of three monkeys while "sorting them for delivery" at Boston's seaport. Two were eventually recovered but

one could not be enticed down from the rafters of a nearby building – Trefflich, reportedly "disgusted," said the monkey was free to whoever would have him.[68] The year after, the fire department had to be called to retrieve a Trefflich monkey from the eaves of a Manhattan post office.[69] The frequent escapes tried the patience of city authorities and Trefflich alike. In 1938, four rhesus monkeys got loose and ambled into the Washington Market grocery store. A police officer tore his pants in pursuit of the simians, the repair of which Trefflich had to reimburse. Finally, three of the monkeys were corralled but the fourth was wilier, tossing purloined bananas at pursuers. When the police finally apprehended the final monkey, Trefflich crankily proclaimed that "the police could shoot the banana-thrower." The police declined, handing the primate over to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals instead.[70]

Monkey escapes were a perennial occupational hazard for Trefflich, but perhaps the most significant one of all came on 11 May 1946.[71] Nearly 100 rhesus macaque monkeys slipped their bonds and romped through downtown Manhattan, drawing a large crowd and snarling traffic as the creatures made what the press called "their bold bid for liberty."[72] The exodus came after an employee opened the cage in order to free a baby monkey that had become ensnared in wire netting. Two days later, Trefflich told the media that 20 monkeys were still unaccounted for.[73] In the intervening period, most had been corralled, but some had met their deaths. One monkey mistimed a leap from the 12th floor of a building and fell to the pavement, dying instantly.[74] Trefflich was hauled into court to answer for the escape and for a monkey bite sustained by a boy during the commotion.[75] Luckily for Trefflich, the charges against him were dismissed six days later.[76] Ultimately, Trefflich averred that the media coverage of the mass escape had catalysed his business – around one hundred prospective pet owners wrote to Trefflich in the days after the escape to express their desire to own a rhesus macaque.[77] The last of the escaped monkeys was not recaptured until August.[78] Other species also proved problematic. Frighteningly, Trefflich claimed to have lost seven pythons in a 1950 move from 215 Fulton Street to 228 Fulton Street –they were never seen again.[79] Bears were often uncooperative, too. In 1937, a Himalayan black bear cub destined for Trefflich's store broke free of his bonds and jumped ship in the Suez Canal.[80] Loose for six days, the cub's original ship carried on without him. The cub was later recaptured by what Trefflich called the "canal guard" and put on another ship to New York City, though. On arrival, Trefflich maintained the cub – now dubbed "Suez" – in his store but was anxious to give

him away. Trefflich thought the cub was "trouble," remarking "I wish I had never seen him."[81] Although I do not know Suez's ultimate fate, Trefflich was trying to give him away free of charge to the Bronx Zoo.[82] Nearly 15 years later, Trefflich would again experience a bear escape but this time in front of his store, when a small Malaysian sun bear broke out of her cage and cavorted around the neighbourhood.[83] No one was injured before Trefflich recaptured her with the help of his staff.

One of Trefflich's poignant misadventures with elephants is perhaps most illustrative of the individuality and agency that animals can express, even in confinement.[84] In 1954, Trefflich imported a pair of baby female elephants from India by plane. The animals, although bonded, were meant for different zoos – one would stay in New York City, the other would go to Little Rock, Arkansas. But the 1,000-pound elephants had other ideas. Separated from her friend and placed on a plane, the Little Rock-bound elephant became distressed. Trefflich reported that the beast "got pretty rough," jeopardising the safety of the flight. The plane turned back, and both elephants were then brought to America on the same flight, which quelled their distress. There they resided together in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, showing their attachment by frequently entwining their trunks. Trefflich was unmoved, though. He was determined to press ahead with the separation, telling the press that "they'll love her in Little Rock," and blithely dismissing the potential for similar problems in transport from Brooklyn to Little Rock.[85]

Elephants were a minute portion of the animals that passed through Trefflich's network – he claimed in 1967 to have imported 98 in total – but they proved especially hard to force into the regimens of the animal trade.[86] In 1949, six baby female elephants at Idlewild Airport (now JFK) refused to deplane for five hours, resisting even the coaxing of Jungle Jenny before deciding to cooperate only when they became hungry.[87] Far more serious consequences attended Trefflich's mishandling of "Dumbo" (Fig. 3), the youngest elephant ever brought to America at just five months old (courtesy, again, of Philip Carroll).[88] Upon Dumbo's arrival at Idlewild in July 1949, Trefflich made the dubious decision to pack Dumbo into the backseat of his sedan – trunk trailing out the window – and drove him into the city.[89] Intended for St. Louis' zoo, the unfortunate Dumbo died later that night of pneumonia, despite Trefflich's best efforts to save him through the use of antibiotics and oxygen.[90] Some members of the media plausibly speculated that Dumbo's pneumonia was caused by his breezy ride through New York.[91]

Figure 3 | The ill-fated Dumbo. "$5,000 Baby Catches Pneumonia".
Source: *New York Daily News*, 10 July 1949, p. 51. © New York Daily News

Thus far, I have mostly concentrated on transportation mishaps that occurred after animals had arrived in New York City, but the journey to America's shores could be even more dangerous. Once hunters and trappers engaged by Trefflich, like Philip Carroll, had obtained animals and brought them to a port – with all the morbidity and mortality that capture and transport had already exacted – long plane or ship journeys awaited. Trefflich sometimes accompanied his animals on planes to America, but for the most part, unaffiliated airline and shipping companies performed the labour of loading, unloading, and caring for animals in transit. Often, these voyages experienced massive loss of life. In 1936, for instance, Trefflich lost 100 out of 600 rhesus monkeys during the 47-day oceanic journey from Calcutta to Boston.[92] The monkeys were contained in 27 cages placed on deck and covered in a canvas to protect them from the elements. If they were evenly distributed, there would have been 22 monkeys in each cage, a recipe for disease and infighting.

Such loss of life was routine and unregulated. Unlike interstate shipments of animals, no US law mandated humane standards in international animal shipping. But Trefflich inadvertently caused that to change. On 25 December 1946, a shipment commissioned by Trefflich of 300 monkeys and 6 elephants arrived in Boston's harbour.[93] The animals had suffered atrociously. Dozens of the monkeys were deceased, as were half of the elephants. The monkeys' food was contaminated by parasites, and the animals had not been protected from the elements. Frigid sea water had washed over the deck into the cages,

chilling and killing the animals.[94] Members of the Animal Rescue League of Boston intervened to help unload the ship and to care for the remaining animals. Soon Congress took up the matter, likely as a result of pressure from animal welfare advocates. In summer 1948, legislators heard of the horrors of this shipment and many others, soliciting testimony from zoo people, animal welfare advocates, and, of course, Henry Trefflich himself.

Trefflich painted himself as virtuous and dismissed the need for regulation in a letter to the American Humane Association which was read into the congressional record at the Senate hearings regarding the matter. Although Trefflich conceded that it was "very disagreeable" to witness the elephants' condition, he said only 42 of 300 monkeys had died, refuting testimony from an animal welfare advocate who gave a death toll of one-third. While Trefflich believed that "something should be done" about situations like the elephants had experienced, he did not think that the government should intervene, because new legislation would only hurt "legitimate animal dealers" like himself. He asked Congress rhetorically, "How is possible that the average animal dealer could want to be cruel to animals, when this is our business, and only the best healthy animals will sell?" Trefflich went on to claim that the death rate in his monkey shipments was typically "only" 5–10%, and that he paid bonuses to caretaking sailors for safe delivery.[95] He was, he assured Congress, doing "everything possible ... to insure the well-being and good health of these monkeys," comments which seemed to sidestep the fact that Trefflich's control over the shipping companies with which he contracted was minimal.[96]

Trefflich's protests failed to convince Congress, deluged as it was by tales of animal misery in international shipment and letters supporting punitive laws. A letter from the director of the San Francisco Zoological Gardens stated that one shipment of birds saw only 111 survive out of 750 shipped.[97] The Curator of Mammals of Philadelphia's Zoo, Frederick Ulmer, told Congress that what had happened to the elephants that landed at Boston was "perfectly horrible" but "not an isolated case." Ships regularly sailed from tropical climes to wintery ones, and their masters often left their animals above deck with no protection from the changing seasons or storms. This was due to neglect, malice, or ignorance, habits of mind also present in crewmen. Ulmer told Congress that "few seamen have any regard for animals" and that they dislike the additional burden imposed on them by living cargo. Ulmer recounted that one seaman told him – "with fiendish glee" – of soaking caged rhesus monkeys with water from a fire hose, "battering them about the cage

and half-drowning them in the process." Many died.[98] A letter from the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society likened the "pitiful conditions" of animals in international transport to the slave trade and urged Congress to take action against such cruelty "as a policy and as an example in our ambition to build a better world."[99] Congress ultimately passed amendments to the Lacey Act to prohibit inhumane treatment in international animal shipments and to provide for criminal penalties for violators.[100]

Trefflich's preference may have been ignored by Congress, but his self-defence was not meritless. He did try to limit animal mortality and morbidity in transport, such as in pioneering airplane transport of animals after the Second World War. While not without hazard, this quicker mode of travel generally resulted in lower mortality. For example, Trefflich crowed about a 1949 monkey shipment from southeast Asia – "the largest air shipment of animals ever made" – which saw only 30 deaths of the 700 on board, or less than 5 %.[101] Trefflich professed to love his animals, too, although he tried not to become attached to the "merchandise."[102] His profit motive also surely incentivised him to try to maximise animal survival in transit. Trefflich was, however, also somewhat insulated by insurance from the untimely deaths of his animals. Although a reconstruction of exactly how much insurance buffered Trefflich's losses cannot be made with the extant sources, one story is instructive. In 1955, a fire ravaged Trefflich's Manhattan store, killing four gorillas, four orangutans, and four chimpanzees, all from French Equatorial Africa.[103] Trefflich estimated their value at $39,000, telling the media that the loss was fully covered by insurance. On the whole, Trefflich surely cared about many of his animals, and he tried to mitigate the dangers they faced. But they were, ultimately, just merchandise.

Conclusion: Henry Trefflich and the Rise of American Exotic Pet Ownership

Supplying primates to American science was the backbone of Trefflich's business and a major part of his legacy.[104] But he was equally enthusiastic about peddling primates – and other exotic animals – as pets. Trefflich was the most vocal and charismatic proponent of exotic pet ownership of his era and asserted that monkeys were the ideal solution to empty nest syndrome, advising that "when a boy or girl goes away to college is a good time to get a monkey to take his place."[105]

He alleged that "caring for a chimp is just like rearing a baby" – after all, "they only cost about $500 or $1,000 and you don't have to educate them."[106] Trefflich thought other animals were excellent companions, too. "Extroverts," he bizarrely insisted in 1947, could get "quite attached" to a python.[107] Meanwhile, he professed to have sold ocelots to women as a matching accessory for their fur coats, and leopard cubs to women "who have feline instincts."[108]

Such madcap statements were more than marketing hype. Trefflich furiously defended exotic pet owners when they faced censure. In 1949, Manhattan chef Jack Crawford ran afoul of Section 22 of New York City's sanitary code. This edict outlawed the keeping of "lions, bears, wolves, foxes, snakes, or other animals of similar vicious propensities" within the city.[109] Crawford had five monkeys in his apartment, sparking debate over their viciousness. Trefflich testified for the defence that monkeys were "mischievous rather than vicious," and offered (in vain) to demonstrate his point by bringing a chimpanzee into the courtroom.[110] Crawford was given a five-day suspended workhouse sentence, which prompted Trefflich to indignant rhetorical heights outside the courtroom. He thundered to the "people of New York City" that

> *you have lost your parrots and other hook-billed birds, and now they are taking away your monkeys. The next thing that you know they will be taking away your dogs and cats. I appeal to the people to protest at once to the proper authorities!*[111]

Trefflich's fears that government would curtail exotic pet ownership were not irrational, but for most of his lifetime, few prohibitions existed. Trefflich continued to sell his products to enthusiastic private buyers – in 1950, he estimated that he sold 100 monkeys per month as pets.[112] Two decades later, Trefflich reported his pride in "sell[ing] lion and tiger cubs to private homes every day of the week."[113]

One tends to be scornful when considering the exotic pet-buyers of mid-century America, a period the journalist Bryan Christy has called "the gilded age" of the American pet industry, when rules and scruples were few.[114] Yet no comprehensive history of American exotic pet ownership exists.[115] My study of Trefflich's career, however, indicates that complex motives and experiences defined American exotic pet ownership. Exotic pet-buyers were sometimes frivolous, to be sure, but many were committed and caring owners. Jack Crawford, rather than surrender his monkeys, relocated them to a Brooklyn apartment owned by a woman who said she would rather be jailed than surrender the monkeys.[116] Crawford's lawyer, when Crawford was later

threatened with the reactivation of his suspended sentence, told the court that, "to this man, the loss of these animals will be a tragedy."[117]

Others were just as passionate. In the mid-1950s, ocelot enthusiasts founded the Long Island Ocelot Club (LIOC) to promote best practices in keeping the small South American wild cats.[118] Despite its New York origin, the Club soon enrolled a national membership of dedicated ocelot owners – by 1975, it had 1,700 members nationwide.[119] These members were quick to defend persecuted peers. When the Environmental Protection Agency seized three ocelots from a New Jersey family and placed them in a zoo – the family did not have a permit to keep endangered species, as the recent Endangered Species Act had mandated – LIOC rallied to their defence, talking up the ocelot's docility and merits as a pet to the media. The family, meanwhile, was genuinely distraught, protesting that the cats "were members of the family," and worrying about their health in the cold confines of a zoo cage.[120]

By the 1970s, laws protecting endangered species and bolstering animal protections slapped new constraints on animal importers like Trefflich and exotic pet owners. This trend has roughly, albeit unevenly, continued to the present, although American states vary widely in which animals can be kept by private citizens and in what manner. Nonetheless, American exotic pet ownership was already big business by the early 1970s – one highly critical 1972 article by a former Congressional aide estimated that Americans spent 20 to 30 million dollars annually on exotic pets.[121] Trefflich, however, was by then struggling to capitalise on this industry which he had done so much to champion. The construction of the World Trade Center complex displaced Trefflich's store in the late 1960s, and – despite relocation – Trefflich's once lucrative business declined badly by the early 1970s, prompting his retirement. For historians like Daniel Bender, the sunset of Trefflich's store also represented the end of an era in the animal trade.[122] It had become less acceptable to peddle exotic animals as more attention focused on their abysmal rates of attrition during the journey from wild to captive. Feeling that pressure, zoos increasingly turned to captive breeding. Greater awareness of the depletion, and potential extinction, of charismatic megafauna also galvanised backlash against the animal importers and the criminal smuggling networks often on the other side of the American animal trade.

Yet the American exotic animal trade has hardly ceased, despite shifting mores toward animals and a tighter regulatory environment. Animal dealers still import tens of thousands of primates into the U.S. every year to serve the medical research industry.[123] While many zoos and aquaria have backed away from obtaining rare species, especially those which are palpably unhappy in

captivity, they still do acquire animals, particularly fish and marine mammals which are difficult to breed in captivity. Meanwhile, the exotic animal trade continues, often in illicit form. American customs authorities annually seize millions of dollars of animal appendages destined for varied uses ranging from clothing to potions of dubious medicinal validity.[124] Moreover, charismatic species like tigers and lions still find their way legally, or otherwise, into and around the U.S. to tickle the fancies of the nation's exotic animal aficionados.[125]

In fact, in this last point there lies a final, unlikely connection to Trefflich: He is only two degrees of separation from the notorious Joe Exotic of Netflix infamy. In the latter years of Trefflich's business, he employed Joan Byron-Marasek, who would later rise to national notoriety as the "Tiger Lady" of New Jersey when one of her prized beasts escaped her compound in 1999.[126] The State of New Jersey subsequently won a lengthy court battle to shut down Byron-Marasek's tiger-hoarding, seizing her animals in 2003.[127] The felines were then transported to an animal rescue in San Antonio with the state suing for the expense. In 2010, three of the animals were relocated to the Florida big cat sanctuary of Carole Baskin, who, of course, was later the target of Joe Exotic's murderous ire.[128]

All told, the often-squalid worldwide trade in animals continues, even if its main participants now shun rather than court the spotlight. Much remains mysterious about it, just as there remains much that we do not know about Americans' historical relationships to exotic animals. Having focused here on the supply side of the animal trade, I hope scholars will soon take up the demand side in greater depth. What ideological justifications enabled exotic pet ownership, both historically and currently? How did exotic pet ownership inflect or reflect class, gender, and racial stratifications? Henry Trefflich's oft-repeated slogan – "a monkey in every home" – may not have come true, but he certainly got monkeys into many homes. We should know more about those homes and their more-than-human families.

1 Although humans are also animals, I stick to the human/animal binary throughout this text for the sake of avoiding cumbersome language like "nonhuman animals." But I do not wish to imply that I view humanity as superior to, or separate from, the rest of animal life.
2 Lieber, Leslie: "King of the Monkeys", in: *Washington Evening Star*, 11 January 1948, p. 10, 14.
3 McFadden, Robert: "Henry H. F. Trefflich, Importer of Animals, Dies at 70", in: *New York Times*, 9 July 1978, p. 2.
4 Lieber (1948), *King of the Monkeys*.
5 In general, much more research remains to be done on the American animal trade. Daniel Bender's excellent recent book focuses on zoos' acquisition of animals yet only touches on Trefflich briefly. See Bender, Daniel E. (2016): *The Animal Game. Searching for Wildness at the American Zoo*, Cambridge, p. 307–310. Amelia Brackett's article on the polio trials briefly discusses Trefflich's correspondence with Albert Sabin but does not discuss Trefflich's business in depth. See Brackett, Amelia (2013): "And Those That Are Missing. The Role and Experience of Dr Sabin's Chimpanzees in the Polio Crusade of the 1950s", in: *Chicago Journal of History*, vol. 2, p. 43–45. Trefflich also comes up in passing in Hanson, Elizabeth (2002): *Animal Attractions. Nature on Display in American Zoos*, Princeton, p. 79.
6 Later government inquiry into overseas animal shipments featured animal welfare advocates making explicit reference to the 28-Hour Law as model and venerated historical accomplishment. See U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce (1948): *Requiring Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, S. Rep., p. 11.
7 "Exotic" species are an admittedly fuzzy category over time and space. Generally, 20th-century Americans understood exotic pets as anything outside domesticated animals like dogs, cats, and, later, small mammals like hamsters.
8 Trefflich's business records seem to have not been preserved judging from my conversations with one of his descendants. Government statistics on exotic animal imports to the U.S. are helpful, but highly incomplete. On the modern endurance of "exotic" animal petkeeping in the U.S., one can watch the deranged "Joe Exotic" on the Netflix series "Tiger King," or consider that the largest tiger population of any modern country resides in America. On America's 10,000 tigers, see Popescu, Adam: "How Did America End Up with the World's Largest Tiger Population?", in: *The Guardian*, 21 September 2021, on: *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/21/tiger-trafficking-america, accessed 23 April 2023.
9 "Pythons Advocated as Pets by Dealer Who Should Know", in: *Wilmington Morning Star*, 11 May 1947, p. 7B.
10 Gates, of course, famously said that Microsoft's early goal was "a computer on every desk, in every home." It is safe to say that he was more successful than Trefflich in his ambitions. See Bae, Hannah: "Bill Gates' 40th Anniversary Email. Goal Was 'a Computer on Every Desk'", in: *CNN Business,* 6 April 2015, on: *CNN Business*, https://money.cnn.com/2015/04/05/technology/bill-gates-email-microsoft-40-anniversary/index.html, accessed 19 May 2022.
11 Of course, European interest in, and encounters with, the fauna of other continents and regions predated the 19th century. Nevertheless, the 19th century featured a major uptick in the accessibility of, and consumer demand for, animals Europeans and Americans deemed exotic.
12 The unique animals of the Australasian continent seem to have been less frequently acquired and displayed in this period.
13 Hoes, Charlotte M. (2022): "Live Cargo, Dead Ends. The German Wildlife Trade in Global Perspective," in: *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, vol. 70, p. 70, note 13. The Reiches have been little investigated by historians, but arise also in: Grier, Katherine C. (2003): "Buying Your Friends. The Pet Business and American Consumer Culture," in: Susan Strasser (Ed.): *Commodifying Everything. Relationships of the Market*, New York, p. 47–48; and Flint, Richard W. (1997): "American

Showmen and European Dealers. Commerce in Wild Animals in Nineteenth-Century America", in: R. J. Hoage, William A. Deiss (Eds): *New Worlds, New Animals. From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*, Baltimore, p. 101–105.

14 On Charles' claim, see Reiche, Charles ([1853] 1871): *The Bird Fancier's Companion. Tenth Edition*, New York and Boston, p. viii. On the half a million figure, see Reiche's associate Charles Holden (1875): *Holden's Book on Birds,* Boston, p. 111–112.

15 The Aquarium was stocked with many rare sea animals, including the manatee, see "A Visitor from Brazil", in: *New York Times*, October 31 1886, p. 3.

16 "Northern Africa. Rare and Curious Animals that are Destined to Recruit the Travelling Shows", in: *Chicago Tribune*, 4 June 1882, p. 6; "A Huge Passenger. Removal of Sampson, the Elephant, from Hoboken to Utica", in: *New York Times*, 7 April 1882, p. 8.

17 Charlotte Hoes identifies this region as modern-day Sudan and Egypt, which is also possible. See: Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 71.

18 Ostrich feathers were at the time highly valuable for use in women's hats. See "Hunting Ostriches. Peculiarities of the Monster Bird", in: *Detroit Free Press*, 7 February 1882, p. 3. One article attests that the Reiche brothers had an ostrich farm out of their Hoboken base as early as 1878, but it is the only one that I have seen asserting that. See "Ostrich Farming", in: *Daily American*, 8 November 1882, p. 2. On the Sylvan Lake ostrich farm and its 1883 founding, see "The Florida Ostrich Farm. How the Great Birds Are Doing at Sylvan Lake", in: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, courtesy of the *New York Telegram*, 5 August 1884, p. 7.

19 "Northern Africa", in: *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 June 1882, p. 6.

20 Ibid.

21 "Hunting Beasts in Africa", in: *San Marcos Free Press*, 26 October 1878, p. 7.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 It was presumably shot by the Reiches' hunters, although the shooter was unspecified.

26 "Northern Africa", in: *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 June 1882, p. 6.

27 "Science to be Surprised. Monsters Supposed to be Extinct Said to be Alive", in: *New York Times*, 18 September 1884, p. 8.

28 Sceptical press coverage drew this conclusion, too. Ibid., p. 8.

29 "Van Amburgh, Charles Reiche & Brother's New Railroad Shows!", in: *Yonkers Statesman*, 1 May 1885, p. 2.

30 "Indian Life and Customs", in: *New-York Tribune*, 15 April 1879, p. 8. On the Reiches' exhibition of the native American peoples in Europe, see the leaflet "Einige kurze Notizen über die hier anwesenden Indianer" at the Municipal Archive in Alfeld, Germany.

31 "Two Queer African Babies. A Chance to Identify the Missing Link", in: *New York Times*, 28 August 1887, p. 9.

32 Ibid.

33 For scholarly work on zoos as sites for debased contemporary interpretations of evolutionary theory, see Kjaergaard, Peter C. (2011): "Hurrah for the Missing Link!" A History of Apes, Ancestors and a Crucial Piece of Evidence, in: *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London,* vol. 65, no. 1; Rothfels, Nigel (1996): "Aztecs, Aborigines, and Ape-People. Science and Freaks in Germany, 1850–1900", in: Rosemary Garland-Thomson (Ed.): *Freakery. Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, New York, p. 158–172; Hochadel, Oliver (2010): "Darwin in the Monkey Cage. The Zoological Garden as a Medium of Evolutionary Theory", in: Dorothee Brantz (Ed.): *Beastly Natures. Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*, Charlottesville, VA, p. 81–107.

34 "Two Queer African Babies. A Chance to Identify the Missing Link", in: *New York Times*, 28 August 1887, p. 9.

35 Ibid.
36 "He is Left Alone", in: *New York Times*, 7 September 1887, p. 8.
37 Ibid.
38 Hoes (2022), *Live Cargo, Dead Ends*, p. 72, note 22.
39 On the dominance of the Hagenbeck, Reiche, and Ruhe companies around this time, see Ibid., p. 71–72.
40 See Trefflich, Henry; Anthony, Edward (1967): *Jungle for Sale*, New York, p. 218.
41 Ibid, p. 258.
42 Ibid, p. 233–238.
43 Ibid, p. 239–241.
44 See here and following ibid, p. 244–283.
45 "Macaque Monkey is New York Runaway", in: *Wausau Daily Herald*, 11 September 1934, p. 5.
46 Trefflich was also becoming well-versed in monkey escapes, too, and he gave the press some insight into his techniques for recapturing monkeys, see "Run 'Em Ragged and They Quit, Monk Advice", in: *Kingston Daily Freeman*, 24 August 1935, p. 5.
47 Ross, George: "In New York", in: *Salisbury Times*, 24 February 1936, p. 3.
48 There is no standard definition of "charismatic megafauna," but generally this refers to large mammals like lions, tigers, elephants, great apes, and others that have captivated Euro-Americans in particular, and dominate discussions about preventing species extinctions.
49 Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, p. ix.
50 On Carroll's role supplying some of the valuable rhesus monkeys that Trefflich sold to polio researchers, see Brackett (2013), *And Those That Are Missing*, p. 43–45.
51 Sullivan, Robert: "Dream of Love. US Ape Population has Increased, but Only by Importation", in: *New York Daily News*, 9 August 1942, p. 59.
52 India's post-colonial government would occasionally object to the quantity of monkeys being imported out of the country and to their treatment. See, for example Rosenthal, A. M.: "Red Tape Tangles India's Monkeys", in: *New York Times*, 2 March 1958, p. 26.
53 All information in this paragraph from: Neville, Charles: "Murder in the Jungle", in: *El Paso Times*, 5 October 1941, p. 47. I do not know how many expeditions Carroll made for Trefflich, but likely quite a few. At the end of the decade, their business relationship remained active, see "Trefflich Imports Gorillas", in: *The Town Talk*, 23 July 1949, p. 9.
54 Eventually, it seems, American laboratories were able to set up their own arrangements with Indian sources, thus breaking Trefflich's "near monopoly" by the late 1950s. See Michelmore, Peter: "It's Pathetic but It's Important. The Multi-Million-Dollar Monkey Business", in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1959, p. 76. Michelmore also comments on Trefflich's secrecy.
55 "Women the World Over", in: *Kansas City Star*, 11 June 1948, p. 29.
56 Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, photo insert between pages 184 and 185.
57 "Bring 'Em Back Alive Business Is in Bad Shape", in: *Dayton Daily News*, 10 August 1946, p. 2.
58 Pett, Saul: "Inflation in the Animal Kingdom", in: *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 9 September 1951, p. 62.
59 Cramming multitudes of different animals together in packed cargo holds or in networks of cages at various waystations is a recipe for the proliferation of zoonotic diseases, too. There is ample evidence that shipping conditions have long been abysmal, but, for example, the *New York Times* reported in 1958 that 3-to-8-pound monkeys used to be shipped from India to America with ten of them in each crate. See Rosenthal (1958), *Red Tape Tangles India's Monkeys*.
60 Rothfels, Nigel (2002): *Savages and Beasts. The Birth of the Modern Zoo*, Baltimore, p. 1–3; Bender (2016), *The Animal Game*, p. 146.
61 Trefflich was very proud of supplying monkeys to the polio vaccine trials. But if he dwelled on the suffering of the monkeys involved, I have seen no evidence. See Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, p. 4.

62 The experiments of the psychologist Harry Harlow seem particularly excessive. See Guerrini, Anita (2003): *Experimenting with Humans and Animals. From Galen to Animal Rights,* Baltimore, p. 129–131.
63 "Macaque Monkey is New York Runaway", in: *Wausau Daily Herald*, 11 September 1934, p. 5.
64 "Mike Back in Cage After Five-Day Frolic", in: *New York Times*, 24 July 1934, p. 19.
65 Ibid.
66 "100 Monkeys Remain Free on Long Island", in: *Baltimore Sun*, 24 August 1935, p. 2.
67 "448 Monkeys to Give Serum Arrive in NY", in: *New York Daily News*, 25 August 1935, p. 69.
68 "Monkey Hunt at Army Base", in: *Boston Globe*, 11 July 1936, p. 15.
69 "Park Row Monkey Leads a Mad Chase", in: *New York Times*, 23 May 1937, p. 1.
70 "Love and Bananas. Downfall of 4 Happy Monkeys", in: *New York Daily News*, 12 September 1938, p. 57.
71 For other simian-Trefflich hi-jinx, see "Monkey, Kitten Stage Big Show Resulting in Police Car Calls", in: *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 25 May 1942, p. 4; "Monkey Returns to Pet Shop", in: *New York Times*, 28 August 1944, p. 13; "Brooklyn Monkey-at-Large Again Outsmarts Trappers", in: *New York Daily News*, 11 February 1947, p. 23; "Monkey Will Be Shot if Ship Snares Fail", in: *New York Times*, 3 January 1952, p. 20.
72 "All Those (100) Monkeyshines Serious Business to Trefflich", in: *Yonkers Herald Statesman*, 13 May 1946, p. 1.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 "Monkey Spree Holds Owner", in: *New York Daily News*, 15 May 1946, p. 441.
76 "Court Dismisses Monkey Business", in: *New York Daily News*, 21 May 1946, p. 449.
77 "Monkey Keeper in Court. Reveals Orders for Pets Pour in After Case Is Put Off", in: *New York Times*, 15 May 1946, p. 22.
78 "Firemen Grab Madcap Monk of New York", in: *Charlotte Observer*, 29 August 1946, p. 19.
79 Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, p. 66.
80 Kihss, Peter: "Bear Tale", in: *New York World-Telegram*, reprinted in *Raleigh News and Observer*, 5 September 1937, p. 34.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 "Bear on the Loose Gives Pause to Crowd; Climbs Wall Into Loft Before Recapture", in: *New York Times*, 31 August 1951, p. 16.
84 By "agency," I simply mean the capacity to express – and to try to actuate – individual, independent desires.
85 "Little Rock's Elephant Will Surely Understand", in: *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, 4 March 1954, p. 27. I do not know if there were any further issues when the final separation came.
86 Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, p. x.
87 "6 Baby Elephants Disrupt Idlewild", in: *New York Times*, 9 March 1949, p. 27.
88 "Elephant Rides in Auto, Dies", in: *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 10 July 1949, p. 1.
89 "$5,000 Baby Catches Pneumonia", in: *New York Daily News*, 10 July 1949, p. 51.
90 "Elephant Rides in Auto", as in note 88. Trefflich even summoned his personal physician, who injected Dumbo with penicillin and adrenalin. It was not enough. See "30-Inch Elephant Promised to Zoo Here Dies in NY", in: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 10 July 1949, p. 3.
91 "Bimbo Wasn't So Dumb(o); Henry Was", in: *The Tennessean*, 10 July 1949, p. 9.
92 "Two New Born Rhesus Monkeys Among Nearly 500 Brought Here from India", in: *Boston Globe*, 13 August 1936, p. 18.
93 U.S. Congress (1948), *Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, p. 8, 12.
94 Ibid.

95 In 1963, Trefflich told Congress that his monkey attrition rate in international shipping averaged 17%, mostly caused by customs delays. These remarks might be unreliable as he had a vested interest in persuading Congress to drop tariffs on his animals. See U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance (1963): *Wild Birds and Wild Animals*, 88th Cong., 1st Session, S. Rep., p. 23.
96 All information here comes from Trefflich's letter of 5 March 1948, reprinted in U.S. Congress (1948), *Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, p. 32.
97 Baldwin, C. M. (1948): "San Francisco Zoological Gardens", in: U.S. Congress: *Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, p. 17.
98 Ulmer, Frederick (1948): "Philadelphia Zoo", in: U.S. Congress: *Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, p. 18–19.
99 Wentzel, W. F. H. (1948): "Western Pennsylvania Humane Society", in: U.S. Congress: *Humane Treatment of Animals and Birds*, p. 25.
100 The final bill was enacted on 29 June 1948 as 80 S. 1447 – Wild Animals and Birds Humane Transportation Regulations.
101 "Animal Cargo a Record", in: *New York Times*, 7 May 1949, p. 15.
102 On not getting attached to the "merchandise," see Trefflich; Anthony (1967), *Jungle for Sale*, p. 88.
103 "Fire Results in Trefflich Animal Deaths", in: *The Billboard*, 22 October 1955, p. 53.
104 In 1950, Trefflich estimated that 80% of his gross income, or $200,000 of $250,000, came from simian sales. See Albright, E. C. (1929): "King of the Monkeys", in: *Coronet,* vol. 29, no. 2, p. 106.
105 Lieber (1948), *King of the Monkeys*, p. 14.
106 *Pythons Advocated as Pets by Dealer Who Should Know* (1947), p. 7B; "Depressed? You Need a Chimp Around the House", in: *Des Moines Register*, 11 May 1947, p. 6.
107 *Pythons Advocated as Pets by Dealer Who Should Know* (1947), p. 7B.
108 Ibid.
109 Daly, Maureen: "Offbeat Pets of the City", in: *New York Times*, 16 June 1957, p. 203.
110 "Monkeys, the Law Says, Are Vicious as Lions. Owner of Five Little Pets Just Sheds Tears", in: *New York Times*, 22 September 1949, p. 33.
111 Ibid.
112 In the same article, he also puzzlingly claimed that he could "tell a chimp's IQ from the shape of his face. The smart ones have high foreheads and high cheekbones." See Albright (1929): *King of the Monkeys*, p. 105–106.
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Lion Capital

Zoo Acquisition Strategies in Interwar Poland

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Zoo Acquisition Strategies in Interwar Poland

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Abstract

The Zoological Garden in Poznań was established in the 1870s and maintained a provincial character within the German Empire. After the First World War, the zoo was taken over by Polish authorities and gained the status of national heritage. Nevertheless, it encountered problems with sustainability due to limited funds, as well as with installing its own institutional identity and social legitimacy amidst postwar austerity. This article maps out three key strategies which the zoo devised for making new acquisitions to the collection, namely through specimen exchanges, donations, and captive breeding. Focusing on lions, it demonstrates how these strategies were intertwined. The zoo gained new lion specimens by exchanging other species with German animal trade agents and from donations by circuses, Polish travellers and missionaries. Building a foundation for a lion breeding program, the zoo hoped to increase its bargaining power for further exchanges with international wildlife traders.

Introduction

In 1921, the zoological garden in Poznań in Western Poland celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The zoo was formally established in 1875 with the formation of the Association Zoological Garden (*Verein Zoologischer Garten*) at a time when the city of Poznań belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia. After a quick calculation, one can easily notice that something does not add up: in 1921 there were still four years until the zoo's golden jubilee. The reason for this mismatch lies in postwar national politics and the economic recession of the 1920s that threatened the zoo with closure. When the Polish administration stepped in in June 1919, they urgently needed to secure financial and material support to keep the zoo operating. An upcoming round-number anniversary was a perfect pretext for gathering funds. In the hopes of drawing public attention to the only functioning zoological garden left in the country after the First World War, the Poles decided to commemorate a more whimsical foundational story of the zoo.

In 1871, the chairman of a local bowling club received a rather eccentric birthday gift in the form of a small animal menagerie. His colleagues bestowed upon him a pig, goat, sheep, cat, rabbit, squirrel, goose, duck, chicken, and peacock – all picked up on the streets of the city – plus a trained brown bear and a monkey purchased from Roma travellers. This haphazard assemblage of animals was initially kept in the restaurant garden of the Stargard-Posener railway station, which after its closure became home to the provincial zoo. The modest collection kept growing, especially after it was handed over to the Association tasked with curating a more intentional zoological collection. In 1880, the zoo kept 250 specimens from 59 different species, and by 1907, the collection had almost quadrupled with over nine hundred specimens from about four hundred species. This growing trajectory was disrupted by the First World War, which had taken a toll on the animals, leaving only 243 specimens from 75 species alive when the Poles took over the zoo. To prevent its liquidation, the new directorship needed to restock the depleted collection and tackle a serious deficit in the budget (over five million Marks) caused by postwar inflation.[1] They used the anniversary to drum up public support for one of the oldest zoos in now independent Poland. Therefore, their decision to commemorate an earlier date of foundation was motivated both by the greater prestige accorded to institutions with longer history, and the need to speed up the celebrations that were geared towards saving the zoo.

As an institution known mostly for public entertainment, the zoo was not a priority for the rebuilding state. It received slim governmental and municipal subsidies that barely covered the budget deficit. The new director, Bolesław Cylkowski (1885–1942), launched a national campaign to save "the only Polish zoo," presented as such to garner public support. He encouraged his fellow citizens to visit the zoo as part of their patriotic duty, and the attendance increased from 184,138 visitors in 1919 to 257,774 in 1920.[2] To tackle the issue of the collection itself, Cylkowski and the Association members issued calls for donations in the local and nation-wide press, including hunting journals. The latter were mostly directed at foresters and landowners, who were asked to deliver any interesting local species to the zoo. Appeals to stimulate interest in native fauna were gaining traction, with charismatic species becoming foci for international wildlife conservation efforts. For example, the free-ranging population of the European bison in the Białowieża Forest was wiped out at the end of the war and the international efforts to save the species from extinction gave impetus to the national campaign to save the zoo.[3] This shift from foreign to native species was dictated by the financial and political circumstances of the last zoo in the country with limited access to international animal trade business.[4] However, this does not mean that the Poznań Zoo switched to displaying endemic species only.

This article explores the ways in which the peripheral institution sustained its exotic animal populations. After all, most people in Europe still associate zoological gardens with charismatic animals such as elephants, giraffes, or lions brought from "faraway" lands. These large, strange, and dangerous creatures serve as the epitome of exoticism that the zoo was banking on from its early days as an institution tightly intertwined with the colonial animal trade.[5] This article specifically focuses on lions kept in Poznań between 1921 and 1935, in order to show how the zoo, which was struggling with its own institutional identity and serious financial difficulties, attracted visitors who expected encounters with exotic beasts. Lions exemplify the ways in which the zoo procured such new specimens, namely, through donations, exchanges, and captive breeding. The focus on one particular species allows me to demonstrate how these three acquisition strategies were interconnected. This kind of overlap often involved the management of other species; therefore, this article also discusses camels that happened to play an important role in the lion acquisition story.

The thrifty ways of stocking and diversifying the collection adopted by Poznań Zoo pre-empted the major shift in the role of the institution toward ex situ species conservation in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Started in the 1960s, the processes of decolonisation limited access to wild-caught exotic animals and necessitated captive breeding as the new standard. Meanwhile, the international networks of zoological gardens allowed for the exchange of specimens between institutions to ensure the genetic diversity of captive populations.[6] As the lion case demonstrates, some zoos already developed similar acquisition strategies during the interwar period to cope with their own peripherality within the global wildlife trade. This exposes the conservationist turn in the zoo politics and practices as similarly dictated by the necessity to sustain captive animal populations, rather than concerns for species loss. In this sense, the economic laws of supply and demand were the determining factors driving the latest zoo reform. In this light, zoo specimens appear as what Nicole Shukin called the "animal capital", or the carnal traffic in animal bodies, their reproductive value stretched beyond the realm of biological life, and their symbolic value exploited for human profit and entertainment.[7] In the zoo, sentient beings were rendered fungible commodities that could be (re)produced, accumulated, and exchanged. Their individual and collective life stories remain fragmented and often unfinished because of this commodification. Therefore, what I call *the lion capital* serves as an example of such species-specific commodification of animal bodies, reproduction, and fungibility: one tailored for institutional rather than species survival. For the directorship of a peripheral institution with not much spending power, the lion capital was an investment into the zoo's future and sustainability.

Bolshevik Camels

By the end of the (purported) anniversary year, several German newspapers circulated information that the Poznań Zoo was closing due to bad management.[8] With limited funds for proper feed and veterinary care, the surviving animals in the zoo were perishing quickly. In March 1921, three lions and two young wolves died from a parasitic infection because they were fed spoiled meat.[9] This was a big loss for a small collection left with only a few large carnivores on display. The only lion left on the zoo grounds was a monument dedicated to one of its former directors, Robert Jaeckel (1851–1907). For the Poles, the bronze statue designed by August Gaul, a Berlin-based sculptor

known for capturing animal life, was a bitter reminder of the institution's golden age under the German director. Polish members of the Association promoted the cause of saving the zoo as a matter of national honour:

> *Like all scientific institutions, zoological gardens are the evidence of the city's culture. Poznań, as the only city in the whole of Poland to have a zoological garden, can be proud of it, and the duty and honour of its citizenry should be not only to provide small subsidies that let it vegetate but rather to equip it so that if our institution cannot outdo other European zoological gardens, it can at least keep up with them.*[10]

Keeping up with European trends meant displaying attractive animals from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. To counter the rumours about the zoo's closure, the management committed to restock the animal collection and promised to bring lions of blood and flesh back to Poznań.[11] Despite the aforementioned calls for more native species to be exhibited, exotic specimens were still highly desired as tokens of political power. Consider this excerpt from one of the many appeals for donations, speculating far-reaching diplomatic networks developed by the Second Polish Republic, and cemented with wild animals donated to the zoological collection:

> *Maybe we will see such inscriptions on its* [the zoo's – M.S.] *fences: royal lion – a gift of Consul X. from Algiers, Bengal tiger – a gift of Consul Y. from Calcutta, jaguar – a gift of deputy Z. from Buenos Aires, polar bear – from the naval school in Gdańsk, Japanese hoopoe from deputy Patek from Tokyo.*[12]

Notice that four out of five species on this wish list are predators, and three are big cats. The "royal lion" is the first animal mentioned as one of Africa's most iconic charismatic species and a must-have in any zoo.

Donations comprised the main source of new specimens, but they were not really coming from consuls and diplomats. In response to the appeals from the zoo's board of trustees, landowners contributed large amounts of domestic fowl and local game species. Exotic animals, which were considered more valuable, occasionally made their way to the collection, too. Yet not all of them were there to stay, as they rather constituted assets that held value for sale or exchange. For example, the Polish-Soviet War of 1920 reaped several camels that had been brought to the war front by the Bolsheviks and

seized by the Polish troops as living war trophies. They were domesticated Bactrian camels used as beasts of burden by the Soviet army.[13] In December 1920, the sixty-first regiment of infantry donated two camels to the Poznań Zoo. The soldiers apprehended the wandering animals near Łomża.[14] In November, Warsaw municipality deposited three more camels, also captured by Polish soldiers, to the only Polish zoo at the time (the Warsaw Zoo did not officially open its gates until 1928).[15] Later on, even more Bactrians ended up in Poznań. In 1925, another Soviet camel went astray across the border near Grodno and was about to be exchanged for draft horses, but instead, the Ministry of Military Affairs decided to send it to Poznań to join his fellow ungulate veterans.[16]

In the zoo, these draft animals were supposed to symbolise exotic wildness. Their tameness was an advantage and soon camelback rides became a new attraction for younger visitors. The zoo is an institution that balances the wildness/domestication boundary to its best advantage. Once, the camels were even employed as a living advertisement for an outdoor performance from which the proceeds went to the zoo (Fig. 1).[17] The play was based on the famous adventure novel *In Desert and Wilderness* by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916).[18] Its action takes place in Egypt and Sudan, so to promote the performance, actors dressed in Arab-like outfits (sporting fitted white sheets rather than actual gallibayas) led the camels through the streets of Poznań to bring the supposed atmosphere of northeast Africa to the Polish city. It must be noted that the two-humped Bactrian camels are native to the steppes of Central Asia, while one-humped dromedaries would be more suited to depict the pack animals used in the deserts of Africa and the Middle East.[19] Bactrian camels and dromedaries are two distinct species occupying different geographic areas. Just like the novel, the peculiar caravan moving through Poznań exploited colonial tropes about exotic animals and cultures that oftentimes ignore historical and geographical accuracy.

Yet the camels proved not exotic enough for the zoo, or at least their number made them disposable. Additionally, their origin as war trophies raised concerns over the institution becoming a "pinfold for camels."[20] This kind of accidental accumulation of specimens from one species served as a resource for exchanges with German zoos and animal dealers. In 1921, the zoo held a total of seven camels, and Cylkowski concluded: "There are too many of them, we want to exchange them for something else at Hagenbeck's."[21] Kazimierz Szczerkowski (1877–1952), who took over the director's position in 1922, continued his predecessor's plan. He wanted to assemble a more diverse

Figure 1 | Camels on the streets of Poznań, 1932.
Polish National Digital Archive, 3/1/0/8/6885, Common source

collection with iconic animals in order to satisfy the expectations of visitors craving more exoticism. And indeed, he soon managed to exchange the "Bolshevik camels" for lions with the Hagenbeck company. The previous director had approached John H. A. Hagenbeck (1866–1940), the half-brother of the world-famous animal trader based in Hamburg, several times before, but the asking prices (e.g., 80 to 100 Pounds Sterling for a lion) were out of reach for a struggling peripheral institution. It was only once Poznań Zoo was in possession of surplus specimens of interest to Hagenbeck that they could negotiate an exchange.

A pair of lions, sent by Hagenbeck from Amsterdam, arrived in Poznań in January 1922.[22] The big cats settled in the new heated enclosure specially prepared for the noble guests. Each animal required a daily supply of ten pounds of horse meat that underwent veterinary inspection to prevent any infection with diseases that had caused the death of the previous lion residents.[23] After the former fatal incidents, carrion had been eliminated from the carnivores' diet. Szczerkowski was praised for his ambition to revive the zoo to its former

glory – one journalist described him as a man of action with a tenacious spirit: "He wanted lions, there are lions!"[24] Building on this successful exchange, the newly appointed director envisioned starting a lion breeding program on the zoo's premises. This would ensure more specimens that could then be used for further exchanges.

Szczerkowski chose lions because zoologists considered them to breed easily in captivity. In this sense, fertility was the key quality that transformed lions into a "lively capital," and one that rested on their reproductive capacities.[25] Other associated characteristics of individual animals such as gender, age, and origin served as important indicators for their value for the breeding program. For this purpose, a second female lion was purchased from the L. Ruhe company based in Alfeld near Hanover. Unfortunately, the four-year-old lioness turned out to be infertile. Szczerkowski returned her and demanded another specimen as a replacement.[26] This request was quickly accommodated thanks to the fact that the company had just established its own catching and acclimatisation station in Dire Dawa in east Ethiopia that provided a steady supply of lions.[27] But for the Poznań Zoo, this kind of direct purchase was a rare occurrence. The institution mostly resorted to other ways of acquiring lions – beyond transactions with animal traders and specimen exchanges.

Precious Gifts and Lion Pride

In the following years, the zoo gained several new lions from Polish travellers, big game hunters, and missionaries.[28] However, accommodating these generous gifts often proved difficult. Whereas some of the donations resulted from negotiations with owners of big cats that were already kept in the territory of Poland, others required the zoo's active participation in organising their delivery from Africa. In contrast, when animals were purchased from a wildlife trading company, the transportation costs were included in the price, and typically, the trader delivered the specimens directly to the buyer (unless these costs were exceptionally high or when otherwise negotiated). Donations of exotic animals were sporadic, but by the mid-1920s, more Polish adventurers explored the African continent, and they occasionally brought wild animals back with them or sent them to Poland.[29]

In 1926, Father Dawid Drwinga promised to hand over two lion cubs to the Poznań Zoo. The Catholic priest served a mission in Northern Rhodesia (current Zambia) in the protectorate of the British South Africa Company and decided to send the animals to his home country. Local press reported that the benevolent gift still posed logistical difficulties for the zoo, because the receiving institution was burdened with organising transport for the precious animals:

> *From Kotumdue* [Katondwe] *you need to carry the lion cubs to the nearest train station in Sinoia that is eight-days walk away. From Sinoia, take the rail to Salisbury, and from there you can take the long rail route to the east coast to the port of Beira. However, the most difficult task is the sea transport. A glance at the map will allow you to assess the long way around the Cape of Good Hope, along the east coast of Africa to Europe, the more that the transport must be made by a cargo ship sailing far slower than a passenger ship. Difficulties abound* [...].[30]

The Second Polish Republic had no colonial territories in Africa, so organising such transports depended solely on diplomatic relations with colonial powers on the continent (mostly the British and the French) and on commercial enterprises.[31] In other words, bringing the cubs to the zoo required political and financial resources to cover the transport expenses. Finally, after sixty-five days of arduous journey through two continents, the cubs arrived in Poznań. Named *Eryka* and *Cezar*, these two wild-caught youngsters were a perfect addition to the breeding pool carefully assembled by the zoo director. It is unclear how they were captured, but it is possible that their mother was killed and the hunters took the orphans, as was commonly practised by animal traders.

The lion clan in the zoo was thriving thanks to onsite breeding. On 5 January 1927, *Eryka* bore two lion cubs from her union with *Cezar* (there is no information on whether the Rhodesian lions were related to each other). The following month, another lioness named *Gora* gave birth to three cubs. This lioness was entrusted to the zoo by the Medrano-Swoboda circus company from Vienna under the condition that if she were to reproduce, the zoo would give one of her newborns back to the circus. As it turned out, this deal proved beneficial for both parties involved. Finally, in October of the same year, *Wanda* (sometimes called *Manda*), who was purchased from Leipzig, bore three more cubs. Altogether, that gave nine cubs in just one year! With a growing pride of lions in the collection, the zoo was building its bargaining power for further wildlife exchanges.

These cubs were not only born into captivity, they were also born into becoming living commodities. The local press praised the director's resourcefulness, comparing his breeding program to "a wholesale wildlife production," and proclaimed somewhat arrogantly that "at this rate, Congo, Cameroon or Liberia can disappear from the face of the Earth."[32] This statement can be interpreted as a humorous declaration of independence from the colonial wildlife trade dominated by German merchants. It is obviously exaggerated to mask the colonial longings cultivated in interwar Poland.[33] At the same time, imagining lion breeding at the zoo as a "wholesale" business marks animal life as bio-capital.[34] When life itself is a commodity, biological reproduction becomes more obviously collapsed with production. This process is most evident in livestock husbandry, where the animal body is quite explicitly commodified and consumed, whereas exotic zoo animals typically lend themselves to a more romantic vision of noble beasts.

All the newborn cubs were charmingly referred to as "kinglets" (*królewiątka*), a word in Polish containing the word lion (*lew*). Eryka was hailed the first matriarch of the lion kingdom in Poznań. The lioness was represented as a caring and protective mother.[35] Her parenting skills were closely monitored and reported on:

> *The charming big kittens are gaining weight, just as their tender mother Eryka who lets her clumsy cubs leave the warm enclosure into the spacious cage where with admirable patience she watches over her kids teaching them how to walk on their wobbly paws. The fawn coloured Eryka follows the little ones and when she notices that someone gratefully observes such one-of-a-kind lesson from the other side of the bars, she delicately and skilfully picks them up with her jaws and takes them into the enclosure as if she wanted to shelter her most precious treasure from covetous eyes.*[36]

Unfortunately, *Eryka* fell ill just a few weeks after giving birth to *Sułtan* and *Sula*. The local press issued a call from the zoo administration, asking for donations of nurturing bitches to act as surrogates for the hungry lion cubs.[37] Despite the efforts of a team of veterinarians from the university comprised of Dr Jan Starkowski, Dr Edward Lubicz-Niezabitowski, Prof. Dr Stanisław Runge, and Bolesław Witkowski, "the queen" *Eryka* died in March, orphaning her two cubs.[38] Post-mortem examination revealed that she suffered from severe pneumonitis. Despite equipping the large carnivores' enclosure with a heating system, the cold climate proved disastrous for the lioness. Her death is a grim reminder that the commodification of wildlife often requires large amounts

of care work, specialised infrastructure, and knowledge about species-specific needs. The zoo's loss, however, meant a gain for another institution conveniently located on the zoo grounds; *Eryka's* skeleton and her prepared skin replenished the collection of the Natural History Museum that was moved to the former restaurant pavilion of the zoological garden in 1924.[39] In this way, the lioness remained a commodity and a spectacle even after death.

Szczerkowski used the accumulation of young lions to procure other exotic species for the collection. He traded not only with other zoos and wildlife dealers, but also with circuses, which were an important source of exotic specimens for many zoos. Traveling menageries sometimes sold surplus or troublesome animals to local zoos, but transactions in the opposite direction were rare. Generally, circuses preferred buying trained animals from wildlife dealers, but young zoo specimens were also considered. For example, Szczerkowski managed to sell *Sułtan* to the Warsaw-based Staniewski Brothers circus. All the other young lions were exchanged abroad for tigers, leopards, and pumas, leaving only *Cezar* and his daughter *Leda* to "rule" the zoo. This is how this strategy was explained:

> *Exotic animals are usually very expensive so to be able to purchase those wonderful specimens that we currently have, it was necessary to resort to the only solution, namely exchange because otherwise, we did not have enough money for buying all these animals.*[40]

In this sense, captive breeding was a necessary step towards (re)producing and accumulating animal capital as a basis for specimen exchanges.

Nevertheless, donations as a source of new specimens did not lose importance when the zoo invested in captive breeding. They occasionally complemented the breeding plans. In 1929, *Eryka's* successor, the six-year-old *Wanda*, died from internal bleeding during her second labour. After losing the two main breeding females, and giving away all the youngsters, the zoo director came into possession of two more lions from a local aristocrat. In 1928, Jan Władysław Pętkowski brought with him a pair of lion cubs that he had caught during a safari hunting expedition in the Tanganyika territory in Western Africa. *Simbo* and *Leda* lived in his estate in Wola Kożuszkowa, near Poznań.[41] The appeal of cuddly cubs that symbolise superiority, nobility, and leadership made them a favourite accessory for eccentric aristocrats.[42] Hunters recognised lions as territorial animals who protect their family groups, and this social behaviour primed the animal for becoming a symbol of monarchic

Figure 2 | Cover of the magazine *Wielkopolska Ilustracja* (1929) showing Pętkowski's brother with one of the lions, probably *Simbo*. The caption reads: "After countryside holidays… to the Zoological Garden." University of Poznań, Library

kinship and royal power. After one year of their residency in the manor, the grown lions became bothersome. Pętkowski decided to donate them to the Poznań Zoo. When the director visited his estate, accompanied by a custodian from the Natural History Museum, the zoologists were surprised at how tame the lions were: the animals behaved like domestic pets rather than ferocious beasts (Fig. 2).[43] This was good news for them, because docile animals adapt to captivity more easily.

The lion pair was a welcome addition to the zoo collection, because wild-caught specimens increased the genetic diversity of the small breeding pool. The zoologists were aware of the dangers of inbreeding, but they managed the captive lion population without any specified guidelines. When assembling the lion pride at the zoo, Szczerkowski had only considered the individual animals' capacity to reproduce, while leaving out species-specific needs such as the composition of the group and kinship ties. In the end, female animals bore the gendered costs of reproductive labour, which made them more vulnerable to diseases and premature death as evidenced by their higher mortality. The destiny of the newborn cubs was always to be exchanged for other species. In this sense, the lion capital was a form of commodification and accumulation that was pivotal for other acquisition strategies, developed out of the necessity and due to limited access to the global wildlife trade.

Conclusion

In 2021, Poznań Zoo celebrated its one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary, thus, choosing to continue the tradition of honouring an earlier foundation date. For this special occasion, the zoo turned the old pavilion for large predators (Fig. 3) into a museum commemorating the institution's history. Named the Museum of Zoo History and Lion, it also pays tribute to the former feline inhabitants of the enclosure. In the 1920s and 1930s, the building popularly referred to as the lion's house (*lwiarnia*) was used to keep tigers, leopards, and pumas, which the zoo acquired thanks to the lion breeding program. During the interwar period, systematic captive breeding was not yet a common acquisition strategy for most Western zoos, given that it was still legally possible to source exotic specimens directly from their natural habitats. However, for an institution with a small budget and limited access to the colonial wildlife trade,

breeding was one of the thriftiest solutions available at the time. Combined with random donations from missionaries and aristocrats, as well as loans from circuses, captive breeding allowed for accumulating specimens of one species. Initially, exchanges were the only way the Poznań Zoo could access the inventory of European wildlife trading companies. By focusing on lion breeding, the director eventually managed to exchange them for other species, which increased the diversity of the collection and its appeal to visitors.

It is important to mention that Szczerkowski was able to return on this lion capital thanks to his active participation in the meetings of the European zoo directors. German directors had been meeting informally since 1887 in order to share practical knowledge and experiences in institutional management, treating animal diseases, adapting buildings for wildlife, etc.[44] After the First World War, the meetings were resumed in a broader Central-European framework, and Szczerkowski joined this international collaboration early

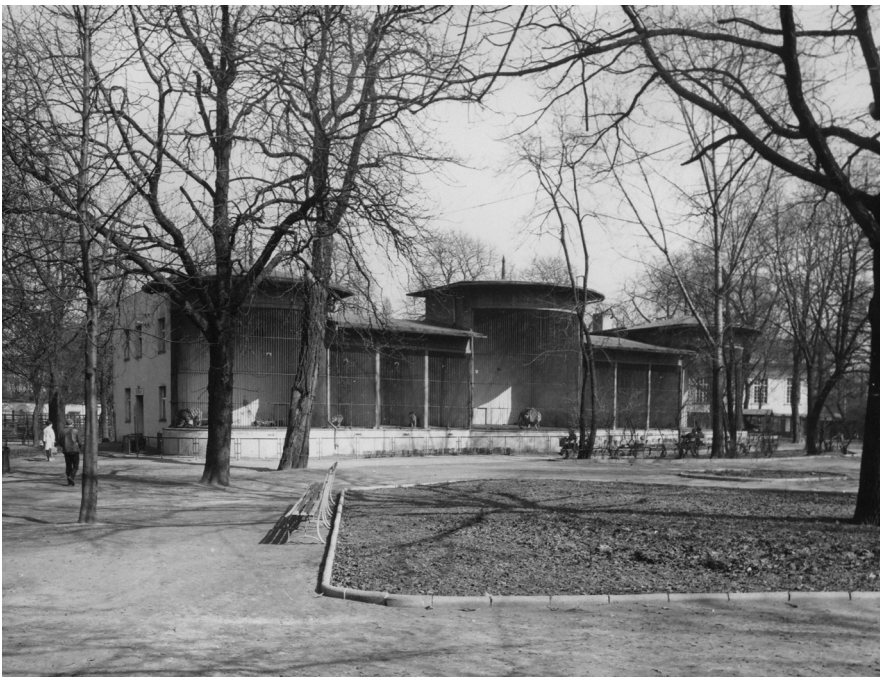

Figure 3 | Pavilion for large predators at the Old Zoo in Poznań, 1968.
© F. Maćkowiak, from the collection of the Municipal Monument Conservator in Poznań, cyryl.poznan.pl

on. In 1935, he took part in the creation of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG) in Basel, a forerunner organisation of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA).[45] On the one hand, Polish participation held a symbolic and diplomatic significance, while on the other, it had a practical dimension when it came to acquisitions. Poznań Zoo gained access to an international zoo network that was crucial for finding prospective buyers for the lions and arranging specimen exchanges.

To a certain extent, this peripheral zoo and its ingenious combination of acquisition strategies could be regarded as a precursor to postwar zoo management. After the Second World War, the international collaboration modelled on the IUDZG became the cornerstone for ex situ wildlife conservation. It became the golden standard for accredited zoos, partly because it responded to the same problem the Poznań Zoo had tried to solve with captive breeding: limited access to wild-caught animals. However, it must be noted that Szczerkowski did not use tools such as studbooks to monitor and control the lion breeding program. This element of reproductive technology was first adapted from selective breeding in agriculture for managing captive wisent populations in several European zoos, and by the Polish branch of the International Society for the Protection of the European Bison (ISPEB), which was based in Poznań. Even though the wisent rescue mission coincided with lion breeding and the same people from the Poznań Zoo were involved in both projects, the methods and tools for managing both projects did not overlap. The reason for this discrepancy can be found in the different motives for breeding the animals: lions were treated as fungible commodities, while wisent reproduction focused on ensuring genetic diversity and purity within the captive population dispersed between several zoos across Europe. When generating the lion capital, the breeding pool was limited to the specimens available in the Poznań Zoo.

The immediate purpose of the lion breeding program was the production of living commodities. In this sense, the lion capital approximated the "undead capital" described by Jonathan Saha in relation to working elephants in imperial British Burma as living means of production.[46] By analysing how the Poznań Zoo acquired and bred its lions during the interwar period, this article illustrates how zoo specimens were rendered both lively and undead capital. Additionally, it captures the moment when reproductive labour became critical for such commodification of wildlife, at a time when the global animal trade was starting to lose its footing.

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Cheetah (and Dog) Politics

Interspecies Relations and the Colonial Legacy of Cheetah Conservation Programs in South(ern) Africa

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Abstract

Cheetahs have been used as hunting comrades and exotic pets for millennia. In the colonial state, they served particular functions, some of which, as this article aims to demonstrate, have survived into post-colonial society. Looking at conservation and relocation programs in Southern Africa that have been established from the 1990s onwards, this chapter argues for a multilayered approach that also takes interspecific relationships seriously. In the case of the cheetah, livestock guarding dogs have been used to protect both the herds as well as the cheetahs that were casualties of farmers safeguarding their property. However, these dogs had to play a role that went far beyond the mere guarding function: they were used as stand-ins for colonial (and Apartheid) control. Looking at current debates about species survival and repatriation also helps to uncover these long-lasting colonial topics of exoticism, "wildness" and cultivation.

Figure 1 | Promotional Photo for the Cheetah Encounter. © Courtesy of Cheetah Outreach, South Africa, Photo from Website, Visitor Information, https://www.cheetah.co.za/co_visitorinformatio.htm

Introduction

Approximately fifty kilometers outside of Cape Town lies the city of Somerset West, named for the former governor of the cape colony, Lord Charles Henry Somerset (1767–1831). The city is populated by 55,000 people, most of them white, with Afrikaans as the majority language. Somerset West is also home to Cheetah Outreach, a wildlife conservation park, which houses cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus jubatus*) and other animals, and which aims "to promote the survival of the free ranging, South African, cheetah" by ensuring its "co-existence" with humans and other animals "on farmland areas in South Africa".[1]

To reach this goal, they provide an "educational program for learners in the Cape Town area" and foster "public awareness at our facilities, and research projects".[2] Cheetah Outreach, one can say at the outset, is a complicated, multi-layered place: it promotes conservation efforts for wild animals, while at the same time raising animals in captivity. Like exotic pets, those non-traditional or unusual animals kept for companionship, entertainment, or aesthetic purposes are not commonly domesticated, yet are meant to serve as "ambassadors" for the organisation. Visitors can book "encounters" with the animals within their enclosure (Fig. 1).[3]

"For those who desire a far more exclusive and intimate experience," Cheetah Outreach advertises,

> *we offer a VIP Private Cheetah Encounter with an adult male cheetah. Here we bring the cheetah to a private area, and your group will be able to spend some special time with the cheetah and have their photos taken with him. You will have the privilege of having the cheetah and his handlers to yourselves for the best part of 30 minutes. Children of all ages are able to participate.*[4]

Petting the animals is also part of this special VIP encounter. To make things even more interesting in this multi-species assemblage, Cheetah Outreach hosts a programme to breed Andalusian guard dogs. These dogs are placed on farms to assist farmers in protecting their livestock from cheetah attacks. On top of this, Cheetah Outreach supports (even if not enthusiastically) a programme to translocate cheetahs from Africa to India in order to replace the Asian cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) that is now extinct on the Indian subcontinent.[5] The multi-species assemblages of cheetah-human-dog relations are more complicated than they seem at first, making them all the more worthwhile for historians to look at and further concentrate on the different forms of (bodily) practices involved.[6]

The objective of this contribution is to examine these inter- and multispecies relations and to analyse how they have been shaped by a colonial legacy that promoted certain concepts of the "wild" as in need of protection, conservation, or annihilation. It also traces the influence of a global wildlife trade that has always particularly valued cheetahs for their exotic and charismatic nature, making them desirable as status symbols, pets, and attractions. Applying recent approaches in animal history that are sensitive to the power dynamics of colonial pasts, this paper highlights the role of the animals and their complicated agencies.[7] Using Cheetah Outreach as a starting point, it looks at cheetah conservation (and dogs!) in southern Africa, particularly South Africa and Namibia, in the later 20th and early 21st centuries, to see how the ideas about the exotic pet trade, colonial land access, and (post-)colonial conservation programmes have shaped ideas about who should be protected and why.

Cheetahs as Domesticates: Just a Wild Little Thing to Pet

Of all big cats, cheetahs are the easiest to tame, making them a seemingly perfect pet for the status-conscious. Throughout history and across cultures, cheetahs have been associated with royalty and nobility. In some regions, wealthy elites used them as hunting companions, cementing their image as creatures of the upper class. Yet keeping cheetahs as pets can also be seen as a form of colonial continuity, as this practice featured prominently in the historical exploitation and exoticisation of African wildlife by Westerners. The demand for cheetahs as exotic pets has led to a thriving (and now mostly illegal) trade, which threatens the survival of wild cheetah populations in Africa and led to their extinction in India. In addition, the trade of cheetahs has often been facilitated by Western tourists and expatriates in Africa, perpetuating the notion that wild animals can be commodified and exploited for entertainment. This close entanglement can be seen today as well: even though Cheetah Outreach's mission statement clearly condemns the exotic-pet trade as wrong and dangerous for the survival of the species, their message is delivered by making individual captive cats available. They therefore follow an animal-individualising approach that emphasises the emotional connection between humans and cheetahs. Romeo, one of the cheetahs currently housed by Cheetah Outreach, is introduced as being "extremely affectionate and [loving] all the attention he gets during encounters as well as from staff and volunteers".[8] Ebony, another cheetah, is described as having "a sweet and easygoing [*sic*] temperament".[9] Furthermore, we learn that "he enjoys interaction with everyone and has turned into a wonderful ambassador for Cheetah Outreach."[10] Naming the cheetahs reflects the human-centric perspective in which humans assign meanings, labels, and identities to animals based on human understandings and cultural contexts.

Being an ambassador for their own extinction thus only works if the cheetahs also entertain the visitors by being friendly, docile animals that are precisely not "wild". Indeed, a recent study based on interviews conducted with people in Europe found that the perception of undomesticated wild cats as approachable, cuddly, tameable, and controllable objects of human desire increases as a result of this sort of representation.[11]

As one visitor from the United Kingdom wrote in their Trip Advisor review in 2022: "I got to meet Romeo.....WOW what a handsome and well behaved

[*sic*] boy! He was so chilled! It was dream come true to hear him purr loudly as I stroked him."[12] In a way, then, Cheetah Outreach reproduces a colonial image of dominance and desire, in which the animal "other" is forced to become an exotic, yet governable image of itself. Representing the subjects of colonialism, including the native animal populace, as in need of "proper governance" was a common justification for controlling and exploiting colonised territories. This narrative was a significant tool in justifying colonisation and maintaining imperial control.

The exotic pet trade itself, of course, has a and complex history. Exotic animals have long been kept as symbols of power and wealth, and cheetahs, as mentioned above, were often used as hunting companions. Indeed, next to the dog, the cheetah is said to have the longest hunting relationship with humans, having been used as a companion hunter by the Sumerians around 3,000 BCE.[13] Ancient Egyptians may have also kept them as pets, as did the Greeks and Romans.[14] After arriving in Western Europe around the turn of the 12th century, thousands of cheetahs were housed at European, North African, and Asian royal courts, where they were used as hunting comrades alongside dogs or falcons (Fig. 2).[15] Hunting cheetahs were usually caught in the wild as pups, having received initial training from their mothers, before being further trained in European hunting styles with horses.[16] With the growing trade in the 19th century, when Europeans brought back exotic animals from their expeditions to display in zoos and private collections, cheetahs no longer signified the power of the monarch, but the might of the colonial state. Unsurprisingly, the exotic pet trade grew in parallel with the expansion of colonialism; colonial powers established trading relationships with regions where exotic animals seemed abundant, particularly on the African continent.

In the first half of the 20th century, the trade in cheetahs expanded rapidly with the growth of global transportation and tourism. The demand for exotic pets fuelled a thriving illegal trade which has been linked to the exploitation and trafficking of wild animals.[17] Although the legal trade in wild cheetahs diminished after the passing of the CITES agreement in 1975, cheetahs were "still taken from the wild to be exploited as pets or tourist attractions, entered into illegal captive breeding operations, killed in illegal trophy hunts, or their body parts sold as ornaments, traditional medicines, and clothing".[18] In addition, they were caught legally "to begin new breeding programs".[19] Especially on the Arabian Peninsula, owning cheetahs as pets has kept its

Figure 2 | Hare-chasing with cheetahs and dogs. Jan Collaert, carton of Jan van der Straet (Stradanus), 1594–1598, Amsterdam. © Trustees of the British Museum, London

attraction to this day. Most of the animals that are held there in private, more or less as house cats, have made their way from Africa via illegal traffickers.[20]

While cheetahs in the West may no longer be royal property, the legal trade from Africa to the Global North continues to capitalise on audiences' desire for a rare, exclusive experience. The San Diego Zoo, for example, advertises its "Animals in Action Experience" by promising that visitors will be able to:

> *see exotic cats climb and jump, and much more! Bring your camera to this fun and interactive experience, as we bring the animals out to you for an up-close view. Our expert wildlife behavior specialists will also take you behind the scenes to learn more about some of our wildlife ambassadors. You will hear amazing stories about each animal you meet, and find out how San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is helping to save species here and around the world. Some animals are unique to this experience and can only be viewed by attending Animals in Action.*[21]

In turn, the Wingham Wildlife Park in Kent, UK, makes its cheetah encounter all about the shared time together:

> *This experience is about spending some time with this amazing cat to get a feel for their temperament and intelligence. To do this, the keeper will introduce you to the cats and get you to help them do some training. This will involve a chance to give them some treats.*[22]

Here, just as in numerous other zoos, the protection of cheetahs relies on their status as easily individualised, charismatic animals willing to participate in efforts to save their species, even if only indirectly. As conservationists claim, the presentation of cheetahs in live-animal displays is vital to the success of these efforts. However, they do have clear recommendations on which animals should be displayed. As veterinary scientist Hendrik Jan Bertschinger and his colleagues from the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Centre, known as the Ann van Dyk Cheetah Centre since 2010, stated in 2008: these animals "could be pre-breeding age animals, males with poor semen quality or animals that are past their prime".[23] It is the tranquil, docile animal that is in demand.

Cheetah Conservation: Breeding, Catching, and Relocating

Until 1900, cheetahs could be found in the wild in India, the Middle East, and particularly in northern and southern Africa. Since cheetahs were not only used as hunting companions, but were also hunted themselves, the species came to the brink of extinction several times in the course of the 20th century. In India, the last wild specimen was killed around 1950.[24] In southern Africa, the animals did not fare much better: until the 1970s, cheetahs were frequently killed in order to protect livestock. As cheetahs are the prey of other big cats, they are seldom found in large national parks that are also home to lions and leopards. Instead, they look for "ecological niches" that suit their dietary needs. These happen to be mostly privately-owned commercial farms.[25]

The struggle for ownership of these commercial farms is itself a result of the colonial legacy. In Namibia, for instance, land reforms that were rolled out after the country's independence in 1990 and that aimed at distributing land ownership among the population largely failed. As a consequence,

white Namibians still possess most of the agricultural land in Namibia.[26] The same is true for South Africa: after the end of the apartheid regime and the passing of the Restitution of Land Act in 1994, only a minor part of the commercial agricultural land, almost exclusively owned by white South Africans, was redistributed.[27] As a result, cheetah attacks against livestock mostly occur on land owned by white farmers. In this light, the conflict with cheetahs reveals a continuation of colonial mindsets: only "wild places" are reserved for wild animals; agricultural land, now "civilised", no longer belongs to wildlife. As both Jane Carruthers and Jules Skotnes-Brown have pointed out, cheetahs are seen and treated as "pests" or "vermin" that have no place on agricultural land.[28]

Interestingly, the dispute over ownership is also associated with a notion of caretaking. It depends upon ideologies of European racial superiority as well as upon legal narratives that equate civilised life with English concepts of property. Property rights thus came with the obligation of civilising the land and to take "proper" care of it.[29] The legacy of this colonial mindset can be seen in discussions around conservation and environmental protection to this day: in a 2010 article, conservation scientists Kenneth Buk and Kelly Marnewick viewed land reallocation as a possible threat to cheetah survival.[30] Giving back land in order to right former injustices and colonial dispossession is then depicted as mixing up or redrawing the boundaries of civilisation, in which animals have distinct places.

Furthermore, the allegedly "uncontrolled" increase in human population has been frequently regarded as a risk to cheetahs.[31] This trope of unrestrained population growth among African peoples harkens back to claims about the "oversexed" Black population central to colonial biopolitical regimes of control. In this view, the threat of social disruption resulting from decolonisation apparently includes the disruption of human-animal relationships, particularly those with flagship species status.[32] Plenty of scholarship is dedicated to the mechanism behind the making of colonial nature and colonised land.[33] As a result of this reorganisation and redefining of land, certain places are no longer seen as the habitat of Africa's wild fauna. The formation and institutionalisation of national parks, to which the wild fauna have now been relegated, have received particular academic attention.[34]

As these works show, the establishment of national parks was accompanied by the institutionalisation of conservation societies that aimed at protecting certain species. With a growing awareness of their possible extinction, a number of societies and refuges targeted cheetahs specifically. The

first of these, the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Centre, was founded near Pretoria in 1971, and has since developed into the primary breeding institution for the species.[35] The founding of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) in Namibia by American zoologist Laurie Marker in 1990 was another major step in establishing the cheetah as a vulnerable, if not endangered, species.

Along with these institutionalisations, ideas about the translocation and reintroduction of cheetahs to the "wild" also became more popular. Private game reserves saw cheetahs as charismatic species that were useful for advertisement. These reserves started to blossom in South Africa from the 1960s onwards, after a set of legislation gave private landowners utilisation rights over the "wild" animals on their land as "instruments of nature based tourism development".[36] Cheetahs were seen to have "big potential"[37] to make these reserves more attractive to visitors. A programme started in 2000 relocated cheetahs from ranch land to enclosed reserves to form metapopulations. Like some national parks, those reserves became confined enclosures surrounded by "predator-proof" fencing that largely prevented the big cats' escape. The translocation and, eventually, exchange of cheetahs between these reserves in South Africa (72 out of roughly 300 had cheetahs among their animals in 2016) also served another goal: guaranteeing genetic diversity.

In 1989, zoos in the Global North, with American zoos leading the way,[38] had established a stud book for breeding cheetahs held in captivity. However, most of the individuals displayed in the zoological gardens had been caught in the Namibian wild, out of a desire to prevent a genetic bottleneck. Even after the CITES agreement was firmly in place, until 1994, 28% of all cheetahs in those zoos were still wild-caught.[39] The Cheetah Conservation Fund has since pressed zoos to exchange breeding animals to "create new bloodlines"[40] and "optimize genetic diversity",[41] and thus to ensure the species' (genetic) survival. Zoos and rescue centres, both products of the colonial era, were portrayed by the CCF as safe havens on which the species' continuation relied. Zoos, in particular, still claim to be an "excellent resource for conservation efforts" by providing "conservation support for dwindling populations in the wild through awareness raising, fundraising, education, and research".[42]

Today, 7,000 cheetahs are believed to live in the "wild", most of them in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.[43] By 2014, the captive cheetah population registered in the International Cheetah Studbook – only listing those used for breeding – totalled 1,722 individuals: "87% captive born, 12% wild imports, and the remaining 1% of unknown birth type".[44] With this in mind, the conservation of the species – apart from the efforts

of several NGOs founded in South Africa and Namibia – is still very much in the hands of zoos, the same institutions that capitalised on the animal trade in previous centuries.

The Hamerton Zoo Park in Huntingtonshire, UK, a latecomer to the game since it was founded in the 1990s, boasted that:

> *the management of the animals and the arrangement of enclosures is based on that developed by the most successful breeding programme for Cheetah ever undertaken, formerly located at Wassenaar in The* [*sic*] *Netherlands.*[45]

Its "Cheetah Country" enclosure, as the website declares, has successfully provided an enriched environment where the second generation of the cats enjoys their time away from their "nomadic and stressful lifestyle" in the wild.[46]

Cheetahs as Problem Animals and Their Canine Handlers

The cheetahs' "stressful life" in the wild was caused by being potential prey to lions and hyenas as well as farmers, and by the need to find food for themselves and their offspring. The latter brought them into conflict with farmers of livestock and farmed wildlife, especially ostrich and antelope. As a solution to this conflict, in 1994 the Cheetah Conservation Fund proposed that Anatolian Shepherd Dogs be brought to Namibia. The Livestock Guarding Dog programme was established to deter cheetahs from approaching flocks, as the dog would react with "loud barking and attentiveness to the herds".[47] The programme offered training to both the dogs and the farmers. Initially, the dogs were given free of charge, but after 2003, farmers had to pay around 130 US dollars per individual.[48]

In a way, these dogs were a living reminder of the shift from "colonial dog" to "post-colonial dog", as Sandra Swart and Lance van Sittert have called it.[49] This shift was characterised by introducing European breeds to South Africa and nationalising them through breeding. The Rhodesian Ridgeback is one notable example from the first half of the 20th century; it is no coincidence that these dogs were cross-bred with the Anatolian Shepherd. Rhodesian Ridgebacks were not only used to protect farms and livestock, but also helped to control and suppress insurgences against white rule. They, "as much as

people, patrolled and maintained the white cities and countryside of post-colonial South Africa and time and again were catalysts and actors along its social frontiers".[50] They also "became an easy metaphor for apartheid".[51] In Namibia, too, dogs served as vehicles of colonialism and representatives of colonial control.[52] As European breeds were favoured, the native wild dog population was nearly entirely eradicated,[53] illustrating that clearly not all dogs were equal.

Why was the Anatolian Shepherd chosen? According to the CCF, it was "due to certain characteristics such as its large size, short coat, and independent nature".[54] This independent nature, i.e., the ability to make decisions and to be active and not indolent, is deemed a good trait in a shepherd dog. At the same time, the fact that Eurasian dogs were privileged over native breeds does reveal the persistence of tropes central to the colonial mindset: native breeds were seen as not trustworthy enough. In particular, European shepherds were preferred in the control of "problematic" exotic animals such as cheetahs. Since cheetahs were already considered problematic when they encroached on livestock herds and farmed wildlife, not just when excessive killings occurred, the DeWildt Centre, on top of its guard dog initiative, claimed to have "successfully captured over sixty cheetahs that were considered 'problem animals'" and relocated them into protected areas.[55] The multispecies assemblage of control, dominion, and submission was therefore built on multiple bodily practices: breeding, training, and placing as well as replacing animals.

To prevent conflicts, the "Anatolian guard dogs successfully guard livestock against cheetahs and other predators, and the predator populations find a balance with their natural prey",[56] claimed Buk and Marnewick, suggesting that the help of the dogs re-established a sort of natural order. However, the dogs did not fare too well in the beginning of the program:

> *Over a third of placed dogs died while working as guardians, mainly due to accidents such as being hit by cars, being bitten by snakes, or drowning (one dog was reported to have drowned in a reservoir)* […]. *Culling by the owner, primarily in the early part of the study, also accounted for a substantial proportion of working dog deaths, particularly on commercial farms, usually as a result of the dog chasing or harassing stock. We received no reports of livestock guarding dogs being killed either by predators (i.e. cheetahs or leopards) or by other dogs, although there were two reported incidents of young dogs being killed by baboons.*[57]

The CCF's attempt to train the dogs and to "civilise" them is thus reminiscent of the colonial settlers' attitude towards those dogs used by the lower classes or native inhabitants. Indeed, as Swart and van Sittert write, they "likened them instead, in both discourse and action, to the indigenous wild canids".[58] Bringing in new breeds could therefore be seen as an extension of this dismissive attitude towards the local dog populace even if these new dogs also had to be trained first.

As a result of the Anatolian Livestock Guarding Dog project, and the introduction of the "cheetah-friendly" farmer boards by the National Cheetah Conservation Forum of South Africa founded in 2002, 240,000 hectares of farmland have been converted into areas "that demonstrate that the cheetah and farmer can live together".[59] As an incentive for participating, landowners get a badge for their gate that marks their business as "predator friendly", which was advertised to create new "marketing opportunities"[60] for their property, especially for lodging tourists. Eco-labelling their products in this way, as conservationists suggested in 2015, could also help farmers "to receive a premium for the meat or other animal products they sell".[61] The CCF even promoted their own brand of meat products called "Cheetah Country", which they claimed was "helping to conserve threatened wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of rural communities".[62]

In South Africa, Cheetah Outreach adopted the CCF's guard-dog programme in 2005, breeding dogs that were predominantly used in the north of the country.[63] Cheetah Outreach offered the same services as CCF, taking over most of the costs involved with keeping and feeding the dogs. A 2015 report, however, showed mixed results, just as in Namibia. Not all farmers were content with the dogs, prompting trials with other breeds, such as the Boerboel.[64] As Swart and van Sittert argue, the Boerboel stood for the "defence of white privilege and property" and "as deterrent to the real and imagined threat of black revolt and redistribution".[65]

At this essay's time of writing in 2023, only one Anatolian Shepherd, Juliet, born in 2015, is housed at Cheetah Outreach. Her biographical notes state that she has "remained with Cheetah Outreach as an ambassador of the Anatolian Livestock Guarding Dog Programme" and that she was "raised alongside [...] Romeo" and "sometimes accompanies him on walks".[66] Apparently, the more "easy-going" approach of the Anatolian Shepherd is no longer in demand.

Outlook: Cheetah Politics in the 21st Century

On 19 February 2023, twelve cheetahs from the north of South Africa were translocated not to a reserve or game park, but to India— more specifically, to the Kuno National Park in Madya Pradesh. They were eagerly awaited. The Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi rolled out the red carpet and rejoiced that "India's wildlife diversity receives a boost with this development".[67] *The Hindu*, the largest English-language newspaper in India, reported that the move was made possible by a law that the South African government had passed under the Mandela presidency. Because India was at the forefront of leading the international fight against apartheid, so they claimed, they wouldn't have traded with the former regime anyhow.[68] Earlier in the year, both governments had signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on the Re-introduction of Cheetah to India. In itself, this kind of translocation was nothing new: African cheetahs had been transported to India as early as 1900 to replenish the dwindling local population.[69] Back then, however, the aim was to replace cheetahs that were used for hunting, not to halt any extinction.

In contrast, the 2023 memorandum reads:

> *Conservation translocations have become a common practice to conserve species and restore ecosystems. South Africa plays an active role in providing founders for the population and range expansion of iconic species such as cheetahs.*[70]

The cheetahs were furthermore part of an animal diplomacy between South Africa and India that helped to solidify the countries' ties in areas such as trade and investment, defence and security, science and technology, and culture and education. Together with Brazil, the two countries formed a "South-South" cooperation in 2003 based on the premise that the three nations are dominant players in South Asia, Southern Africa, and South America.[71] As a sign of mutual understanding among the nations, more than a hundred additional animals are planned to be transferred to India over the next few years.[72] The CFF and the Namibian government, another important player in South-South coalition attempts, had already shipped eight animals to India in September 2022 to a grand welcome.[73]

In Somerset West, the plans for translocation to India were addressed by the volunteers of Cheetah Outreach, though the organisation has no part in the programme. Enthusiasm was limited, unlike in the South African Department of Forestry, Fishery and the Environment, which organised the deal. According to their statement from February 2023, the cheetahs chosen were well prepared for the task, as

> *concerted efforts were made to select the best possible cheetah for the reintroduction effort. All 12 cheetahs are wild born, have grown up amongst competing predators including lion, leopard, hyena and wild dogs. They are considered predator savvy and should respond appropriately when they encounter a new predator guild in India that includes tigers, leopards, wolves, dholes, striped hyena, and sloth bears.*[74]

They did not need dogs to show them how to behave.

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Godeffroy, Beetles and Birds

Museum Collections and the Plantationocene

Godeffroy, Beetles and Birds

Museum Collections and the Plantationocene

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Abstract

A renewed attention to the plantation as a site of planetary change has highlighted the persistence of its logics beyond the sphere of agricultural production. Work on the plantation condition foregrounds the links between interspecies dynamics, racialised hierarchies of labour, and the proliferation or extinction of certain kinds of life forms. Looking to the Godeffroy Museum, a 19th-century institution founded by a Hamburg-based merchant and plantation owner, the contribution engages with the colonial legacies of this museum's collections, attending to traces of Godeffroy's plantation logics. Building on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at the *Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle* (MNHN) in Paris and the *Museum am Rothenbaum – Kulturen und Künste der Welt* (MARKK) in Hamburg, an attention to traces of the plantation in the present offers the possibility to bridge the divides between disciplines and institutions, whilst attending to the museum's entanglement in violent planetary changes.

Introduction

In the year 1862, a visit to the Godeffroy Museum cost Hamburg residents 50 Pfennig: roughly the price of a loaf of bread.[1] For that price, they were able to explore two carefully curated floors of zoological and ethnological material from Oceania. Downstairs, visitors were greeted by neatly organised displays of animals from the Pacific region and, after climbing the spiral staircase to the first floor, they'd find cabinets filled with tools, weapons, decorative objects, and costumes alongside those displaying skeletons and skulls of people from across Oceania. For an additional amount of 50 Pfennig, visitors received a guidebook, which provided further information about the displays, the people who collected the objects, and the company that run the museum. The small book provides interesting contextual information that would have helped the visitor understand the connections between the animals on display downstairs and the people upstairs. The description of cabinet six, for example, told visitors that the Papuan hornbill is an important figure in religious ceremonies in New Ireland.[2] The possibility for connections to form between the collections upstairs and downstairs offered visitors the opportunity to begin thinking about the relationship between people, plants, and animals in Oceania.

It was thanks to the owner of the merchant house *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn*, the guidebook explains, that these collections were assembled. The company, as the guidebook and the museum exhibits imply, was heavily involved in the establishment of a German colonial presence in Oceania. Although the museum painted its director as a wealthy patron to the sciences and removed itself from the commercial aspects of the company, we know today that this wasn't the case. The company sat for several decades at the centre of a vast commercial network in Oceania, with a fleet of ships, trading posts and coconut plantations enabling the collection of this material. From the mid-19th century, the company's operations centred around the establishment of plantation economies in islands across Oceania. A closer look at the logistics of these colonial ventures alone is enough to highlight the ties between the museum's collections and the company's commercial activities: the same ships that carried preserved coconuts back to Hamburg also carried the preserved specimens of animals and plants, as well as human remains and sacred objects that were destined for the museum. The development of these plantations involved the disruption of local ecologies and

ways of living together with the land, as well as the forced labour of human and other-than-human actors. This had lasting effects that are visible today, not only in Oceania, but also in the museums and institutions that inherited the objects, plants, animals and human remains. With fieldwork conducted at museums that are today in possession of Godeffroy's material, this chapter focuses on objects in natural history and ethnology collections, tying them into interspecies stories of planetary change and palm plantations. Inspired by the spiral staircase that once linked the two departments of the Godeffroy Museum, my work attempts to bridge the gap between collections and explore the potential nascent in these collections dispersed across disciplinary divides.

In a 2016 paper advocating for a more systematic approach to the colonial histories of German museums, Larissa Förster states that researchers should move beyond a restricted focus on histories of objects and should think about the entanglement of collections and museums in wider colonial processes. This research should, she argues: "[...] lay bare the many connections between collections of different ethnographic museums, between different museum types (for example ethnographic and natural history museums)".[3] However, research that focuses explicitly on these disciplinary entanglements remains sparse. "While progress has been made in the reinterpretation and reactivation of ethnographic collections," Luciana Martins writes in the 2021 book *Mobile Museums*, "the managers of natural history collections have been relatively slow to develop specific tools for integrating historical, environmental and Indigenous knowledge."[4] *Mobile Museums* emerged out of a project at Kew Gardens and presents an argument for considering museum collections and their constituent objects not as fixed and rigid, but as rather more contingent and relational entities, with movement and interaction between disciplines to be understood as a key component of many collections' histories. Martins goes on to quote Anna Tsing, stating that, "plants and animals are part of a human disturbance regime; they have a contaminated history."[5] My work here deals with the contamination of natural history and ethnographic museum collections by the Godeffroy company's colonial practices of commerce and plantation economics.

The era of European colonisation of the Global South and the development of industrialised capitalist economic systems drastically altered nature-society relations and provoked planetary environmental change. Many of these shifts have their roots in unequal and racialising hierarchies of labour and in the violent transition towards industrial forms of wealth production and

resource extraction, such as that seen on the plantation. Cultural historians Eva Horn and Hannes Bergthaller explain that: "While a swift social, environmental and economic transformation took place in industrialized countries, other parts of the world did not partake in the prosperity generated by industrialization, the social and environmental costs of which were increasingly 'outsourced' to more impoverished parts of the world (Nixon 2011)."[6] As other chapters in this volume have shown, the colonial histories of the global wildlife trade are tightly bound up in these planetary transformations, too. But so, too, are museums and scientific institutions in Europe, having been responsible for the massive translocation of plant and animal material from the Global South, as well as subsequent practices of ordering it, analysing it, and attempting to master it. Warwick Anderson reminds us that: "In trying to define nature, colonial scientists were at the same time structuring (and restructuring) the relations of humans – whether local or alien – to the environment and one another."[7] Or, put differently, "[...] the emergence of the scientific method and the idea of progress is intimately tied to the European project of colonization – a new type of empire – and the desire for large returns on investments. Exploration and exploitation were brothers in arms."[8] The Godeffroy Museum's histories and legacies allow for an analysis of the entanglements of scientific progress, colonial exploitation and environmental destruction. The closely entwined stories of ethnography and natural history collections provide a unique lens through which to explore these legacies.

Attempts to impose order on Oceanic lifeworlds, then, are entangled in the histories of planetary change that have come to be known as the Anthropocene, a term used variously to describe an era in which the planet is being significantly changed by human influence.[9]

Critics of the term 'Anthropocene' have argued that a monolithic reference to the Anthropos, or mankind, hides a multitude of messy contexts of unequal power imbalances, for the responsibility for these colonial planetary shifts is not borne equally by all humans.[10] In other words: many messy anthropocenes hide behind the Anthropocene. Each one of these has its own histories of colonial power dynamics, racial hierarchies and disrupted ecologies. To counter the totalising nature of "the" Anthropocene, scholars have argued that it would be more productive, more just, to attend to the many instances where these more granular Anthropocenes make themselves known. Anna Tsing talks of a "patchy anthropocene."[11] In this same vein, Donna Haraway has proposed the notion of the Plantationocene as a means to explore "[...]

the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labour and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labour."[12] But beyond the fields of the plantation, the Plantationocene also allows us to attend to "deracinated plants, animals and people" and their interspecies dynamics in multiple different contexts.[13] Recent discussions surrounding the Anthropocene have been drawing attention to the plantation, with the persistence and perenniality of its logics both within and beyond the sphere of agricultural production, as a means to attend to the multispecies dynamics and the racialised hierarchies of a patchy Anthropocene.[14]

Sophie Chao's work draws our attention to the plantation conditions of "prisons, the criminal justice system, and industrial livestock factories, but also white-dominated institutions like universities and their constitutive members and disciplines."[15] Taking up Chao's invitation to investigate the ways the plantation pervades such institutions, I use the case of the Godeffroy Museum to draw attention to museums as a possible site of this continuity. It is in this sense that the Plantationocene has come to be considered as a methodological impulse to investigate the implication of other-than-human animals and plants in these planetary transformations. It calls for attentiveness to the persistence of disrupted ecologies, and the reordering of nature through the violent proliferation of certain plants and animals, and the extinction of others. Although underexplored in this respect, ethnographic studies of museums offer unique insights into these conjunctures. In this contribution, the dispersed collections of the Godeffroy Museum will offer a rich ethnographic field for exploring the entanglement of natural history and ethnography museums, of preserved animals, plants, and material culture in broader plantation logics.

This chapter emerges from a period conducting fieldwork at European museums that are today in possession of material that was collected for the Godeffroy Museum. I focus primarily on parts of the collection stored at the *Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle* (MNHN) in Paris and the *Museum am Rothenbaum – Kulturen und Künste der Welt* (MARKK) in Hamburg. I was attentive to the stories that emerge of shifting interspecies relationships in the wake of Godeffroy's presence in Oceania, and I paid a particular attention to aspects of work occurring today in the context of a natural history and a world cultures museum that addresses or troubles these nature-culture binaries. I conducted interviews with contemporary museum workers, observed daily practices and investigated museum archives.

Contemporary research on collections and their histories places a great deal of emphasis on tracing historical connections between people and things.[16] The disconnect and rupture that accompanies so many of these collections' histories can, however, prove difficult to overcome. An understanding of the Godeffroy collections as entangled in a broader Plantationocene allows me to draw collections together in new ways, whilst taking account of and working through these apparent archival absences. Whilst it may be difficult to find detailed information about the exact conditions Godeffroy's collections were acquired in, this chapter deals with the broader systems the Godeffroy Museum operated in and supplements these patchy object histories with ethnographic work conducted in contemporary museum contexts. Research on museum collections often struggles to bring plants and animals into dialogue with "art" or "world cultures" collections; my ethnographic research, conducted in different museum contexts, attempts to weave collections back into these wider stories of the capitalist exploitation of people, plants and animals. By reading the collections through the lens of the Plantationocene, and by focusing on the entanglement of certain objects in Godeffroy's colonial plantation enterprise, this chapter is able to demonstrate how the extinction and extraction, as well as the abundance and reordering of animal and plant lifeworlds, continues to be felt in various kinds of museums today. My method of engaging with objects in different disciplinary contexts in the present helps bring to light new ways of considering the collections, which may not necessarily emerge when one goes hunting in the archive for historical connections between collections.

The Making of a Commercial Empire: *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn*'s Expansion into the Pacific

J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn was founded by Johann Cesar IV. Godeffroy (1742–1818) in 1766 before it was handed down to his son, Johann Cesar V. Godeffoy (1781–1845), and later to Johann Cesar VI. (1813–1885) in 1845. Focusing initially on trade with Spanish colonies in South America, subsequent generations expanded the company and shifted its focus from trade to shipping. By the time Johann Cesar VI. took over, the shipping company was the largest in Hamburg and he oversaw a period of rapid expansion. Benefitting from gold rushes in California and Australia and subsequent large-scale emigration

from Hamburg, the company established stations in California, Australia, South Africa, Chile, Cuba and Cochin (today's Vietnam) by the middle of the 19th century. One of the most significant developments, however, was Godeffroy's expansion into the Pacific in the 1860s. A fuelling station in Samoa provided a useful midway point between the company's operations in Chile and Cochin. The development was facilitated by Godeffroy's general manager in Chile, August Unshelm, who established a base in Apia, Samoa. As German historian Kurt Schmack wrote in 1938, "Unshelm soon realised that a continued expansion of business into the islands of Polynesia would bring the necessary success, provided that J.C. Godeffroy & Son had their own branch from which they might be able to barter with the individual island groups."[17] Quoting letters written by Unshelm during this period, Schmack highlights how Unshelm was convinced that the costs of setting up an agency were minimal, as were the risks, whilst the chances of success were, in his words, "quite sure".[18] Unshelm then turned to the people and the land to provide new sources of income. He spent several years buying and selling locally produced palm oil, which was important for the European cosmetic and food industries.

Under Unshelm's successor, Theodor Weber, *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn* began a transition to a primarily plantation-based economic model, purchasing land and employing local people to process the palm oil (Fig. 1). By 1868, Godeffroy was in possession of 2,500 acres of land, much of which was purchased from Samoan people after periods of storms or drought.[19] Initial forays into the palm oil trade involved pressing the oil in situ and shipping the finished product to Europe in casks. Weber subsequently developed a new system for processing and exporting dried coconut kernels (or copra) which were then pressed in Europe. These were more efficient to transport than casks of oil which often spoiled on the journey. The work was, however, very labour intensive, and Weber was faced with resistance from the Samoan people to the economic, environmental, and social upheaval that a violent shift towards this kind of plantation economy required. Godeffroy's workers interpreted this reticence as laziness, with Samoans garnering a reputation as ineffective labourers.[20] Writing about the African colonial context, labour historian Andreas Eckert highlights the pervasiveness of the trope of "the lazy primitive" which emerged in the face of growing resistance to forced labour in various colonial contexts. Whilst it implicitly acknowledges the limits of colonial dominance, the stereotype nonetheless places the blame for the contradictions and failings of colonial rule firmly on the shoulders of the labourers.[21] In the context

of Godeffroy's activity in Samoa, the notion of the "lazy Samoan" masks a multitude of acts of resistance to the plantation model, which was violent and favoured European profits, to the detriment of Samoan lifeworlds. The company later turned to the forced indenture of Chinese and Melanesian labourers to work the Samoan plantations. Whilst copra production was important for the company's rapid growth, what was key to their success was that "instead of setting up a minimum number of agencies and relying on trading schooners to purchase from the outer islands, Godeffroys decentralized. They established agents on as many small outliers as possible."[22] This period of intense commercial activity, although occurring prior to the establishment of any formal colonies or protectorates, is a clear precursor to later state-sponsored German colonial activity in the Pacific region. Fitzpatrick refers to this earlier period of German activity in the Pacific as "informal empire", or "private sector imperialism". [23]

Figure 1 | View of J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn's headquarters in Apia, Samoa. Photo taken by Jan Stanislaus Kubary, an employee of the Godeffroy Museum. MARKK Photographic Collection / Godeffroy, Inventory number 2014.21:2. © Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), Hamburg

Entangled within this story of empire, commerce, and copra is that of the Godeffroy Museum, which emerged in the early 1860s in response to the increasing flow of ethnographic and scientific material into Hamburg. As colonial activity in the Pacific increased, academics in Europe became ever more concerned with euphemistically termed processes of "Europeanisation", or the destruction of Indigenous lifeworlds at the hands of European colonisers.[24] This period saw the rise of what was later termed as "salvage anthropology", where the desire to collect information about societies that were thought to be disappearing led to a scramble to collect the "authentic" or "traditional" material culture of Indigenous peoples.[25] But, as Nancy Parezo highlights, speaking about salvage anthropology in the North American context: "There is irony in this 'salvage' perspective and in the anthropologists' search for a 'purer' remnant. The mere presence of the anthropologists and their trading goods, [...] rapidly changed the nature of the material culture inventory in each place."[26]

Godeffroy's business model lent itself particularly well to the acquisition of diverse ethnographic and natural history material from a vast area, and Johann Cesar VI., a self-proclaimed enthusiast for the natural sciences, quickly saw the benefit in compiling his own collection. The museum was able to support a network of dedicated collectors of ethnographic and natural history material. They were employed by the museum and profited from the extensive infrastructure that the trading company had already developed in the Pacific.[27] This led to a well-documented, well-organised collection that the European and North American scientific community regarded with favour. "Such is the remarkable Museum Godeffroy," wrote U.S. naturalist Henry A. Ward in 1876, "As a storehouse of material for the benefit of working naturalists it stands unique; and as an auxiliary to the purest, highest research, it is one of the signs of the times that wealth is not absorbed in material interests."[28] The development of a scientific journal to bring together the museum's findings, which featured work from some of the foremost European natural scientists of the time, helped broaden the museum's reach. As *Godeffroy & Sohn's* commercial network in the Pacific grew from the 1860s to the late 1870s, so, too, did the museum's academic network in Europe.

This material collected for the Godeffroy Museum was transformed into "museum objects" through processes of preparing organic matter, preserving it, and protecting it against natural decay. Subsequent processes of ordering, sorting, and naming incorporated these objects into new value systems. Much of this was considered "new" material, including as yet undescribed

species of animals and plants, or material from cultures supposedly untouched by European influence. It was often then exchanged with institutions elsewhere, generally on the condition that scientific expertise was provided in return. These objects were sent to eminent scientists of the period, who then described the museum's collections and published original work about them. Material collected for European museums came to function as somewhat of a social currency among scientific circles in the late 19th century, with museum objects being exchanged with colleagues through personal networks.[29] Clearly also operating with commercial gain in mind, the Godeffroy Museum sold and donated "duplicate" objects to museums and individuals throughout Europe, whose interest was often roused by the quality of the articles published in the journal. Though later troubling this definition, Ina Heumann, Anne Greenwood Mackinney, and Rainer Buschmann explain that duplicates are: "multiple specimens and objects understood to represent a single species or object type."[30]

The museum also circulated a sales catalogue, which highlights the centrality that the sale of "duplicates" had to its business model. The prices and amount of stock available for sale were clearly advertised in these catalogues.[31] Numerous duplicates of stuffed birds, preserved specimens of tropical fish and taxidermised small mammals were listed for sale in these catalogues.[32]

Despite the income generated through the sale of museum objects and massive growth across the Pacific, Godeffroy's business model proved unsustainable, with coconut production ultimately failing to provide the necessary capital to keep the company afloat. Coconut palms took ten years to mature, and sufficient labour and income was required to maintain the plantations during that time. Poor investments following German unification meant *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn* had to declare bankruptcy in 1878. Upon the announcement of the museum's eventual closure in 1879, Godeffroy and Johannes Schmeltz, the scientific curator of the museum, began an aggressive marketing campaign. They attempted to pit Germany's largest museums against one another in a race to purchase the remaining collections.[33] Newspapers at the time closely followed the negotiations, highlighting the importance of the collections for the city of Hamburg.[34] Despite the broader support for Hamburg retaining the collections, most of the ethnographic display collection was sold to the city of Leipzig. Some parts of the collections remained in Hamburg, eventually finding their way to the newly founded *Museum für Völkerkunde*.[35] The then-director of the museum, Carl Lüders (1823–1896),

wrote in his annual report in 1886 that the acquisition of Godeffroy's collections would be significant for the collection.[36] Of the seven hundred objects purchased in 1886, only a small proportion are accounted for in Hamburg today, where they can be found in the *Museum für Völkerkunde*'s successor institution – the MARKK.

With the company failing and plans being drawn up to sell the museum's collections, Godeffroy scrambled to save its south seas assets. Godeffroy's allies in Hamburg and Berlin, including Otto von Bismarck, sought to avoid the loss of the company's Pacific properties at all costs. The Pacific arm of the company was eventually converted to a separate legal entity: the *Deutschen Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln zu Hamburg* (DHPG) in 1880. The DHPG amped up copra production, notably in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, and encouraged competition with the British throughout the latter half of the 19th century. Though it continued to lose money, the DHPG pivoted towards more political aims in Oceania, pushing for a more formal colonialism that would protect their properties.[37] At this time, politicians and the merchants at the helm of these large trading houses were hopeful that German New Guinea would fulfil its promise of becoming a German settler colony. Plantations were understood as simply a means to bolster the coffers in the meantime.[38] These colonies of course failed to live up to the expectations that German colonisers had attached to them. But looking hopefully towards a German colonial future, Rudolf Virchow writes in an 1885 eulogy following Johann Cesar VI. Godeffroy's death, that: "If the new colonial policy should one day fulfil the hopes that are currently attached to it, then one will certainly remember that it was a simple Hanseatic merchant who laid the first foundation for it."[39] Godeffroy's 'informal' imperialism in Samoa and Tonga, across Polynesia, as well as to the north in New Britain, New Ireland and Duke of York Islands attracted German attention towards the Pacific, whilst the enduring proto-colonial infrastructure developed by the company paved the way for later colonial efforts by the state, and the subsequent expansion of German plantations across Oceania.

The material traces of this commercial empire persist in the many museums that have inherited Godeffroy's collections. Ethnographic fieldwork in these museums offers the possibility to attend to these traces in new ways. My fieldwork in the MNHN and the MARKK traverses natural history and ethnology collections, allowing these contexts to reveal different aspects of the Godeffroy Museum's history and its ripples in the present day. I'll be dealing

with the story of an extinct Samoan beetle in the MNHN and a series of dance instruments from New Ireland in the MARKK to reveal different dynamics of Godeffroy's plantation pasts, the company's role in planetary changes and the long shadow of the plantations in the present.

Extinction and Abundance in the Plantation: The Case of a Flightless Beetle

Bryanites graeffii (Fig. 2) is the Latin name given to a flightless Samoan beetle by the U.S. entomology professor James Liebherr in an article published in 2017.[40] He recounts how he stumbled across a preserved specimen whilst conducting research at the MNHN in Paris. Found lying amidst a clutter of cardboard boxes, the specimen in Paris is thought to be the last remaining beetle of its kind, as it is believed to have gone extinct shortly after this one was collected in the 1860s. The species' extinction, this specimen's translocation to a Paris storeroom, and its subsequent classification in a scientific taxonomic system are all able to tell us something about Godeffroy and its plantations.

Figure 2 | Male holotype, Bryanites graeffii, dorsal view. Source: James Liebherr in the journal *Zoosystematics and Evolution* (see footnote 40)

Let us begin with the beetle's displacement from Samoa to Paris. Liebherr's systematic work reveals an engagement with the lengthy biography of the beetle, using methods that are very similar to those engaged in ethnology and art museums.[41] He examined a series of labels, little slips of paper affixed to the cardboard backing that accompanied the specimen, to establish that it was collected in 1869 in Samoa by the Swiss naturalist Eduard Graeffe (1833–1916). Graeffe spent many years in Oceania under the employ of the Godeffroy Museum, for whom he was charged with gathering new collections. His first stop, and indeed the centre of his work in the Pacific, was Samoa. Godeffroy's Pacific operations at the time were headquartered there in Apia, and it's likely that there would have been an overlap between the social and professional circles of the Museum's work and the plantation management, which also operated out of Godeffroy's Apia headquarters. Liebherr consults a number of sources to ascertain the beetle's date of collection of 1869, identifying a return shipment to Hamburg in 1870 aboard one of Godeffroy's ships. It was common for these ships to be used to ship material gathered by museum employees back to Hamburg, and the lucrative European trade in these "museum objects" was only possible thanks to the extensive commercial infrastructure already in place. Regular ships, as well as a vast network of trading posts and company employees, helped facilitate the massive influx of plant, animal, human and cultural material from Oceania back to Europe.

The beetle we're concerned with here was sent from Hamburg to Paris as part of a larger shipment of insects that was to be examined by the French entomologist Léon Fairmaire (1820–1906). It's unclear whether Fairmaire purchased the shipment, or whether it was simply provided to him by the museum, but he had previously published descriptions of species of insects in Godeffroy's journal.[42] Whilst I was based at the MNHN in Paris, an entomology professor with experience working on Fairmaire's collections showed me a passage from one of his articles elsewhere, in which he states: "I owe all the elements of this work to the inexhaustible kindness of Mr Godeffroy of Hamburg, whose museum is well-known to all scholars".[43] But this beetle managed to slip through the cracks of this reciprocal system of exchange, description and publishing, and wasn't written about by Fairmaire. After his death in the early 20th century, his collections of many thousands of insects were bequeathed to the MNHN.

Almost a century later, James Liebherr uncovered the beetle in a box in the MNHN, and was likely the first person to have seen it in the century or so since its collection. Not recognising the beetle, he identified it as a new

species. Conducting the taxonomic and phylogenetic work necessary in the description of a new species, he described it and ascribed it a place in the animal kingdom. His 2017 article gives it a new name, looking to its 19th-century collector Eduard Graeffe for its new designation of *Bryanites graeffii*. Speaking about Liebherr's work, a member of staff at the museum who assisted Liebherr during his Paris stay told me excitedly that, "it's still possible to hunt for new species in the storeroom."[44]

Whilst this specimen owes its preservation to Graeffe's collecting efforts in Samoa, the extinction of the rest of its species can be explained by the disruption of local ecologies by colonial plantation economies. Liebherr's article links its extinction to the introduction of invasive species of rats. He highlights the impacts of the Pacific rat, otherwise known as *Rattus exulans*, or the *Kiore* to people across Oceania. First introduced to islands throughout Oceania by early Polynesian settlers, their disruptive impact to island ecologies has been variously studied, though it's perhaps also relevant to mention the *Kiore*'s important role in Polynesian cosmology. The animal is often considered a companion species to these early Polynesian voyagers. But the *Kiore* arrived in Oceania centuries earlier than this beetle's extinction, and the loss of this animal coincides much more closely with the later introduction of another invasive species of rat – the black rat, *Rattus rattus*, or the Ship Rat, as it's otherwise known. This latter rat was introduced to Oceania by European colonisers.[45] As European interest in Samoa increased with the arrival of the Godeffroy company, so did the impacts of the black rat. Biodiversity specialists have highlighted the correlation between increasing black rat populations and the establishment of copra plantations in the 19th century.[46] At its height, the Godeffroy company owned around 2,500 hectares of plantation in Samoa, so an accompanying proliferation of rat life would be no surprise. In ecologies unused to the predation of small mammals, rats, with their ability to thrive in various landscapes on a variety of diets, devastated local populations of birds and insects. Samoa was home to a number of land-dwelling birds that nested underground or in undergrowth, whilst larger beetles such as the one we're concerned with here also nested on the forest floor, among decomposing plant material or larger logs. The beetle would have been an easy target for a hungry rat, or indeed for a German scientist on the hunt.

In addition to damage caused by these rats, the proliferation of the coconut palm and the introduction of new monoculture landscapes would also have drastically altered local ecosystems, having a particularly strong impact

on insects. Diverse animal and plant life were replaced with the forced order of rows of palms. As entomologist Laura Laiton reports: "Vast monocultures can alter the equilibrium of natural ecosystems through landscape simplification. [...] When only a single plant is grown and maintained in the landscape, soil health is challenged, and the dietary, refuge, overwintering and reproductive needs of diverse insect species can no longer be met."[47]

In a recent paper, Eva Giraud et al. highlight how the Anthropocene, "[...] is not just bound up with loss but with abundance."[48] In plantation contexts we see loss coupled with the monocultured abundance of coconut palms and the feral proliferation of the plantation's companion species, the Ship Rat. No longer present in Samoan lifeworlds, museum storerooms overflow with examples of other-than-human lifeforms dried, stuffed, pinned to boards, and stored in cardboard boxes. The specimens are part of new hierarchies now, and this partial ethnography highlights the "unevenly shared worlds" that were in this context produced by 19th-century plantations, which were and continue to be "of and *for* [emphasis from the original] some worlds, and not others."[49] Extracted from Oceanic lifeworlds, these insects were transformed to be made productive in Europe in new ways. Through exchanges within European scientific networks, the Godeffroy Museum increased its standing in Europe and was for a long time financially profitable. Today, scientists continue to hunt for new specimens in museum storerooms. Taking cues again from Sophie Chao, the Plantationocene draws our attention to the ways plants, animals and people are rendered productive in new ways. Attending to the more-than-human stories that emerge, it's possible to see how the histories and logics of the plantation weave throughout the museum.

A Bird's Head Dance Instrument: Shifting Relations to the *Kokomo* in German New Guinea

As discussed above, conversations surrounding the Plantationocene have extended an invitation to consider the utility of the 'plantation' beyond its agro-industrial manifestations, "conceiving of it more broadly as an extractive site and system of power."[50] With the Samoan beetle and its relationship to plantation ecologies in mind, we move on to an example that emerged during fieldwork at the MARKK in Hamburg. Here, a series of objects that are

Figure 3 | Malagan bird's head figure. MARKK Oceania Collection, Inventory number E 1059.

somewhat further removed from these contexts is nonetheless able to tell us something about the contemporary museum and its entanglement in extractive colonial logics. Although the exact provenance of these objects isn't entirely clear, and the names of the makers unfortunately remain unknown, they can still offer interesting insights if one thinks with them about German colonial histories. A group of around twenty carved bird heads (Fig. 3) collected in the late 1870s, these objects were crafted in New Ireland, an island in Papua New Guinea's Bismarck Archipelago. I first encountered them while conducting fieldwork in Hamburg in early 2022, during which time I accompanied museum workers on an ongoing provenance research project that explored the MARKK's entanglement in Hamburg's colonial trade networks in Oceania.[51] The birds' heads aren't on display, but stored in the museum's depot, and I first became aware of them in the archives, where I was interested in parts

of the collection that troubled the distinctions between natural history and ethnological collections, or those that might attest to changing relations between human and other-than-human actors in Oceania.

Working through a set of illustrated index cards, which bear descriptions of the objects at the MARKK, I came across a drawing of a bird, with its beak held high, its neck covered in feathers and a bluey green eye staring out.[52] I wasn't sure if the drawing was of a carving or if the beak and feathers of some kind of bird were used. The other side of the index card described the object: "E 1059, Museum Godeffroy, Fetisch, Neumecklenburg." The feathers and beak of a wild bird had been fastened to a neck made of bamboo, the card said, whilst the eye was fashioned from the shell of a sea snail. As I continued through the index cards, a set of these birds emerged, all having been collected for the Godeffroy Museum, with some incorporating organic animal material and some being carved entirely from wood. On further research, the relatively large set of around twenty of these birds and the variation in their use of animal material came to provide useful insights to the influence of a German presence in Oceania and changing relationships between people, animals, and plants there. How might changes in local methods of production reflect changes in relationships with plant and animal life? Paying attention to these shifts, one is able to see the traces of the broader plantation condition of Godeffroy's presence in the Southern Seas, and the continuing influence of this today.

This material was collected towards the end of the Godeffroy Museum's activity, in the early 1880s. The date of collection coincides with a period prior to a formal colonial presence in the region, but nonetheless one of increasing commercialism and the development of a nascent, 'informal' colonial interest. Godeffroy's presence began with the establishment of a trading post in Mioko, one of the Duke of York Islands, which came to function as a centre of their operations in the Bismarck Archipelago. Their initial interest in the region was related to the Pacific labour trade and the indenture of Melanesian workers on Samoan plantations, but trading posts later emerged all along the New Ireland coast. German activity increased in New Ireland, or Neumecklenburg, and it became part of a formal German colony in 1885. A boom in plantations followed, and along with it a massive transformation of local ecologies and ways of life.

The bird heads in the MARKK were used in New Ireland as part of the ceremonies and cultural traditions known as Malagan. Although my aim here isn't to explain away sacred elements of Malagan culture, some context is helpful.

Malagan ceremonies commemorate the passing of community members and are often regarded as a funerary art, but much more than this they also cement relations between different communities, the land, and the sea. During the festivities, which can last for several months, Malagan sculptures are produced. These wooden carvings feature repeated patterns and motifs of certain animal forms, combining them in specific ways to physically manifest these relations and record obligations between groups.[53] Material from New Ireland Malagan culture from the 19th and early 20th century is abundant in Europe, with a significant amount found in German museums. This series of bird heads were used as dance ornaments, with handles adorning the back of the heads allowing dancers to hold them in their mouths during ceremonies.[54] These festivities, and accompanying material culture, came to be of particular fascination for Europeans present in New Ireland. Tools, costumes, carvings, and dance instruments soon found their way into German museums, with captains of Godeffroy's ships being particularly active in the acquisition of such material. As work elsewhere has shown, increasing demand from European colonisers for Malagan artworks led to an increase in their production.[55] Aware of rapidly changing practices and fearing a supposed "degeneration" of the culture that produced this material, German anthropologists, museum employees, and anyone wishing to make a profit from it were all eager to acquire "authentic" examples before the destructive process of "Europeanisation" discussed above took its toll. These collectors were, however, heavily implicated in the dynamics that sped along these processes.

Malagan sculptures, which were prepared over several months, were usually disposed of and left to decay once the festivities were completed. Imbued with life during the ceremonies, the sculptures are considered drained of life force and left to return to the land once the ceremonies are complete. This decay served a social and spiritual function. Anthropologist Susanne Küchler has argued that this process of disposal was key to the arrival of Malagan material in European museums: "certain museum collections are not the result of "salvage anthropology" alone, but of the operation of "gift to god systems," as sale became an alternative means of removing gifts from circulation Malagan sculptures".[56] Under the pressure of a European interest in these carvings, in their bold colours and stylised renderings of local flora and fauna, Malagan culture adapted. People in New Ireland learnt that, instead of allowing them to decay, they could sell these carvings to interested Europeans and fulfil the same social functions once the festivities were over. But these encounters

led to shifts in cultural behaviours, and local people increased production of these ritual objects in order to meet demand as the production of these ritual objects became increasingly commoditised. Whilst some carvings had previously taken months, they were able to simplify the processes and adjust the timescales of this cultural production. We could compare these accelerated timeframes to Samoan plantation ecologies, as discussed above, where coconut production was simplified, streamlined and rendered as profitable as possible. Production styles changed, tools used to produce ornaments changed, and so, too, did the materials used to construct them. As a result, relations to particular species of animals used in their production altered, too.

The difference in styles of bird headed ornaments that I first stumbled across in the MARKK's archives indeed belies some kind of shift in local production methods and ways of relating to a certain species of bird. Whilst the sculptures made using the beaks and feathers and those carved entirely from wood did serve different functions during Malagan dances, something else is at play here, too. The carved ornaments take much longer to produce than those made using hunted or scavenged feathers and beaks of birds. Therefore, as demand for such ornaments rapidly increased, so did the number of sculptures made using remains of living birds. Earlier examples found in museums are more commonly carved, whilst ornaments made using preserved birds' heads became increasingly more common with the crystallisation of a formal German colonialism.[57]

This species of bird is known to Indigenous New Islanders as the *Kokomo*, whilst in English it's referred to either as the Papuan Hornbill or Blyth's Hornbill, after Edward Blyth, an English zoologist. It's had a number of Latin designations, but today it's recognised as the *Rhyticeros plicatus*, a name which refers to the bird's undulating beak. Today, the *Kokomo* is ubiquitous in New Ireland and can be found in forests alongside human settlements in much of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia today. It's known in New Ireland for a distinctive loud cry and the recognisable swooshing sound of its wings. The bird has lived alongside people in the region for thousands of years and the beaks have long been valued for their use in crafting weapons and ceremonial garments, even if the bird is considered somewhat shy.

This period of change at the end of the 1870s led to an increasing commodification of the bird. These dance ornaments were sold into the European market for museum objects and the beaks, which previously had a spiritual value, came to be valued differently in light of European commercial interests. The

birds were thus hunted not only for their use in Malagan cultural spheres, but also to enter global capitalist systems that ultimately served to generate wealth for European merchants. These shifts were bound up in the plantation condition that emerged in the wake of companies such as *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn*. The *Kokomo*, however, is resilient and continues to thrive. Even as plantations developed and rapidly altered relationships between people and the land, the *Kokomo* found ways to live alongside these expansive swaths of coconut palms.

The set of objects at the MARKK and their accompanying illustrated index cards point to shifts that occurred in Malagan culture in New Ireland. The shifts in the design of the ornaments mark the shift from an 'informal' commercial colonialism and the onset of a formal colonial period, with its accompanying excess of plantations and coconut palms, of rats and museum objects. Building on Godeffroy's commercial infrastructures, the shipping routes, the trading posts, and the relationships developed through the Pacific labour trade, the formal colonial regime that emerged in Godeffroy's wake took the company's comparatively humble plantation regime and expanded upon it dramatically. The series of birds' heads at the MARKK bear witness to this transition and to the altered ecologies and ways of relating to animal and plant life that were ushered in by the German plantation condition in Oceania.

On the Enduring Presence of the Plantation in Museums Today

Provenance research being conducted at the MARKK today ties material culture from Oceania into broader histories of Hamburg's colonial trade networks. The stories of how these objects were acquired, and indeed how they came to be so abundant in European museums at all, are impossible to extricate from the stories of the plantation. The ripples of the plantation condition are visible in the presence of Oceanian natural and cultural material in European academic institutions and in attempts to order insect life or to "hunt" for new species in the museum storeroom. As discussed above, the instinct in provenance research is to search the archives for connections between people, places, and things, but accepting that archival traces of such connections may not present themselves need not foreclose the possibility of carrying out productive research.

In the case of the dispersed collections of the Godeffroy Museum, ethnographic work in contemporary contexts can highlight partial, complementary, and patchy truths about the plantation condition. "If the plantation's historical origins were manifold," Gisa Weszkalnys writes, "so are its contemporary appearances. Indeed, it can be tracked and traced toward the prison, the city, shopping malls, biometric technologies, as much as modern instances of intensive monocrop agriculture [...]. They carry on its moralizing mechanics and rhetorical commitments, its modes of racialized violence, or its physical reordering of nature to facilitate capital accumulation."[58]

A focus on the plantation as a driver of this particular set of colonial dynamics highlights the role that a reordering of plant and animal lifeworlds played in the assembly of these collections. Museum collections of all kinds are able to bear witness to the environmental and societal destruction wrought by imperial endeavours in the era that has come to be known as the Anthropocene. The museum collections that emerged from these violent contexts are able to speak to the many forms of colonisation in which these objects, plants, animals and people were acquired (or, rather, stolen, looted, unearthed, uprooted, and killed). The focus on the plantation here points to the particular genealogy of Godeffroy's collections, highlighting their entanglement in the broader contexts of plantation economies.

The stories outlined above have helped draw forth connections between "ethnographic objects" and "natural history specimens", highlighting their interrelated histories of abundance and extinction and their ties to plantation labour. The crossing of disciplinary lines in the research process, moving from one museum to another, is not intended to suggest that contemporary museums all have their roots in the plantation. Rather, it draws attention to the plantation as a significant driver of 19th-century environmental and societal change in the Pacific region, which has, in this context, contributed to the present-day constellation of the objects collected for the Godeffroy Museum. In the cases discussed here, plantation dynamics weave through the stories of the birds' head dance instruments and that of the Samoan beetle. This research shows how, particularly in the case of collections originating in Oceania, stories of the plantation pervade European museums. Whilst the European project of colonisation is intimately bound to both the scientific method and the planetary transformations known as the Anthropocene, these stories highlight how plantation economics were a major driver in this

case. Whether the last extant example of an extinct species, or a witness of changing relationships between humans and birds, the stories told above are suffused with the histories of the plantation. Though the *Kokomo* adapted and continues to be abundant in the wild today, the dance instruments nonetheless attest to the role of the plantation in shaping human-nature relations in Oceania. These shifts, a direct result of the ordering logics of the plantation, can be read in these and in the stories of many other objects stored in contemporary museums, be it through the extinction or absence of certain species while others abound, or perhaps in changing relations between human and other-than-human actors over time.

The division of Godeffroy's collections across disciplinary lines makes it complicated for connections to form between them. Creating new connections is no longer a simple case of following a guide book up and down a spiral staircase, but ethnographic fieldwork is able to open up some of these possibilities. Allowing the beetle and the birds to enter in a dialogue brings forth stories of the Godeffroy Museum's entanglement in the arrival of European merchants in Samoa, and the ecological and cultural impacts of their subsequent movement into New Ireland. This work has highlighted *J. C. Godeffroy & Sohn's* involvement in the accelerated production of both coconut palms and Malagan cultural material in order to meet European demand. A focus on these objects has highlighted the complimentary abundances and extinctions that accompany the plantation in all its forms, from the feral proliferation of invasive rats to the loss of ground-dwelling beetles. And their very presence in museums today highlights abundance of Oceanian plant, animal, and human material that's to be found in Europe, and which continues to be mined for useful resources today.

Without suggesting that all contemporary museums have their roots in plantation economics, the focus on the dynamics of the plantation – its attempts to impose order on the natural world, to eliminate undesirable species whilst accelerating the production of others, its exploitation of certain forms of labour and Indigenous knowledge, and the extraction of resources from the Global South for the profit of institutions in Europe – certainly does raise questions about parallels between the guiding logics of these plantations and those that continue to shape much museum work today.

1 Schmeltz, Johan Dietrich Eduard; Museum Godeffroy Staff (1882): *Führer Durch Das Museum Godeffroy. Mit 2 Plänen Und 2 Holzschnitten*, Hamburg.
2 Ibid. p. 14. Here and in the following I will be using the term "New Ireland" to refer to the island in Papua New Guinea, which is today known as Latangai to Indigenous peoples in the Tangga language and New Ireland in English, whilst both names are interchangeable in local usage. Successive waves of colonisation have brought with them several names for the island, but for clarity's sake, I'll be using the contemporary English form. Named New Ireland by Australian colonisers, it was previously also known as "Neumecklenburg" by German settlers. When I refer to "New Guinea", I mean the island of New Guinea and not the contemporary state of Papua New Guinea. I also talk about the Bismarck Archipelago, a term originating in the German colonial period which is still in common usage today. It refers to the group of islands comprising the contemporary New Britain provinces, New Ireland province, and Manus province.
3 Förster, Larissa (2016): "Plea for a more systematic, comparative, international and long-term approach to restitution, provenance research and the historiography of collections", in: *Museumskunde*, vol. 81 p. 49–54, here 52.
4 Martins, Luciana (2021): "Plant artefacts then and now: reconnecting biocultural collections in Amazonia", in: Felix Driver, Mark Nesbitt, Caroline Cornish (Eds): *Mobile Museums*, London, p. 21–43, here 22.
5 Ibid.
6 Horn, Eva; Bergthaller, Hannes (2019): *The Anthropocene. Key Issues for the Humanities*, New York, NY, p. 27. Here the authors are referring to: Nixon, Rob (2011): *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
7 Anderson, Warwick (2003): "The Natures of Culture. Environment and Race in the Colonial Tropics", in: Paul Greenhoug, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (Eds): *Nature in the Global South. Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia,* Durham, NC, p. 29–47.
8 Lewis, Simon L.; Maslin, Mark A. (2019): *The Human Planet. How We Created the Anthropocene,* London, p. 172.
9 For a thorough review of the term's origins in geology and geography, as well as its increasing relevance outside of these spheres, see Ellis, Erle C (2018): *Anthropocene. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford; New York, NY.
10 See for example Haraway, Donna; Ishikawa, Noboru; Gilbert, Scott F.; Olwig, Kenneth; Tsing, Anna L.; Nils Bubandt (2016): "Anthropologists Are Talking – About the Anthropocene", in: *Ethnos*, vol. 81, no. 3, p. 535–564; Latour, Bruno (2017): "Anthropology at the Time of the Anthropocene. A Personal View of What Is to Be Studied", in: Marc Brightman, Jerome Lewis (Eds): *The Anthropology of Sustainability,* New York, p. 35–49; Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2009): "The Climate of History. Four Theses", in: *Critical Inquiry,* vol. 35, no. 2, p. 197–222.
11 Tsing, Anna L; Mathews, Andrew S.; Bubandt, Nils (2018): "Patchy Anthropocene. Landscape Structure, Multispecies History, and the Retooling of Anthropology. An Introduction to Supplement 20", in: *Current Anthropology*, vol. 60, no. S20, p. 186–197.
12 See footnote 5 in: Haraway, Donna (2015): "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene. Making Kin", in: *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 1, p. 159–165.
13 Ibid.
14 See: "Plantationocene Series", on: *Edge Effects*, https://edgeeffects.net/tag/plantationocene/, accessed 31 March 2023; and Society for Cultural Anthropology; Barua, Maan; Martín, Rebeca Ibañez; Achtnich, Marthe: "Plantationocene essay series" in: *Theorizing the Contemporary*, *Fieldsights*, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/plantationocene, accessed 31 March 2023.
15 Chao, Sophie (2022): "(Un)Worlding the Plantationocene. Extraction, Extinction, Emergence", in: *ETropic: Electronic Journal of Studies in the Tropics,* vol. 21, no. 1, p. 165–191.

16 The German Museums Association's guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts discuss the necessity to ascertain the nature of a collection's connection to colonial contexts. It highlights a need for understanding colonial networks, providing a list of questions about collections' histories that should be answered in any process of provenance research. But the nature of colonial collecting was often to obscure, to mask, or to disrupt the relations between collections and the contexts they were acquired in, meaning that time and resources may be spent searching for material traces of such connections that may not be found. See the following for examples of such guidelines: Lang, Sabine; Deutscher Museumsbund (2019) (Eds): *Umgang mit Sammlungsgut aus kolonialen Kontexten. Leitfaden 2. Fassung*, Berlin.
17 Schmack, Kurt (1938): *J C. Godeffroy & Sohn, Kaufleute zu Hamburg. Leistung und Schicksal eines Welthandelshauses,* Hamburg, p. 102–103.
18 Ibid, p. 103. Schmack quotes a 1854–1855 letter from Unshelm to Herr A. L. Poppe, who led Godeffroy's station in Valparaiso, Chile, in which he stated the following: "Ich bin zu der festen Überzeugung gekommen, daß wir ein bedeutendes Geschäft auf diesen Inseln machen können, doch ist es durchaus nothwendig, eine Agentur zu errichten, wozu Apia wohl am geeignetsten ist. Das Ganze in Anspruch zu nehmende Kapital würde 50000 Dollar nicht übersteigen, alle Unkosten sind hier verhältnismäßig gering und der Erfolg, wie gesagt, ziemlich sicher, ohne die Zufälligkeiten von Schiffbrüchen und dergl. in Betracht zu ziehen."
19 Droessler, Holger (2018): "Copra World. Coconuts, Plantations and Cooperatives in German Samoa", in: *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 53, no. 4, p. 417–435, here 419.
20 August Unshelm, who helped establish Godeffroy's presence in Samoa, wrote that Samoans were a "free race of 'lively disposition', although they were 'unusually lazy and slow in anything to work and the gathering of products'"; quoted in: Schmack (1938), *J C. Godeffroy & Sohn,* p. 101–102.
21 Eckert, Andreas (2012): "Rechtfertigung und Legitimation von Kolonialismus", in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,* no. 44–45, p. 17–22.
22 Bollard, A. E. (1981): "The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy and Son in the Pacific", in: *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 16, no. 1, p. 3–19, here 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/00223348108572410.
23 Fitzpatrick, Matthew P. (2008): *Liberal Imperialism in Germany. Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848–1884*, New York, p. 75–100.
24 For a discussion on The Godeffroy Museum and 'Europeanization' see: Penny, H. Glenn. (2002): *Objects of Culture. Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, Chapel Hill; London, p. 54.
25 For an in-depth study in the history of salvage anthropology, see: Redman, Samuel J. (2021): *Prophets and Ghosts. The story of Salvage Anthropology*, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London.
26 Parezo, Nancy J. (1987): "The Formation of Ethnographic Collections. The Smithsonian Institution in the American Southwest", in: *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory,* no. 10, p 1–47, here 25.
27 Penny, H. Glenn (2000): "Science and the Marketplace. The Creation and Contentious Sale of the Museum Godeffroy", in: *Pacific Arts*, vol. 21, no. 2, p. 7–22, here 9.
28 Ward, Henry A. (1876): "*Museum Godeffroy*", in: *Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 8, p. 699–702.
29 For more information on the exchange of museum objects in the 19th century, see Nichols, Catherine (2021): *Exchanging Objects. Nineteenth-Century Museum Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution,* New York, NY and Penny (2002), *Objects of Culture*.
30 Heumann, Ina; MacKinney, Anne; Buschmann, Rainer (2022): "Introduction. The issue of duplicates", in: *The British Journal for the History of Science,* vol. 55, no. 3, p. 257–278, here 257. For more information about the role of duplicate specimens in early museum practice, see the whole special issue: Heumann, Ina; MacKinney, Anne Greenwood; Buschmann, Rainer (2022) (Eds): The issue of duplicates. *The British Journal for the History of Science,* vol. 55, no. 3.
31 See, for example, Schmeltz, J.D.E. (1866): *Catalog III der zum Verkauf stehenden Doubletten aus den naturhistorischen Expeditionen der Herren Joh. Ces. Godeffroy & Sohn in Hamburg,* Hamburg.

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33 Penny (2000), *Science and the Marketplace*, p. 15.
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49 Chao (2020), *(Un)Worlding the Plantationocene*, p. 182.

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51 For more information about ongoing colonial provenance research at the MARKK, visit: https://markk-hamburg.de/handelsnetzwerke-als-basis-des-kolonialen-ethnografica-vertriebs-westafrikas-und-beschaffer-von-sammlungsgut-fuer-das-hamburger-museum-fuer-voelkerkunde-1860-1920-2/, accessed 18 August 2023.
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Trade of Māori and Moriori Ancestral Remains

Alongside Wildlife Specimens From Aotearoa New Zealand and Rēkohu Chatham Islands

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Alongside Wildlife Specimens From Aotearoa New Zealand and Rēkohu Chatham Islands

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Abstract

This contribution makes connections between the trade of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains and the trade of wildlife specimens from Aotearoa New Zealand and Rēkohu Chatham Islands. It highlights three key collectors, looters, and traders in Aotearoa New Zealand from the 1870s to the early 1900s, which include Henry Travers (1844–1928), Sir James Hector (1834–1907) and Andreas Reischek (1845–1902). This paper examines the ethics associated with their trading, the context of trade and its connection with the colonisation of the Māori people of mainland New Zealand, and the Moriori people of Rēkohu, the Chatham Islands. This abstract highlights the different ways Māori and Moriori engage with decolonisation in New Zealand to re-establish their connection with their whenua/henu (tribal territory), tūpuna/karāpuna (ancestors) and with taonga/miheke (cultural treasures and natural history specimens) at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). An example of this is provided in the second half of the paper.

Introduction

In this paper, I will look at the connection between the theft of ancestral remains and the acquisition of cultural objects as well as wildlife specimens. To do so, I will first sketch the history of Aotearoa and Māori culture, as well as the colonisation of both, also focusing on three key looters who were very active in removing ancestral remains and cultural heritage from Aotearoa New Zealand and Rēkohu Chatham Islands. The fight of Māori and Moriori people to regain their ancestors and sacred objects has been a long and ongoing struggle, which I will highlight in the second part of my paper. I will give an insight in the work of Te Papa and my own research, drawing on the example of a provenance research project that I took part in in the scope of a fellowship provided by the Georg August University of Göttingen. I will conclude with some thoughts on how the looting in colonial contexts could be reconciled through contemporary decolonisation practices in museology in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Background: Aotearoa New Zealand and Rēkohu Chatham Islands

The Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Moriori people of Rēkohu, Chatham Islands are the descendants of the first Polynesian people to arrive in their respective island territories. The Māori and Moriori are closely related peoples, however, they also have distinct cultural differences and languages. Customary practices for Māori were maintained by a set of social, spiritual, philosophical, and ethical mores known as tikanga. Tikanga is a framework based on best practice principles approved by tribal members built up on knowledge generated from mātauranga Māori (ancient knowledge systems). Tikanga is still an important element for Māori when we engage with the natural environment, social interactions, with ancestral remains, and most importantly with farewelling loved ones.[1]

The earliest Europeans that came to Aotearoa New Zealand were those looking for new land to colonise or for fauna, flora and taonga (cultural treasures and objects of importance) that they could collect, steal, loot or trade.[2]

Māori were astute traders, and this continued with the arrival of Pākehā (Europeans and Westerners). Items of early interest to Pākehā included fresh produce and water, taonga in the form of high-status cultural items, timber spas, New Zealand flax, and camps set up for sealing and whaling.[3] Around this time, a unique Māori cultural item was collected, traded, and looted, which was Toi moko, or the mummified tattooed heads of Māori chiefs, warriors, and captives.[4] Between 1769 and 1840, about 300 Toi moko[5] were traded and exchanged for Western commodities such as muskets, gun powder, ammunition, metal goods and other items.[6]

Intense trade between Māori and Pākehā, as well as Māori rangatira (chiefs) travelling to Western and European countries, made rangatira aware of Western colonisation and how this had affected other people around the world. From the 1830s, rangatira sought mechanisms to protect their trading opportunities as well as to defend themselves from colonisation. During this period, rangatira sought agreements with Western trading partners to actively engage in trade and sought recognition of their tribal authority through documents such as the declarations of independence,[7] and finally by agreeing to become citizens of the British Empire by signing Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the original Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840.[8]

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document for the establishment of New Zealand as a country under the governorship of the British Crown. It is important to note that the te reo Māori (the Māori language) version of Te Tiriti reflects four key points:[9]

1. The British Crown was permitted to govern in their iwi (tribal) territories;
2. The British Crown recognised the rangatira's ultimate chiefly authority or rangatiratanga in their respective iwi territories, including existing political authority, property rights to their tribal lands, fisheries and taonga of value to them;
3. The British Crown had the first right of refusal to buy land from the rangatira if they wished to sell; and
4. Rangatira and Māori in general became British subjects with all the rights and privileges of being a British subject.

Post-1840 – The British Crown and Government Arrives

This is a splendid country but cursed by these rascally Maories. However they are fast becoming extinct.[10]

(Sir James Hector)

From 1840, Pākehā settlers of British descent were encouraged to settle in the new part of the empire that was Aotearoa New Zealand. Some of them took kōiwi tangata (Māori skeletal remains)/kōimi tchakat (Moriori skeletal remains) from wāhi tapu/wāhi tchap (sacred repositories), or from existing or abandoned Māori or Moriori villages.

The theft of indigenous remains without the approval of their communities was a common practice of Western collectors, traders, and scientists in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This is highlighted in the 2003 report completed by the Working Group on Human Remains, which was commissioned by the British Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This department has oversight of collections in public museums within England. In reference to international human remains in British museums the report states:

First, much of the overseas human material in English museums was removed from its original location after the death of the subject without the informed and prior consent of that person, or his or her kin or community.[11]

Some of the stolen ancestral remains in English museums came from Māori and Moriori communities in the South Pacific. Early colonial museums were established in Aotearoa New Zealand from the 1850s onwards, with the opening of the Auckland Museum in 1852, the Wellington Colonial Museum in 1865, the Canterbury Museum in 1867, and the Otago Museum in Dunedin in 1868.

The directors and leaders of these newly established museums had strong working relationships with each other, and many of them were experienced in collecting and recording the country's fauna and flora as well as surveying its geological features through government contracts.[12] They used their experience, connections and knowledge of wāhi tapu/wāhi tchap and tribal lands through surveying the country to access and acquire Māori and Moriori ancestral remains without the knowledge or even against the wishes of local whānau/hunau (family), hapū and iwi/imi (Moriori word for tribe).[13]

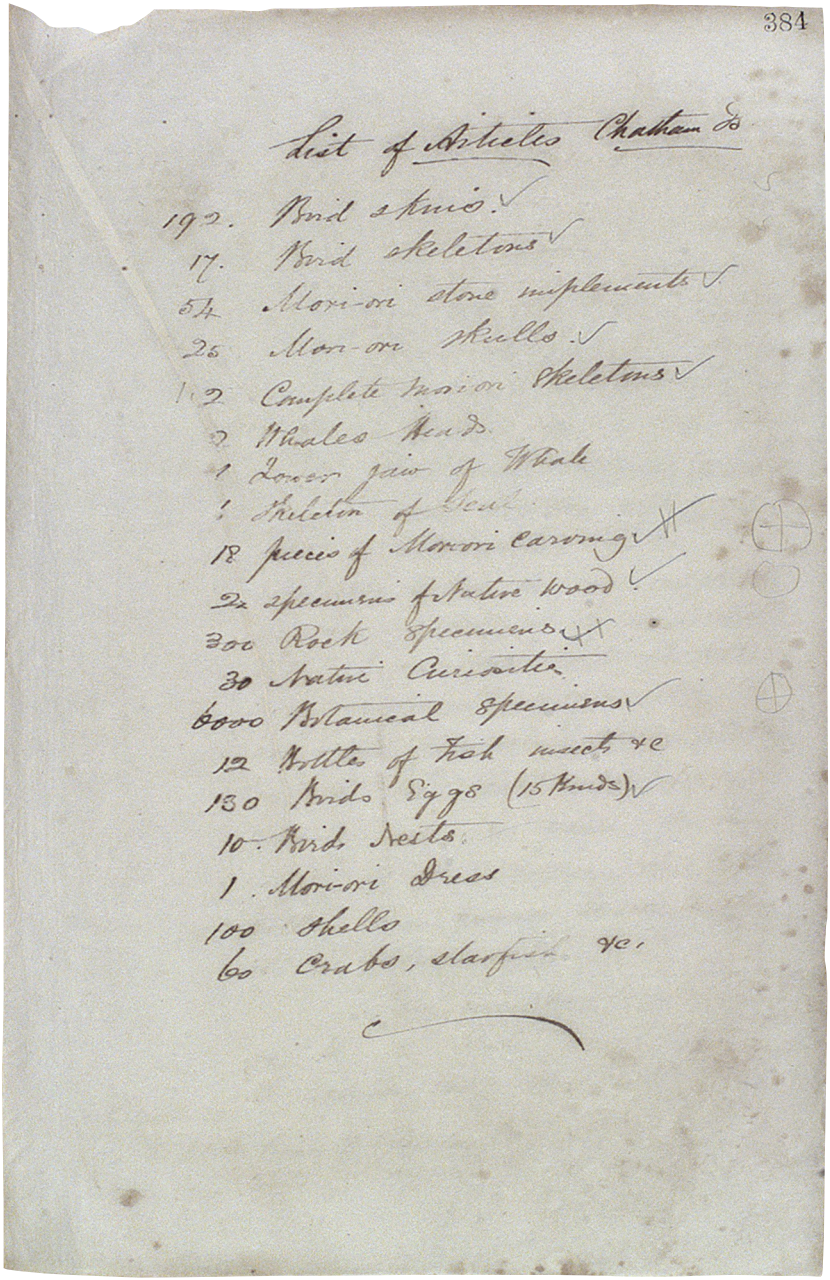
These aspects of early museums' collection practices can be hidden, as there is a tendency to only highlight the collection of natural history specimens (i.e., wildlife) without including details about ancestral remains looted by the same collector. An example of this are the collection practices of Henry H. Travers. Analysis of the Wellington Colonial Museum's archives and annual reports indicate that Travers deposited on 21 March 1872 not only over 6,500 natural history and wildlife specimens from Rēkohu Chatham Islands, but also 25 Moriori skulls, 3 skeletons and 48 miheke (Moriori cultural treasures).[14] Refer to figure 1 below, which provides the list of items, specimens and Moriori ancestral remains taken and looted by Henry Travers from Rēkohu, the Chatham Islands, in 1871 and 1872.

The Wellington Colonial Museum itself played an active role in sending native wildlife, geological specimens and indigenous human remains overseas, with such actions documented in its annual reports and in the accession records of international institutions.[15]

Another contemporary collector of Sir James Hector is the infamous Austrian collector Andreas Reischek.[16] While living in Austria, Reischek became acquainted with Ferdinand von Hochstetter, who at this time was the intendant of the Austrian Imperial Natural History Museum. Through Hochstetter's connection with Julius von Haast, Reischek was recommended as a taxidermist to the Canterbury Museum. In 1876, Reischek moved to Aotearoa New Zealand and worked for both the Canterbury Museum and the Auckland Museum for twelve years in total. Reischek undertook several journeys around the country, including along the West and the East Coast of the South Island, the Whanganui region, Te Tai Tokerau (Northland), the King Country and Waikato.

While undertaking these expeditions, Reischek would collect plant and bird specimens with the main intention of taking these collection items back to Vienna in order to sell them to the Imperial Natural History Museum. However, some of these specimens remained in collections in Aotearoa New

Figure 1 | Sir James Hector, Wellington Colonial Museum, Letter to Under Colonial Secretary, 9 March 1872, p. 3, a list of items, specimens and Moriori ancestral remains collected and looted by Henry Travers.



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List of Articles Chatham Is

192. Bird skins ✓
17. Bird skeletons ✓
54 Mori-ori stone implements ✓
26 Mori-ori Skulls ✓
12 Complete Mori-ori Skeletons ✓
2 Whales heads
1 Lower jaw of Whale
1 Skeleton of Seal
18 pieces of Mori-ori carving ✓
2 specimens of native wood ✓
300 Rock Specimens ✓
30 Native Curiosities
6000 Botanical Specimens ✓
12 Bottles of Fish insects &c
130 Birds Eggs (15 kinds) ✓
10 Bird Nests
1 Mori-ori Dress
100 Shells
60 Crabs, starfish &c.

Figure 2 | Image of a chick of a Putangitangi (Paradise Shelduck), collected by Andreas Reischek in December 1887. © Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2023 a:1

Zealand. An example is in Te Papa's collections, which houses the specimen of a chick of a Putangitangi (Paradise Shelduck) collected at Paringa on the South Island's west coast (Fig. 2).

In February 1889, Reischek left Aotearoa New Zealand for Austria with the biggest collection of natural history items to leave the country so far. This included 2,278 ornithological items and 453 ethnological specimens.[17] Of those 453 "ethnographic items", about fifty consisted of Māori ancestral remains stolen by Reischek during his journeys around the country. The most notorious theft of tūpuna (ancestors) by Reischeck was the taking of two mummified remains from the Hauturu caves in Kāwhia. The theft was in violation of the expressed wishes of Tāwhiao, the Māori king who gave permission to enter the lands at Kāwhia. These two tūpuna belonged to the kahui ariki, the senior chiefly line of Tainui ancestors, and are said to be the ancestral remains of Tūpāhau, and one of his young descendants who died as a baby.[18] Andreas Reischek and his behaviour are considered "characteristic of

nineteenth-century scientific thought",[19] similar in many ways to that of his peers, including Travers and Hector, who gave themselves permission to loot and trade Māori and Moriori ancestral remains.

By permitting the collection practices of the Wellington Colonial Museum, Sir James Hector, Henry Travers, Andreas Reischek, and so many others, the British Crown failed to enact and deliver on article 2 of Te Tiriti with respect to recognising and supporting Māori and Moriori aspirations towards maintaining an enduring relationship with their kōiwi tangata/kōimi tchakat, wāhi tapu/wāhi tchap, and whenua/henu. The Crown's failure is based on three areas: first, by the Crown not recognising its obligations to Māori and Moriori as per Te Tiriti o Waitangi; secondly, the complicit nature of the Crown by doing little to stop the theft of kōiwi tangata and kōimi tchakat from wāhi tapu/wāhi tchap; and third, the extent of the number of kōiwi tangata and kōimi tchakat taken from wāhi tapu/wāhi tchap and traded domestically or internationally.

The Crown's failure becomes more apparent in the judgement in the case of Wi Parata v. The Bishop of Wellington.[20] James Prendergast, the Chief Justice of the New Zealand Supreme Court, declared Te Tiriti as "worthless" and a "simple nullity". In his judgment of 17 October 1877, Prendergast erroneously proclaimed that the country was acquired by "right of discovery" as the land was only inhabited by "savages". He went even further, declaring that Māori had no ancient customary law pertaining to the ownership and use of land,[21] which is a historic falsity as Māori had numerous tikanga pertaining to land and its ownership, guardianship, and care.[22]

Prendergast based his judgement in part on the 1823 United States case Johnson v. McIntosh, where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Native Americans did not own land, but only had a right of occupancy. This ruling purported the U.S. Federal Government had come into ownership of the country's territories by succession from the Crown, based on the "doctrine of discovery" as interpreted by U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall, who presided over Johnson v. McIntosh.[23]

While Māori were trying to prevent the sale and confiscation of their land from the 1860s onwards,[24] they were also becoming aware that their tūpuna were being taken by Pākehā, and they began the process of transferring kōiwi tangata from vulnerable locations to places that offered protection and sanctuary from preying hands and eyes.[25] The Māori Councils Act of 1900 and its amendment in 1903 indicate that, in theory, the Crown approved legislation to prevent the theft of kōiwi tangata from wāhi tapu. However, despite this

act being in place, no appropriate measures were taken to stop and prevent the theft of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains, and it would remain an act without teeth.[26] Furthermore, in 1901, 61 years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori Member of Parliament Sir James Carrol presented the Māori Antiquities Act to the New Zealand Parliament.[27] This legislation was enacted to stop the trade of taonga, as there was concern from both Māori and some Pākehā who were made aware of the significant issue by Māori leaders that taonga were leaving the country, and this act was designed specifically to ensure there was no further loss of taonga.[28]

Despite the Act becoming law in 1901, Māori and Moriori ancestral remains kept leaving Aotearoa New Zealand, as the accession records of international institutions show, specifically those of the Natural History Museum in London and the museums in the State of Saxony in Germany.[29] Research undertaken by Te Papa into the trade of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains confirms that close to 900 tūpuna/karāpuna (Moriori ancestors) were collected, traded, or sent overseas from 1840 to the 1980s.[30]

Reconciling Colonial Collection Practices – Göttingen University Fellowship

Having drawn an overview of the theft of ethnographic objects and ancestral remains, I will now turn to practical examples of the work Te Papa is doing in order to assure that our ancestors return home. In August 2022, I started a fellowship at the Georg August University in Göttingen, Germany. This fellowship is part of the Sensitive Provenance Research Project, which is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation as a three-year provenance research project. The project aims to research and confirm the provenance for indigenous ancestral remains collected, looted, and traded to Germany from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. My specific research project is to confirm the provenance of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains housed in two collections at Göttingen University, specifically the so-called Blumenbach Collection and also the collection of human remains housed at the Anthropology Department.

Mihi and Karakia with Tūpuna and Karāpuna (Meeting and Acknowledging the Ancestors)

An important element of Māori culture is acknowledging the passing of loved ones through a ritual funerary process called tangihanga. Important elements of tangihanga include tikanga, or deep-rooted cultural practices imbued with best practice frameworks. There are specific tikanga when engaging with tūpāpaku (the deceased) and these may include a number of the following elements: playing taonga puoro (traditional musical instruments); the call of the karanga (chanted spiritual acknowledgement by women); chanting waerea (chants to clear pathways and acknowledge historic connections); offering formal speeches through whaikōrero (formal acknowledgements by men); offering lamentations called waiata tangi; and closing the ceremony with a karakia whakawātea (chants to exit the ceremonial process). This process ensures that we offer respect and dignity to our loved ones in the most appropriate manner and way. When engaging with ancestral remains housed in overseas institutions, we take our tikanga to acknowledge them and to offer them the highest form of respect and dignity.

To honour Māori and Moriori ancestors at the university in Göttingen, I arranged separate karakia (chanted cultural acknowledgements) for the four Māori ancestors housed in the Blumenbach Collection, and the 24 Moriori and two Māori ancestral remains housed in the Anthropology Department. I also invited the research team and other fellows to attend. [31] The visit to the Anthropology Department was first, and it was mostly the research team that joined me for the karakia.

After the ceremony, we had a discussion within our research group that dealt with questions regarding the Māori ancestral remains and their repatriation process. Several questions were put forward that, in short, deal with the issue of repatriation versus the value of specimens for science. One inquirer wanted to know what happens to the remains once they are returned to Aotearoa New Zealand. I explained that they are welcomed home through a pōwhiri (formal welcoming ceremony) on Te Papa's marae (community meeting place). They are welcomed by Māori and representatives of Te Papa as well as the New Zealand Government. After the welcoming, they are placed in Te Papa's wahi tapu (sacred repository, see fig. 3).

Figure 3 | Image of pōwhiri on Te Papa's national marae. Te Papa staff and representatives place finely woven feathered cloaks and kawakawa (greenery) on the travelling cases, which contain Māori and Moriori ancestral remains repatriated from international institutions.

Another question touched upon the time after the remains are repatriated. What will happen when they return to their community – will they be buried, cremated, given a sea burial or something else? I answered that this is the decision of the iwi/imi or tribe. The job of Te Papa and the repatriation process is to ensure the ancestors are offered respect and dignity as well as the best cultural and conservation care from the time they are uplifted from an overseas institution, returned to Te Papa and placed into the wāhi tapu. The goal is to return them to their tribal territory.

However, there is a common sentiment conveyed by Western academics and scientists that manage indigenous ancestral remains. They believe it is a loss to science when indigenous remains are returned to their community of origin before scientific analysis (e.g., DNA and isotope testing, as well as carbon dating) is undertaken on the ancestral remains.

My response to this type of argument is gentle, yet direct. Although these ancestral remains are housed in a scientific institution, it would be ethically and morally unwise to undertake invasive scientific testing on them without the permission of their community of origin. For Māori and Moriori, permission needs to come from their iwi/imi (tribal) authority that has the responsibility for deciding on issues of importance for their respective tribal grouping. Importantly, modern institutions have a moral and ethical obligation to contact the community of origin if they wish to conduct research on indigenous human remains.

How to Research the Looting of Ancestral Remains: Two Exemplary Collections

According to te ao Māori (the Māori perspective), history is made of actions, events and people connected by whakapapa. Whakapapa is commonly interpreted into English as genealogy, or the lineage of a person, family, or tribe. However, the meaning has a broader application in the Māori world, where people, events and actions all have whakapapa. This view of whakapapa is a key element of the provenance research methodology for this project. The understanding is that all the Māori and Moriori ancestors housed at Göttingen University have a whakapapa or hokopapa that is connected to a series of people, events, and actions. Consequently, my goal is to discover and confirm the whakapapa of collection, looting and trade for these ancestors. To progress this research, I had the support of library and archival services at Te Papa, the research team at the University of Göttingen (Holger Stoecker and Sofia Leikam), the Natural History Museum in Vienna (Sabine Eggers and Margit Berner), as well as Susan Thorpe (Repatriation Researcher at Te Papa) and Te Arikirangi Mamaku (Repatriation Coordinator at Te Papa).

The Blumenbach Collection

The so-called Blumenbach Collection at the University of Göttingen is named after Johann F. Blumenbach, a collector of ancestral skulls from different parts of the world in the late 1700s, who was also a professor in Göttingen. Many of these ancestral remains were collected as part of the process of European and Western colonisation of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. In this collection, there are four Māori ancestors recorded with the accession information for these tūpuna listed below.

One ancestor[32] was received in 1930 from Adolf Kluckauf of Vienna, Austria. However, the original collector of the ancestor is recorded as Andreas Reischek, who obtained the skull in 1883. The information on the note associated with the ancestor indicates that the skull is of a female of the Ngāpuhi tribe, the specific location being Taiharuru in Northland. I confirmed that Andreas Reischek had collected other ancestral remains from the specific location of Taiharuru and taken these to Vienna, Austria. Regarding the letter in the conservation box, which indicated that the trader was Adolf Kluckauf of Vienna, I received advice from Margit Berner, curator at the Natural History Museum in Vienna, who confirmed that Adolf Kluckauf was resident in Vienna in 1930. Based on the provenance research immediately above, I can confirm that this ancestor is of Māori origin with provenance to Taiharuru, Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is very limited accession information pertaining to the three remaining kōiwi tangata (Māori skeletal remains), as the related documents were destroyed during the Second World War when they were housed in a building next to the main station in Göttingen. An analysis of the word "Maori" written on each one of the three remaining skulls shows a strong similarity with the handwriting on skulls that Andreas Reischek had collected and accessioned for the Natural History Museum in Vienna. However, after comparing the handwriting of Reischek contained in his letters and notes, I assessed that he was not the person who wrote the descriptions on the skulls. I, therefore, analysed the handwriting of those known collectors and traders of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains associated with Andreas Reischek, who included Ferdinand von Hochstetter (Natural History Museum, Vienna), Julius von Haast (Canterbury Museum, Christchurch), Felix von Luschan (Royal Ethnographic Museum, Berlin) and Sir James Hector (Colonial Museum, Wellington).

The outcome of the analysis indicates that the handwriting on three Māori skulls[33] belongs to Sir James Hector. As highlighted previously, Sir James Hector actively traded in Māori and Moriori ancestral remains. Based on the above analysis, there is strong evidence that the handwriting on three of the Māori ancestors in the Blumenbach Collection is that of Sir James Hector. Therefore, those three skulls are Māori ancestors and should be repatriated to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Anthropology Department of the University of Göttingen

As my research has shown, there are several ancestral remains housed at the Anthropology Department of the University of Göttingen. University accession information indicates that the Moriori ancestral remains arrived in Göttingen from the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg (today MARKK) after the Second World War. Guided by the research expertise of Holger Stoecker, and with the support of Sofia Leikam, I was able to locate archival documentation dated to February 1907. The sources reveal that the Umlauff Company in Hamburg offered Moriori ancestral remains to Prof. Dr Thilenius, director of the Hamburg Museum at that time.[34] The Umlauff Museum and company based in Hamburg was established by Johann Friedrich Gustav Umlauff (1833–1889), a collector and trader of indigenous artefacts and ancestral remains.

Furthermore, a review of Te Papa's communication with researchers and institutions in Germany uncovered another related document that was sent to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa by Johannes Krause, co-director of the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig. The document confirms that the collector of the karāpuna was Henry Travers. It highlights that Travers obtained the Moriori ancestors in December 1906 and sent them to the Umlauff Company thereafter. By analysing these two documents, and by directly viewing the ancestors at the Anthropology Department, I detected that the remains had attached the original Umlauff Company name tags. Therefore, the ancestral remains in the Anthropology Department are of Moriori origin with clear provenance to Rēkohu, the Chatham Islands.

Colonisation Celebrated and the Legacy of a Colonial Mindset

At the beginning of this chapter, I indicated that I was the head of repatriation for the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme which is administered by Te Papa. We are the mandated repatriation programme for the New Zealand Government to seek the return of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains from overseas institutions. I began the role in early October 2007, and in November of the same year, I was travelling to the United Kingdom to uplift Māori and Moriori ancestral remains from institutions in England, Scotland, and Wales.

During the handover of the tūpuna and karāpuna at one of the institutions, the director of the institution gave an acknowledgement speech. I remember the speech for two reasons: initially, for what the chair did not say, and secondly, for something he thought was appropriate to say to indigenous representatives receiving their ancestral remains. Firstly, there was no apology for the theft, looting, collecting, trade and taking of ancestral remains. The words of "acknowledgement" that he did offer instead were phrased with him saying: "we are offering these ancestors back because they are of no value to us." The person who said the words represented the institution at its highest level, so the sentence had meaning and purpose from an academic and scientific perspective. It was a stark reminder of how institutions viewed indigenous remains, and their value to them as specimens. This is a theme that often surfaces when I engage in repatriation conversations with institutions in Europe. They say that they need to assess the scientific value of the ancestors before they can be returned. This was also part of the conversation held during the karakia at the Blumenbach Collection. It was apparent to me that the rationale and attitude that permitted the looting and theft of ancestral remains from the 1860s in Aotearoa New Zealand is still operating in contemporary Western academic institutions. In effect, the chair in 2007 was mimicking the actions of collectors and traders such as Travers, Reischek and Hector.

What I mean by this is that they mirror sentiments and sentences that can be found already during the foundation of the Colonial Museum and the height of the theft of indigenous items. Although the Wellington Colonial Museum was established in 1865,[35] it only became formally part of the New Zealand Institute two years later.[36] The New Zealand Institute through

its 1867 Act had the specific purpose of "promoting art and science" within Aotearoa New Zealand.[37] As part of its inaugural address in 1868, the New Zealand Governor, Sir George Bowen, stated that the main purpose of the institute was to "provide guidance and aid for the people of New Zealand in subduing and replenishing the earth – in the 'heroic work' of colonization".[38] This was then followed by an acknowledgement speech of William Fox, member of the House of Representatives. Fox emphasised the central role of the new British Colony by saying, "we in New Zealand were here to lay the basis of a true civilization, not only to subdue nature, and till the soil, but impelled by Anglo-Saxon ardour and energy, to develop all that was worthy of development."[39] These speeches highlight the expectations leaders within the colony had for the New Zealand Institute and its Colonial Museum. They were seen and meant to be a beacon and reservoir of the "heroic" powers of Western colonisation. According to Bowen, Fox and so many others, these supposedly incredible powers would lead to taming, replenishing, and civilising the country: "The only thing in the way was the pesky and troublesome Māori."[40]

As indicated earlier, the whakapapa research methodology provides a framework through which to consider and make connections between people, events, and actions. With the establishment of Wellington Colonial Museum and the New Zealand Institute, there is an underlying theme that it would be used as a tool to colonise, till, and tame the country and put it to "proper" use by the British. In practice, both institutions were part of a series of actions by the British Crown that were implemented to actively disenfranchise Māori and Moriori from their property, their native culture, and those things of value and importance to them as protected by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These actions were reinforced by nullifying Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1877, confiscating lands of tribes that would not sell, as well as alienating other tribal lands, converting them into individual ownership, and then putting pressure on individual owners to sell to the Crown. As part of this process, all colonial museums received, collected, looted, and traded Māori and Moriori ancestral remains. Thus, these scientific institutions profited from the colonial violence and disregard for indigenous people. Since they were considered part of the fauna, flora and wildlife of the country, the remains were also placed on display in museum institutions.[41]

Māori and Moriori Resistance and Their Persistence to Have Their Rights Honoured

As shown above, colonial views prevail and changes only came about due to the persistent activism of indigenous groups. One of the focuses was to seek ratification of Te Tiriti by Māori based on tikanga, or a commitment to follow the intent of the document signed by Māori ancestors in 1840, as a means to honour them and Te Tiriti. The political action taken is also tikanga based, as it recognises that the way forward is through passive resistance and by coordinated political action.[42]

Methodical and persistent political action by Māori led to the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 by the New Zealand Government, with the purpose of considering contemporary grievances Māori had with the Crown for not abiding by its commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.[43] In 1985, the purpose of the Tribunal was extended so it could consider complaints dating back to 1840. The actions of the Waitangi Tribunal and its recommendations provided a formal avenue for the Crown to redress Māori grievances as well as compensate Māori and Moriori. Through the Tribunal, resources are allocated by the Crown to meet its Te Tiriti commitments to protect taonga and miheke of importance to Māori and Moriori, including their languages.

At the time of the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal, there were also social and cultural changes happening within Aotearoa New Zealand. At the National Museum, the immediate predecessor to Te Papa, the key members of its Council in the mid to late 1980s were Sir Graham Latimer and Maui Pomare. Both were highly influential in seeking the return of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains in the 1980s and 1990s. It was Maui Pomare who led the development of the National Museum establishing a wāhi tapu at the museum before it became Te Papa in 1998.

In the 1990s, the National Museum became the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. As part of this development, a new piece of legislation was enacted called "Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992".[44] Significantly, it included Māori and Moriori as part of the process of telling their own stories alongside the Western and European approach to accepted museum practice. The key changes included:

1. Signalling the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of nationhood for Aotearoa New Zealand;
2. Biculturalism is seen as key foundation for the museum, where both Māori (including Moriori) and non-Māori traditions are acknowledged and incorporated into the museum's practices. This included being inclusive of te reo Māori and ta rē Moriori (the Moriori language) with exhibition labels;
3. Mana taonga or ensuring communities of origin of important national treasures at Te Papa are included in the conversations and development of exhibitions containing their cultural treasures; and
4. All Māori and Moriori ancestral remains were immediately deaccessioned from the collections and offered for repatriation to their iwi/imi.

The major shift for the country was recognising that the traditional Western museum practice, in which museum curators typically hold the authority to tell the story of national treasures, did not apply to taonga and miheke, and that the best people to pass on the knowledge pertaining to taonga and miheke are Māori or Moriori.[45]

As highlighted earlier, taonga is a broad term and includes a range of important items, such as cultural treasures, ancestral remains, and wāhi tapu, but also the natural environment, wildlife and geological specimens. Te Papa has done this to some degree by recognising the importance of connection through its mana taonga policy, inviting iwi to tell their stories within their national museum, and through the repatriation of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains. In addition, Te Papa has already recognised its role in re-establishing the connection between iwi/imi and wildlife specimens (i.e., whale specimens, moa eggs, turtles) and geological items (i.e., pounamu) originating from their tribal territories. Examples of working in partnership with iwi include when whales and other sea creatures become stranded and die on coastal areas. Some iwi may extend an invitation to Te Papa to uplift the skeletal remains to allow for scientific examination to take place, however, when this work is completed there is an expectation that the remains will return to the tribal region and placed in a final resting place according to appropriate tikanga (rituals). Further work can be done by Te Papa and other government agencies to build on these initial steps – to build stronger connections between taonga, wildlife and geological specimens, to build a unique knowledge system that reflects peer-reviewed scientific knowledge as well as mātauranga *Māori* and tohungatanga Moriori (traditional Moriori knowledge).

Summary and Reflection

This paper has given an overview of the impact of British colonisation on the Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Moriori people of Rēkohu, Chatham Islands. The signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi between Māori Chiefs and the British Crown in 1840 was meant to signal the beginning of a new type of relationship between the British and indigenous people, where the property and cultural rights of indigenous people were protected by the establishment of British governorship in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The collection of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains alongside wildlife specimens reflect how Western institutions viewed indigenous people as part of the native fauna and flora, part of the wildlife that is available to be collected, looted, and traded without concern or repercussions within Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Decolonisation within Aotearoa New Zealand stems from the determination of Māori and Moriori who sought to hold the British Crown and New Zealand Government accountable. They finally made major inroads with the establishment of the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal in 1975.

Associated with the recognition of Te Tiriti by the Crown, Māori and Moriori were able to seek respect for the ancestral remains housed in museums around the country, and with the establishment of the Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme to formally seek the return of Māori and Moriori ancestral remains housed in international institutions. However, what was highlighted by the Global Wildlife Trade Conference held at the University of Göttingen in November 2022 is that the trade of wildlife and its direct connection with Western colonisation of Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, the Americas and Oceania is still to be fully acknowledged. Through its mana taonga policy, Te Papa connects cultural treasures with their communities of origin, despite the challenges associated with how the taonga came into its collections.

The mana taonga concept may be considered unique to Aotearoa New Zealand, however, academics have been highlighting and discussing similar concepts for some time. One example is by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai. In his paper *Museum Objects as Accidental Refugees*,[46] he highlights the privilege given to western interpretations of objects, and how this devalues the story of the object from the community of origin's point of view.

Furthermore, Appadurai gives these objects the status of "refugees", which is the state they remain in until they are uplifted and repatriated by their community of origin. The Māori and Moriori ancestral remains that were traded to Göttingen University from the early 20th century until the 1950s are examples of "refugees" collected, looted, and traded.

Fortunately for these refugees, they have returned home to Aotearoa New Zealand after more than one hundred years in Germany, as the Georg August University in Göttingen agreed to repatriate these ancestors to their homeland in June 2023. The repatriation was made possible only because both Māori and Moriori peoples have devoted their energies to ensure the safe return of their ancestors to their lands and sacred repositories. Yet, what about the wildlife specimens that require repatriation to their places of origin and remain as refugees in museums and academic collections around the world?

Neel Ahuja in his paper *Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World* offers insight into the plight of wildlife specimens housed in zoos, laboratories, museums, and academic institutions.[47] The point made by Ahuja is that wildlife specimens are treated according to the value humans give to them. In the 1800s, Europeans and Western academics relegated non-Western and non-European people to be categorised alongside wildlife. Indigenous people through their own political activism and untiring effort were able to emancipate themselves from the wildlife category, and to begin the process of seeking the repatriation of their ancestors. Considering these developments, I will ask my final question, which is, who will speak on behalf of wildlife that remain refugees housed in international collections? This is the new challenge for those working in museums, academic institutions, laboratories, zoos, aquariums, and other facilities with wildlife collections. Who indeed is brave enough to offer leadership in this important field of research, repatriation, restitution, and reconciliation?

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32 The ancestor is identified via the catalogue number (141.156.875) in the collection.
33 These ancestors are referenced in the catalogue with the numbers (500.743.619), (501.744.620) and (502.745.621).
34 Umlauff, J. F. G., 1907. Business letter dated 27 February 1907 regarding Moriori and Māori skeletal remains. Letter written by Johann Friedrich Gustav Umlauff (1833–1889), Umlauff Museum Hamburg. Located at the Archives of the Museum of Ethnology, Hamburg (FILE: MARKK – Archiv I 1195).
35 Te Papa Press (2004), *Icons Ngā Taonga*, p. ix.
36 Morrell, Vivienne: "Nineteenth-Century Colonial Museums. Temples to Rational Progress or Curiosity Cabinets?", on: *Vivienne Morrell*, https://viviennemorrell.wordpress.com/2014/12/21/colonial-museums/, accessed 22 April 2022; "New Zealand Institute Act 1867", on: *New Zealand Legal Information Institute*, http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/nzia186731v1867n36364/, accessed 24 April 2023.
37 New Zealand Institute Act (1867), p. 3.
38 Sir George Bowen cited in: Morrell (2014), *Nineteenth-Century Colonial Museums*.
39 William Fox cited in: Morrell (2014), *Nineteenth-Century Colonial Museums*.

40 Sir James Hector cited in: Nolden et al (2012), *The Correspondence of Julius Haast and James Hector,* p. 94.
41 Butts, David James: "Māori and Museums. The Politics of Indigenous Recognition", on: *Massey University*, https://mro.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/251, accessed 23 April 2023, p. 92, 96, 193; Paterson (2021), *Tattooed History,* p. 9.
42 Durie, Mason (2010): *Te Mana, Te Kāwangatanga*, Aotearoa New Zealand, p. 24–27, 124–125; Orange (2011), *The Treaty of Waintangi*, p. 216–217.
43 Durie (2010), *Te Mana*, p. 185; Orange (2011), *The Treaty of Waintangi,* p. 230–235; Anderson et al (2014), *Tangata Whenua*, p. 445–449.
44 Te Papa Press (2004), *Icons Ngā Taonga,* p. xi-xii.
45 Te Papa Press (2004), *Icons Ngā Taonga,* p. 2.
46 Appadurai, Arjun (2017): "Museum Objects as Accidental Refugees", in: *Historische Anthropologie*, vol. 25, no. 3, p. 401–408.
47 Ahuja, Neel (2009): "Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World", in: *Publication of the Modern Language Association*, vol. 124, no. 2, p. 556–563.

Ancestors and Descendants

On Provenance and Repatriation of Ancestral Remains from Hawai'i in Collections of the University of Göttingen

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Abstract

From 2020 to 2023, the interdisciplinary research project *Sensitive Provenances* at the Georg August University of Göttingen investigated the Blumenbach Skull Collection and the Anthropological Collection of the University with regard to their holdings' entanglements with colonial contexts. In this paper, we report on the provenance research that led to the repatriation of 13 ancestral remains, or iwi kūpuna**,** to Hawai'i. The iwi kūpuna were taken during the second half of the 19th century from abandoned battlefields or gravesites – without the consent of the descendants – and reached the collections in Göttingen after various migrations through private property and different institutions in Germany. The proactive steps that were undertaken early in the process in order to inform the present-day countries of origin about the presence of human remains in the collections led to an official request for restitution by the Office of Hawai'ian Affairs (OHA) in September 2021. All further provenance research was carried out in close coordination with the Hawai'ian partners, especially following the realisation that more remains were held in the collections than was indicated by the collections' inventory.

The public repatriation ceremony in February 2022 was programmed to a large extent by the Hawai'ian guests, and was characterised by mutual respect. A joint summer school in Honolulu organised by the University of Hawai'i, Manoa, the East-West Center and the University of Göttingen in September 2023 emphasised the continued relationship between the German and Hawai'ian partners. It was concluded with a visit to the final resting place of the iwi kūpuna near Nu'uanu Pali on the island of O'ahu.

Introduction

From 2020 to 2023, the interdisciplinary research project *Sensitive Provenances* at the Georg August University of Göttingen investigated anthropological collections of the university with regard to their holdings' entanglements with colonial contexts. The goal of the project was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to identify human remains from colonial contexts in the Blumenbach Skull Collection and in the Anthropological Collection, and to determine their origins, the circumstances of acquisition and the related transfer networks. Secondly, it sought to proactively seek out communication and understanding with representatives of the countries and communities of origin in order to agree upon further handling of the ancestral remains, including their return.

For this provenance research, the project was given an interdisciplinary structure. One string carried out anatomical-anthropological investigations, in which predominantly morphological observations were carried out on the skeletal remains themselves in an aim to determine the age at death, biological sex and pathologies of the remains, as well as taphonomic changes and soil adhesions on the remains. The other part consisted of historical provenance research that seeks to determine the larger historical contexts as well as the specific acquisition circumstances that led to the ancestral remains' presence in collections of a German academic institution today. The historical investigation started with the remains themselves, namely with inscriptions, labels and investigations into the paperwork of the collections (i.e., lists, inventories and collection documentation). The next step was to look into external archives and historical publications, but also for an exchange with experts from the countries of origin and their local – sometimes

orally handed down – narratives. In the end, both research paths were brought together to form a synthesis. The goal was a plausible reconstruction of an object or subject history, including geographical and ethnic or social indication of origin. The history of the individual person whose human remains are at hand, as well as of the remains in the status of a collection object,[1] can thus be placed in the historical contexts of both the region of origin and the collection in question.

In the following paper, we will report on the results of provenance research using the example of ancestral remains from Hawai'i and the process of their repatriation.

The Blumenbach Skull Collection

The Blumenbach Skull Collection at the Center for Anatomy of the University Medical Center Göttingen is the oldest existing university skull collection worldwide. It was established by the Göttingen naturalist and anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) between the 1770s and 1840, and then continued by the holders of the Göttingen Chair of Anatomy until the 1940s.[2] Currently, there are approximately 840 skulls and skull casts in the collection, of which about 200 skulls have a non-European provenance.

Blumenbach used skulls from his collection to describe five "varieties" of anatomically modern humans: "Caucasian," "Mongolian," "Ethiopian," "American," and "Malayan."[3] These categories, established according to morphological criteria, later served as a template for the erroneous division of mankind into "races," and in this respect gave rise to a disastrous power.

The scientific-historical importance of the Blumenbach Collection for anatomy and anthropology is widely recognised; this is at least true for the 245 skulls in the collection that were curated by Blumenbach himself and that have been thoroughly catalogued in recent years.[4] However, the more extensive part of the collection (namely the skulls which only entered the collection after 1840) has hardly been researched in terms of its scientific history.

The Anthropological Collection

The Anthropological Collection at the Department for Historical Anthropology and Human Ecology of the Johann Friedrich Blumenbach Institute of Zoology and Anthropology was created at the *Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde* (today: *Museum am Rothenbaum – Kulturen und Künste der Welt* [MARKK]) between 1880s and the 1930s, mainly between 1904 and 1919, i.e., essentially at the time of German colonialism. In addition to human remains from Hamburg and other areas of Germany, it includes about 1,300 ancestral remains from all continents that were given or acquired by travellers or through expeditions by colonial officers and officials or by traders.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Anthropological Collection of the *Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde* was transferred in several steps to the Anatomical Institute of the University of Göttingen, thus dissolving the Anthropological Department of the Hamburg Museum.[5] However, the Hamburg Museum kept "43 skulls that are of ethnological interest" in its holdings.[6] In Göttingen, the collection was initially kept in the Anatomical Institute, but with the founding of an Institute for Anthropology in 1972, the collection moved into its care. In the course of a faculty reform in the 1990s, the institute was incorporated into the newly founded *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach Institut für Zoologie und Anthropologie* as the department of *Historische Anthropologie und Humanökologie*.[7]

Iwi kūpuna in Göttingen

In the course of the 19th century, Hawai'i became a favourite place for European scientists who wanted to collect ancestral remains of the indigenous population.[8] Travellers from Europe and North America often helped themselves to older burial grounds, some of which dated from the time of the violent unification of the island archipelago into the Kingdom of Hawai'i. The iwi kūpuna (ancestral skeleton remains of Hawai'ian descent) in the two Göttingen anthropological collections were collected in the course of the second half of the 19th century by ship and expedition travellers on supposedly abandoned

battlefields and taken from gravesites, or rather, stolen. This was done without the consent of the descendants and against Hawaiian beliefs, laws and practices.[9]

The remains did not reach Göttingen directly, but in a roundabout way. With their torturous migrations through private property and various institutions in Germany, the iwi kūpuna point to the widespread interest – not only scientific, and difficult to grasp today – in human remains of indigenous, often colonised people from distant continents. The following section outlines the acquisition and transfer histories of the iwi kūpuna of 13 people from present-day Hawai'i in the order in which they were received in the collections.

Kanaka Maoli I

Rudolph Wagner (1805–1864) succeeded Johann Friedrich Blumenbach as professor of anatomy and curator of the anatomical collection at the University of Göttingen in 1840 and held this position until his death in May 1864. On 9 March 1864, he reported to the Society (today: Academy) of Sciences in Göttingen about the arrival of several skulls in the Anatomical Collection:

> *I was particularly pleasantly surprised last year by a letter dated 9 July* [1863] *from Mr W*[ilhelm] *v*[on] *Freeden, Rector of the Grand Ducal Oldenburg Navigation School in Elsfleth. He sent us an excellently beautiful skull of a Kanaka from Honolulu on the island of Oahu.*[10]

The natural scientist and oceanographer Wilhelm von Freeden (1822–1894) was apparently prompted to make the donation by an appeal for skulls to be sent to Göttingen, which Wagner published in *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* on 9 March 1863.[11]

Wagner further reported that Freeden had

> *received the skull from a friendly ship captain, who reported the following about the acquisition. He was on a ride, which he had carried out with several colleagues into the interior, on which occasion they would have come over an old battlefield, on which, according to the stories of the natives, they had already fought a battle before the times of the first discoverer (Cook).*

Figure 1 | Inscription on the historical cardboard box (ink): "37. / Kanaka / [donated] by Wilhelm von Freeden / [curator] W[agner] 1863 / from South Sea Isle / Honolulu". © Georg August University Göttingen, Blumenbach Collection, Photo: Katharina Stötzel

James Cook (1728–1779), on his third voyage to the South Seas, first landed on Kaua'i, one of the eight main islands of Hawai'i, on 20 January 1778. Before continuing his voyage, Cook named the archipelago the "Sandwich Islands" after John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the British Admiralty. Thus, the battle in question must have taken place some years before 1778. As Wagner further learned from Freeden, the ship's captain had "jokingly attached one of these bleached skulls, which were lying around there in quantity, to the saddle and had taken it with him. However, a Bremen captain had taken the lower jaw; he had sailed to the East Indies with it."[12]

With its entry into Blumenbach's skull collection of the Anatomical Institute of the University of Göttingen, the iwi kūpuna received the status of a medical object. Its collection number 37 (Fig. 1) was also listed in a catalogue of the Blumenbach Collection, published by the anatomist Johann Friedrich Spengel (1852–1921) in 1880.[13] This catalogue lists the entries up to 1874. In a new listing of the collection before the Second World War, the skull was given the inventory number 747 (today: AIG 747).

Wagner described Freeden's gift as a "splendid, really quite well preserved skull", which is

> *completely preserved and as freshly prepared. The 16 teeth of the upper jaw show themselves in beautiful condition and are almost not worn at all. They announce a man in the 20s or at most at the beginning of the 30s. These teeth are the most beautifully formed in almost our entire collection.*[14]

He compared the skull with those four skulls from Oahu, which the Brunswick anatomist Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand Uhde (1813–1885) had already described in 1861,[15] and came to the conclusion: "I therefore do not doubt in the least the authenticity of the skull."[16] Wagner was, however, uncertain as to whether it was a "well-prepared skull from the hand of a doctor in the Sandwich Islands" or actually a "found grave skull."[17]

The skull was later opened in the sagittal plane, dividing it in the middle. Pencil marks on the outside of the skull were made to indicate the position of the cut and fine striations on the surface indicate the use of a serrated blade. The frontal bone has several shallow kerf marks 1–2 millimetres parallel to the saw edge, most probably caused by a slipping of the blade at the beginning of the sawing process. It is likely that the missing bone parts of the nasal and oral cavities broke off during this procedure and were lost afterwards. The two halves of the skull are currently being held together by two metal pins, one in the front and one in the back. It is known that Wagner used several skulls from the collection for his morphological studies of the human brain. He made plaster casts from the cranial cavity in order to reconstruct the shape of the brain, describing the opening of the skull in the sagittal plane as the most "successful" method.[18] It is therefore very likely that Wagner himself opened the skull for his research, even though no records exist that confirm it for this particular skull.

The outside surface and the edges of the saw cut have pencil marks congruent with points or lines that are used for craniometry. These pencil marks were made after the skull was opened, either during Wagner's time or afterwards. Spengel recorded measurements for the skulls in his catalogue, but it is not known if he made any marks on the skulls.[19] The teeth and the alveolar ridge of the maxilla have remnants of dark grey to black modelling clay, possibly left over from making a dental impression. The timeframe for making the dental impression and its use are unknown.

We can conclude that the iwi kūpuna with the inventory number AIG 747 belongs to a person who died on the island of O'ahu before the arrival of James Cook, i.e., before January 1779. The skull, without its mandible, was taken by an unnamed ship captain in or near Honolulu on O'ahu before 1863 and shipped to Germany. From the possession of Freeden in Elsfleth, it entered the Anatomical Collection of the University of Göttingen in 1863. Wagner's uncertainty as to whether it was a "found grave skull" can be eliminated by the fact that there were soil and plant root adhesions found on the iwi kūpuna. As to its individual identity, it can be determined by the anthropological findings that the person was probably of female sex and had lived to be between 18 and 25 years of age.[20]

Kanaka Maoli II

In 1897, Georg Thilenius (1868–1937), a lecturer in anatomy at the University of Strasbourg since 1896, applied to the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin in order to secure funding for a research trip to Australia and New Zealand. His intention was to collect "developmental material of Hatteria punctata," a lizard considered to be a living fossil that was only found in New Zealand.[21]

The Prussian Academy of Sciences supported the trip with 8,400 German Reichsmark from the funds of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.[22] Thilenius' teacher and doctoral supervisor at Berlin University[23], who was also the director of the Anatomical Institute, Wilhelm Waldeyer (1836–1921), chaired the foundation's board of trustees from 1896 to 1920, and the well-known pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) was its vice-chairman until 1902.[24]

In July 1897, Thilenius started his journey to North America, Hawai'i, Samoa and New Zealand. He spent about a month on the Hawai'ian archipelago,[25] where he met the ethnologist and then naval staff physician Augustin Krämer (1865–1941). Together, they climbed the volcano Manua Loa on the island of Hawai'i[26] and subsequently worked together in Samoa.[27]

On the island of Maui, Thilenius excavated the iwi kūpuna brought from the Hawai'ian archipelago. He described the site as a "burial place from the time of the battles of the first Kamehameha against Maui in the dunes of Maalea Bay".[28] Kamehameha I (probably 1758–1819), the king on the island of Hawai'i, first invaded the neighbouring island Maui in 1790, and conquered it in 1795. The violent union to form the later Kingdom of Hawai'i under Kamehameha I also encompassed other islands in what is now the Hawai'ian archipelago, and lasted until 1810.[29] The military battles against the resident chiefdom claimed many fallen fighters, whose remains remained on the battlefields, such as the one at Mā'alaea Bay, for decades.

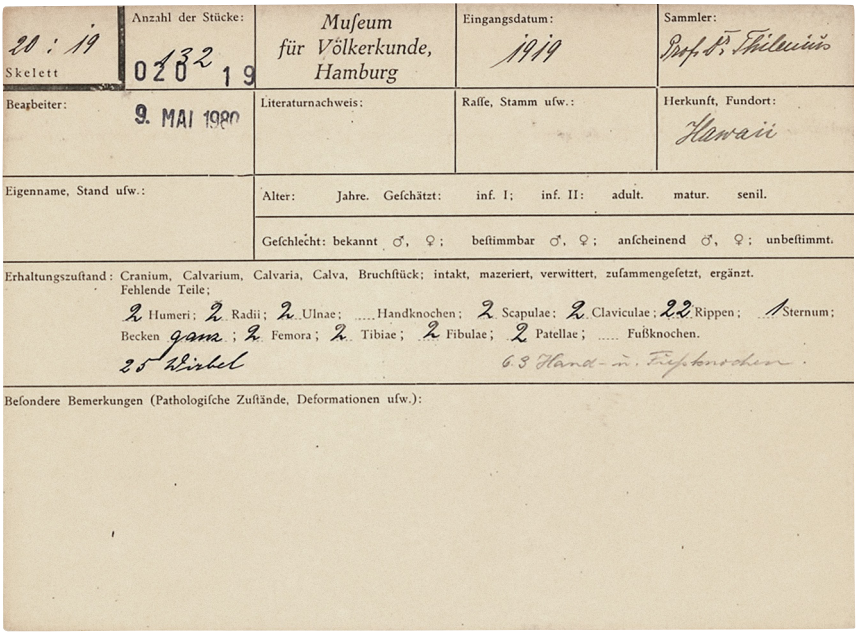
More than hundred years after these events, the former sites of the battles represented a relatively easily accessible plundering place for Western 'explorers' or for scientific collectors like Thilenius. Nevertheless, the removal of ancestral remains was done against the will of the Hawai'ian population from the very beginning. In 1860, the acquisition of ancestral remains was expressly forbidden by the Hawai'ian authorities.[30] Thus, Thilenus clearly violated Hawai'ian law through the appropriation of the remains in 1897.

The financing of the journey was granted under the condition that Thilenius would make the results and collections of his expedition available to the *Museum für Naturkunde Berlin*, the *Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin* and the *Anatomisches Institut in Berlin*.[31] Consequently, Thilenius transferred the stolen human remains to the Berlin Anatomy after his return in 1899. In total, he handed over 52 skulls, 13 skeletons, and 1 pelvis that he had excavated during his stays in Hawai'i, New Zealand, the New Hebrides (today: Vanuatu), Samoa, Solomon Islands, New Ireland, Taui and Kaniet.[32] The remains excavated on Maui (Hawai'i) included, according to Thilenius' own information, "1 skull, – 1 skull, broken and bleached, – 1 pelvis, – 2 skeletons, complete except for small bones of the extremities."[33]

The anthropologist Felix von Luschan (1854–1924), then director of the Department of Africa and Oceania at the Berlin *Museum für Völkerkunde*, had initially taken over the scientific processing of the remains.[34] In 1900, Thilenius was appointed a professorship of anthropology and ethnology at the University of Breslau. Thus, Luschan thought it right that Thilenius "should now publish his skulls and skeletons himself."[35] Apparently, at least some of the ancestral remains were returned to Thilenius as a result.

It seems that Thilenius initially took the remains, kept them in his private possession, and only gave them to the Anthropological Collection of the *Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg* – which he had headed as director since 1904 – in 1919. In the *Eingangsbuch* (entry book) of the Hamburg museum, he noted down on 15 December 1919: "Thilenius, Oceania / 35 / W.3800.– [probably as an indication of value] / Anthropology / P 117 7 / Skeleton, skeletal parts, skull."[36] Although the entry was only recorded in a general way as a series of human skulls and skeletons, it is quite clear that these were the remains that Thilenius had brought back from his voyage to Oceania from the islands of Samoa, Hawai'i, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, New Zealand and Kiribati, and which have been numbered from 8:19 to 30:19 since their entry into the collection (19:19 to 23:19 for the Hawai'ian *iwi kūpuna*).

In response to an enquiry by the Munich anthropologist Hans August Ried (unknown living dates) in October 1926 about the sex of skeletons in the *Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde* – including those from Hawai'i – Walter Scheidt (1895–1976), the curator of the Anthropological Collection, stated that the collection documentation showed "that the skeletons were excavated and brought by Professor Thilenius. [...] The two skeletons from Hawaii 19:19 and 20:19 (Fig. 2) are, in my opinion, male. Nothing is given here by the collector about the sex."[37] Since Ried has not published his study of ancestral


20 : 19
Skelett

Anzahl der Stücke:
0 2 0 1 3 2 1 9

Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg

Eingangsdatum:
1919

Sammler:
Prof. Dr. Thilenius

Bearbeiter:
9. MAI 1980

Literaturnachweis:

Rasse, Stamm usw.:

Herkunft, Fundort:
Hawaii

Eigenname, Stand usw.:

Alter: Jahre. Geschätzt: inf. I; inf. II: adult. matur. senil.

Geschlecht: bekannt ♂, ♀; bestimmbar ♂, ♀; anscheinend ♂, ♀; unbestimmt.

Erhaltungszustand: Cranium, Calvarium, Calvaria, Calva, Bruchstück; intakt, mazeriert, verwittert, zusammengesetzt, ergänzt.
Fehlende Teile;
2 Humeri; 2 Radii; 2 Ulnae; ..... Handknochen; 2 Scapulae; 2 Claviculae; 22 Rippen; 1 Sternum;
Becken ganz; 2 Femora; 2 Tibiae; 2 Fibulae; 2 Patellae; ..... Fußknochen.
25 Wirbel
6 3 Hand- u. Fußknochen.

Besondere Bemerkungen (Pathologische Zustände, Deformationen usw.):

Figure 2 | Anthropological collection, Inventory card 20:19. © Georg August University Göttingen, Anthropological Collection

remains from Hawai'i, we do not know his research question, his methodological approach, or the results of his investigations of Hawai'ian remains.

Due to the transfer of the Anthropological Collection of the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology to the University of Göttingen in the 1950s and 1960s, the ancestral remains looted by Thilenius eventually reached the University of Göttingen. There, they were used in teaching and for mostly undocumented research purposes. In the years right before the start of our project *Sensitive Provenances*, two of the human remains were part of a dissertation project by Mélida Inés Núñez Castillo from Panama. Her work aims to describe the ancient genetic landscape of archaeological human remains from Panama, South America and Oceania, and was carried out in the Department of Historical Anthropology and Human Ecology at the Georg August University in Göttingen. For this purpose, DNA samples were collected from the individuals 19:19b and 21:19.[38] In Castillo's dissertation, the origin of the two Hawai'ian remains is stated as Oceania, but the region and country are incorrectly given

as "unknown". A DNA sample was also collected from individual 19:19a by another unknown researcher, though the time and research purpose of this sampling is unidentified.

Our provenance investigation on these iwi kūpuna began with the assumption that they were the remains of four persons. However, the anthropological findings revealed that in fact, the remains of three persons were recorded under the signature 19:19 (today 19:19a, 19:19b and 19:19c), and the remains of two persons under the signature 20:19 (today 20:19a and 20:19b). The other findings of the anthropological investigations, e.g., bone preservation and taphonomic changes, are consistent with the historical provenance investigation.[39] Thus, these were the remains of a total of eight people of different ages and sexes who were excavated on the island of Maui.

Kanaka Maoli III

The skulls discussed below were acquired as early as 1854, but they were the last of the iwi kūpuna to enter the Göttingen skull collection in 1934. In his paper *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner* (*On the shape of the skulls of the Sandwich Islanders*), which he presented to the Leopoldina Academy in Halle an der Saale in 1860, the aforementioned Brunswick surgeon Carl Uhde reported on the origin and acquisition contexts of the skulls and mandibles in the Blumenbach collection. Based on his paper, Uhde published in the following year, among other things, illustrations of two skulls marked with the numbers 3 and 4, which are identical to the skulls 755 and 754, as well as illustrations of a mandible marked with the number 5, which is identical to the mandible 755a.[40]

According to Uhde's report, a certain "Mr Bielitz, a ship's doctor on the 'Hansa', visited Hawaii in 1854".[41] Hawai'i was then called "Sandwich Islands" by Europeans. Bielitz was possibly a former student of the *Collegium anatomicum-chirurgicum* in Brunswick, which existed until 1869 and trained so-called *"Wundärzte"* (wound doctors), also called *"Chirurgi"* or *"Handwerkerärzte"* (craftsmen doctors).[42] Uhde taught surgery at the *Collegium anatomicum-chirurgicum* in Brunswick, so he may have been one of Bielitz's instructors. In any case, Bielitz promised Uhde to "bring back Kanaka skulls" from his travels as a ship's doctor.[43]

Uhde based his publication on Bielitz's information and described one of the sites: the "Kulau plain on the island of Oahu [...], about one English mile

behind the Pali", the place where Bielitz had taken three skulls as "Golgotha".[44] As part of the Nu'uanu Valley, the Pali is an "almost vertical, 600-foot-deep abyss opening between two forested mountains".

In the history of O'ahu and by extension of Hawai'i, this place is of central importance. It was here, in May 1795, that the battle between the warriors of Kalanikupule (1760–1795) – the last king of O'ahu – and the fighters of Kamehameha I. took place, paving the way for the latter to unify Hawai'i by force. After Kalanikupule's forces were defeated, they retreated, and, reaching the edge of the precipice, threw themselves down to escape capture.[45] This battle was the culmination of Kamehameha's campaign to conquer the archipelago. The events of May 1795 were henceforth among the central mementoes in Hawai'i's history.[46]

Less than 60 years after the Na'anu battle, Bielitz found

> *dazzlingly bleached skulls together with the other bones* [, which] *in the course of time had been pushed by the mountain water from their first resting place into the Kulau plain* [and lay there] *in deep* [, partly] *silted furrows.* […] *A few of them are still well preserved. Most of them are partly crushed by the transfer to the plain caused by the mountain water; partly brought close to crumbling or already destroyed by weather influences; partly completely trodden down by the hoofs of the horses grazing there from time to time. From this memorable point on the islands of Oahu, about 8 miles from Honolulu, Mr Bielitz took skulls 1, 2, 3 in November 1854.*[47]

The preserved pencil inscription "3" identifies skull AIG 755 as one of the three skulls taken from the Kulau Plain.

Bielitz took a fourth skull from another "skull site" and said of it: "This place is about six English miles from Honolulu, located on the south-eastern coast of Oahu, east of Demant Hill (Diamondshill, Lealu) [today: Diamonds Head, Lēʻahi], facing the coast of Malakai Island [today: Moloka'i]".[48] Bielitz recounted various stories about this place: "According to some, Kamehameha I fought a battle here against the inhabitants of Oahu; according to others, there was a sacrificial site here; according to others, he had a landing place here on his campaigns of conquest. [...] Skull no. 4 comes from here."[49] The pencil inscription "4 dt" (dt = dedit = latin for "he gave") on the skull identifies the skull AIG 754 as skull no. 4 from Diamonds Head / Lēʻahi.

Uhde concludes that he also received four mandibles from the Kulau Plain from Bielitz, "none of which match the heads described above". This means

that the two mandibles currently enclosed in boxes AIG 754 and AIG 755 do not belong to the skulls preserved in them, but are from O'ahu.

Uhde continues to discuss in detail the question of the ethnic or "racial affiliation" of the people from whom the skulls and mandibles originate. Specifically, he is concerned with the question of whether the "Sandwich Islanders, who called themselves Kanaka"[50], belonged to the Polynesian or Malay group. He makes comparisons with people from Philippines (Tagals), Australia, Indonesia (Amboines), Malaysia, Tahiti (Otahaites) and Papua, but also with Africans and Mongols as well as with skulls of Germans and Slavs, without conclusion. In the end, he notes three things: firstly, Bielitz's observation that "the chiefs of the Sandwich Islanders in particular differ noticeably from the common man in terms of their size, strength, colour, etc."[51]. Bielitz thus observed social – rather than biologically inherited physical – distinctions. Secondly, Uhde comes to the groundbreaking conclusion, far ahead of his time and his European colleagues, that "the Sandwich Islanders were of mixed parentage as early as 1795."[52] And thirdly, Uhde concludes with an insight that was remarkable for his time "that the shape of the skull alone cannot be sufficient for the classification of human tribes"[53].

In this respect, Uhde's report does not provide any evidence regarding the doubt corresponding to the label of AIG 754 as to whether it is the skull of a "Kanaka" ("Probably not a Kanaka skull, but of a different race"[54]). He does discuss the possibility that skull no. 4 (AIG 754) is not a "Sandwich Islander": for example, skull no. 4 is considerably lighter than skull no. 3, but skulls 1 to 3 also show "a considerable deviation in the weight figures."[55] Rather, it must be highlighted that the notation on the attached label was made in a context far removed in time and place from the context of acquisition and probably not by Uhde himself. The label could have been added at the earliest in 1861 in the collection of the *Collegium anatomicum-chirurgicum* in Brunswick or possibly later by the director of the Anatomical Institute at Göttingen Hugo Fuchs (1875–1954) in the course of the acquisition of the skulls into the Blumenbach Collection in 1934.[56] In any case, as property of a German medical institute of the time, the skulls were subjected to racialising logic and categorisation, causing the labelling curator to overlook – unwittingly or willingly – the literal meaning of the term "Kanaka". In the language of Hawai'i, "Kanaka" means: "the human species in distinction from brutes, a common man in distinction from a chief, the people generally, mankind"[57].

The subsequent path of the remains into the Blumenbach Collection is somewhat unclear. Perhaps Uhde gave the four skulls and four mandibles brought by Bielitz to the *Collegium Anatomicum-chirugicum's* collection or he

kept them in his private possession. Another plausible possibility would be that he first kept them in his private possession and later relinquished them to the *Collegium Anatomicum-chirugicum's* collection.

However, it seems most likely that the skulls and mandibles initially remained in Uhde's possession. In this case, the collection stayed in his family and was passed on to his son-in-law, Wilhelm Blasius (1845–1912), an ornithologist and, director of the Brunswick Natural History Museum from 1870 onwards. This assumption is supported by the inscription "Slg. Blasius" (Slg = dt. Sammlung = Collection) that can be found on the historical boxes which held the skulls until their repatriation. The note "Slg. W. Blasius" is also written on a slip of paper enclosed with the skulls, further indicating that the remains in question were in Blasius' collection before being sent to Göttingen.

Another possible (though less likely) explanation is that the collection of the *Collegium Anatomicum-chirurgicum* was transferred to the Ducal (Teaching) Hospital in Brunswick[58] after the collegium's dissolution in 1869.[59] From there, it may have been passed on to the Anthropological Department of the Natural History Museum in Brunswick in 1890[60], where Blasius could have accessed it.

In October 1934 Hugo Fuchs requested 300 Reichsmark from the curator of the University of Göttingen: He wanted to purchase "racial skulls" that had been offered to the institute by its student Wilhelm Blasius (jun.). This was probably the physiologist Wilhelm Blasius (1913–1995), who studied medicine in Göttingen. The ornithologist and namesake Wilhelm Blasius was not his father, as Fuchs erroneously assumed, but his grandfather or great-uncle. According to Fuchs, the offer to the curator included: "9 racial skulls (4 Peruvian[61], 1 Australian[62], 2 Sandwich Islander[63], 1 Circassian[64], 1 K[...][65]), plus 3 German burial skulls[66] from the Brunswick area."[67] The collection came "from the estate of the student's [grand]father, Prof. Dr Wilhelm Blasius in Brunswick, and had already been partly established by his father-in-law, Geh. Med.-Rat Dr Uhde in Brunswick. [...] The skulls are in good, partly excellent condition."[68] Although Fuchs' request was rejected,[69] the skulls nonetheless became part of the Blumenbach Collection, supplemented by the note "Fuchs 1934", and have remained a part of it ever since.

Our provenance investigations on these iwi kūpuna began with the assumption that they were the remains of two persons. However, the anthropological findings and the historical sources revealed that the remains of two persons were recorded under each signature, i.e., AIG 754 (today AIG 754 and 754a) and AIG 755 (today AIG 755 and 755a, see fig. 3a and 3b). Consequently, these are the remains of four individuals, who were male adults at the time of their deaths.

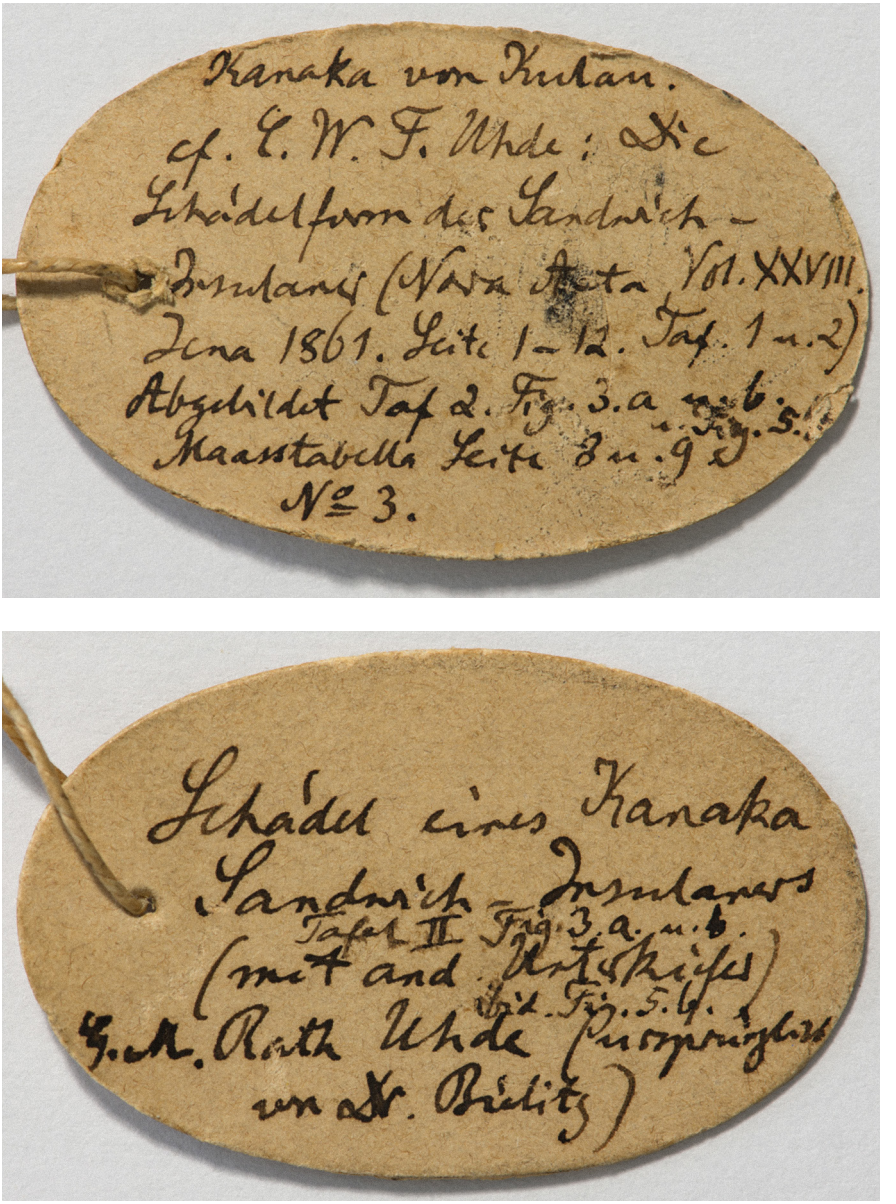


Figure 3a and 3b: Paper label attached to the skull AIG 755.

Repatriation in 2022

After taking inventory of the collections, we next informed the present-day countries of origin in Oceania about the ancestral remains housed in Göttingen. To do so, Jonatan Kurzwelly (a member of the research group) and author Holger Stoecker met with representatives of the Pacific countries in online meetings in summer 2021. The meetings were organised and facilitated by Tarisi Vunidilo, our project member from Fidji/Hawai'i, who is well connected through the Pacific Islands Museum Association (PIMA), and who found excellent contacts.

The reactions varied. Most of the interlocutors were completely unaware of the fact that ancestral remains from their countries had been taken to Germany. Many signalled that they needed time to confer with their government administration, museum experts, and affected communities. Our interlocutors from New Zealand, Australia, and Hawai'i understood, based on already established repatriation protocols, the respective meeting as a prelude to restitution processes (see Te Herekiekie Herwini's contribution in this volume).

Our Hawai'i partners, longtime repatriation activist Edward Halealoa Ayau and Kamakana Ferreira of the Office for Hawai'ian Affairs (OHA), issued a reclaim while the meeting was still in progress. In addition to the ancestral remains, they also reclaimed a plaster cast of a Hawai'ian skull,[70] not in order to bury it like the iwi kūpuna, but to destroy it and thus remove it from future potential research. Simultaneously, they set comparatively strict guidelines for the further handling: no anthropological research beyond looking at the skulls was to take place; the iwi kūpuna must not to be exposed to daylight under any circumstances, as this would disrespect the ancestors;[71] and all further steps had to be carried out in close coordination with them.

The OHA's official request for restitution reached the Presidency of the University of Göttingen on 21 September 2021.[72] Since the return of the iwi kūpuna was scheduled for early 2022, the necessary provenance research had to be carried out in a timely fashion, but still in close coordination with the Hawai'ian partners. Different approaches to generating knowledge about the origins of the iwi kūpuna came into play. In the course of the investigations, it became apparent that the mandibles of the iwi kūpuna with collection numbers AIG 754 and AIG 755 did not match the skulls. It was initially unclear whether they had been added to the skulls while still in Hawai'i or

Figure 4: The memorial at Nu'uanu Pali, where looted and repatriated iwi kūpuna are reburied, September 2023. © Photo: Holger Stoecker

later in Germany. This was very important, because if the mandibles had not been brought from Hawai'i, they would not be eligible for repatriation. We approached Edward Ayau with the problem, who offered to consult a seer in Hawai'i who, with her spiritual methods, would be able to find out whether the mandibles came from Hawai'i, too. Shortly thereafter, he conveyed the seer's verdict: the mandibles were also from Hawai'i and should be repatriated as well. A little later, we came across the historical report on the acquisition contexts of the remains on the island of O'ahu, which affirmed that the mandibles came from Hawai'i. Thus, among the two collection numbers are remains of four individuals. In this case, the spiritual result was confirmed by the historical provenance research, and certainly contributed to the fact that a few months later the repatriation of the iwi kūpuna could be carried out as a consensual, successful process.

On 9 and 10 February 2022, a three-member delegation of the OHA visited the University of Göttingen to retrieve the 13 iwi kūpuna and the plaster cast. One member of the Hawai'ian delegation was Ayau who served as the executive director of Hui Mālama I Nā Kūpuna O Hawai'i Nei (Group Caring for the Ancestors of Hawai'i) until 2015 and now acts as a volunteer for OHA leading international iwi kūpuna repatriation efforts. In addition, Mana and

Kalehua Caceres ensured as cultural practitioners that the iwi kūpuna returned safely to Hawai'i.[73] Göttingen was not the only stop for the Hawai'ian emissaries. On the same trip, they visited the *Übersee-Museum Bremen*, the University of Jena, the Prussian Heritage Foundation in Berlin, and the Natural History Museum Vienna in order to bring home ancestral remains. On 9 February, a public repatriation ceremony took place in the prestigious *Alte Mensa* of the University of Göttingen. Participants included representatives of the University of Göttingen, the city and civil society of Göttingen, the state of Lower Saxony, and the U.S. Embassy. The dignified ceremony, characterised by mutual respect, was programmed to a large extent by the Hawai'ian guests and received an interested echo in the regional, national and international media. The iwi kūpuna have since been reburied and found their final resting place near Nu'uanu Pali at the island of O'ahu (Fig. 4).

Conclusion

From 8 to 10 September 2023, a joint summer school on the topic of "Provenance research and restitutions of human remains", organised by the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, the East-West Center and the University of Göttingen, took place in Honolulu. In total, 15 students, young researchers as well as additional postdocs from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hilo, West Oahu, and the Brigham Young University at Laie were invited to participate. One part of the event was dedicated to learning about the different perspectives of provenance research from the pacific region, with keynote lectures held by Noelle Kahanu (University of Hawai'I at Manoa) and Edward Halealoa Ayau. The second part allowed the students to gain detailed insight and hands-on experiences of historical and bioanthropological provenance research. The summer school was concluded with a visit to the Nu'uanu Pali memorial site.

The processes and results reported here on our provenance research in relation to the iwi kūpuna from the islands of Hawai'i demonstrate how challenging and intricate the treatment of human remains can be. In our project, we relied on two different approaches. For one, the historical research provided not only the information that the iwi kūpuna were taken in violation of Hawai'ian law, but also important details about the locations from which they were abducted and the people involved in the process. In addition, the

bioanthropological research yielded crucial information about the number of individuals whose bones were kept in the Göttingen collections. Through the synthesis of both research paths, we were able to reconstruct the history of 13 individuals and their journey from Hawai'i, through different institutions in Germany, and finally back to their home in Hawai'i. The summer school at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa, emphasises that repatriation should not be seen as the end of a process, but rather the beginning of a new relationship between institutions in Western countries and countries of origin.

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6 Otto Bente (Administrative director of the *Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte*) to the Hamburg Cultural Office, 24 April 1969, in: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 363-6 Kulturbehörde 1629 (Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, An- und Verkäufe 1943–1969).
7 On: https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/geschichtliches/212176.html, accessed 3 November 2023.
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9 Ayau, Edward Halealoha (2021): "The responsibility to restore the ancestral Hawai'ian foundation through repatriation and reburial", on: *German Museums Association: Guidelines – Care of Human Remains in Museums and Collections*, https://www.museumsbund.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/dmb-leitfaden-umgang-menschl-ueberr-en-web-20210625.pdf, p. 126–127, accessed 3 November 2023; Ayau, Edward Halealoha (2020): "I Mana I Ka 'iwi from. Dignity empowered by repatriation", in: Cressida Fforde, C. Timothy McKeown, Honer Keeler (Eds): *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation, Return, Reconcile, Renew*, p. 65, on: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203730966-5, accessed 30 December 2021.
10 Wagner, Rudolph (1865): "Über einige Sendungen von Schädeln, die in der letzten Zeit an die anthropologische Sammlung des physiologischen Instituts gemacht worden sind, und über eine besondere Forderung, welche man an unsere Alterthums-Vereine und die Geologen stellen muss", in: *Nachrichten von der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften und der Georg-Augusts-Universität aus dem Jahre 1864*, no. 5, 9 March 1864, p. 88–89.
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12 Wagner (1865), *Über einige Sendungen von Schädeln*, p. 89.
13 Spengel, Johann Wilhelm (1880): *Die von Blumenbach gegründete anthropologische Sammlung der Universität Göttingen*, Braunschweig, p. 82–83.
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15 Uhde, Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand (1861): "Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner", in: *Nova acta Academiae Caesareae Leopoldino-Carolinae Germanicae Naturae Curiosorum / Kaiserlich Leopoldinisch-*

Carolinische Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher in Halle/S. These four skulls include the two skulls AIG 754 and AIG 755, which entered the Blumenbach collection in 1934, see below.

16 Wagner (1865), *Über einige Sendungen von Schädeln*, p. 92.

17 Ibid.

18 Baer, Karl Ernst von; Wagner, Rudolf (1861): *Bericht über die Zusammenkunft einiger Anthropologen im September 1861 in Göttingen zum Zwecke gemeinsamer Besprechungen*, Leipzig, p. 39–41.

19 Spengel (1880): *Anthropologische Sammlung der Universität Göttingen*, p. 82–83.

20 Stötzel, Katharina (2024): *Individualisierung menschlicher Überreste in zwei historischen Schädelsammlungen der Universität Göttingen und ihr Beitrag zur bioanthropologischen Provenienzforschung*, Med. Diss. Göttingen.

21 Thilenius, Georg (1902): "Ethnographische Ergebnisse aus Melanesien, Teil I: Reisebericht – Die polynesischen Inseln an der Ostgrenze Melanesiens", in: *Nova Acta. Abhandlungen der Kaiserlich Leopoldinisch-Carolinischen Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher*, vol. LXXX, no. 1, p. 3.

22 "Humboldt-Stiftung für Naturforschung und Reisen to the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 10.7.1897", in: *Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW), Berlin, Historische Abteilung*, vol II-XI, no. 76, p. 17. The amount of 8,400 German Reichsmark in 1897 corresponds to a purchasing power equivalent of 62,160 Euro or 70,360 U.S. Dollars in 2021.

23 "Thilenius: CV, 30.7.1926", in: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 361-6 _ 1030 IV Personalakte Thilenius.

24 Dunken (1959), *Humboldt-Stiftung*, p. 165; BBAW-Archiv, II-XI, p. 76.

25 Thilenius (1902), *Ethnographische Ergebnisse aus Melanesien*, p. 3; Thilenius, Georg (1903): "Ergebnisse einer Reise durch Oceanien. Reiseerfahrungen – Ausrüstung", in: *Zoologische Jahrbücher. Abtheilung für Systematik, Geographie und Botanik der Thiere*, vol. 17, p. 428.

26 "Professor Dr. Georg Thilenius zu seinem 60.Geburtstag", in: *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 3 October 1928, in: Staatsarchiv Hamburg 731-8_A 770 Zeitungsauschnitte.

27 Thilenius (1903), *Ergebnisse einer Reise durch Oceanien*, p. 436.

28 Thilenius to Waldeyer, 6 March 1900 (transcript), in: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum, Archiv (SMB-PK, EM), ACTA betreffend die Abgüsse von anthropologischen Gegenständen und die Erwerbung anthropologischen Materials [file concerning the casting of anthropological objects and the acquisition of anthropological material], vol. 2, I B. 39, E 1865/06.

29 On: *Maui* (Wikipedia article), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maui#History, accessed 1 April 2022.

30 Ayau (2021), *The responsibility*, p. 126–27; Ayau (2020), *I Mana I Ka 'iwi from*, p. 65.

31 Letter of the Akademie der Wissenschaften to the Auswärtige Amt and the Kaiserlichen Staatssekretär des Reichsmarineamtes, Herrn Contre-Admiral Tirpitz, in: Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Historische Abteilung, II-XI, p. 76: Humboldt-Stiftung 1897 bis 1904, p. 15–16; Thilenius: CV, 30 July 1926, in: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 361-6 _ 1030 IV Personalakte Thilenius.

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34 Adolf Bastian (director of the Ethnological Museum Berlin) to Thilenius, 9 October 1899 (with notations about the grant of 8 November 1899 and von Luschan's about the receipt of the nine skulls of 10 February 1900), in: SMB-PK, EM, Acta betreffend die Erwerbung ethnologischer Gegenstände aus Australien [File concerning the acquisition of ethnological objects from Australia], vol. 12, E 753/1899.

35 Luschan to Waldeyer, 19 October 1906, ibid.

36 Sortierraum. Eingänge. 1912–1925, entry 128, in: MARKK Hamburg, Archive. All translations of German documents by the author Holger Stoecker.

37 Ried (München) to the Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, 3 October 1926, in: MARKK Hamburg, Archiv, 101-1 Nr. 965; Scheidt to Ried, 19 October 1926, ibid.
38 Núñez Castillo, Mélida Inés (2021): *Ancient genetic landscape of archaeological human remains from Panama, South America and Oceania described through STR genotype frequencies and mitochondrial DNA sequences*, Phil. Diss. Göttingen, p. 228–229, on: http://dx.doi.org/10.53846/goediss-9012, accessed 1 April 2022.
39 Stötzel (2024): *Individualisierung*.
40 The skulls were drawn by means of a *camera lucida*; the illustrations therefore show great attention to detail, see Uhde (1861), *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner*, p. 7.
41 The frigate *Hansa*, on which Bielitz served as ship's doctor, had an eventful biography. Built in New York in 1848 as a paddle steamer with sail propulsion and subsequently converted into a warship, it was the flagship of the German Imperial Fleet from 1850 until its dissolution in 1853. In the service of the Bremen shipping company Fritz & Lehmkuhl, the frigate was used from 1853 for liner services between Bremen and New York and chartered by the British Navy in 1855 for transports in the Crimean War and in 1857 for transports to India. In 1862, the frigate burnt out in London; see Gröner, Erich (1966): *Die deutschen Kriegsschiffe 1815–1945*, vol. 1, München, p. 99, on: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hansa_(Schiff,_1848), accessed 1 April 2022.
42 Oehme, Johannes (1992): „Ausbildung und Bedeutung der Handwerkschirurgen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ausbildung am anatomisch-chirurgischen Institut in Braunschweig", in: *Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen,* 10, p. 293–301.
43 Uhde (1861), *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner*, p. 3.
44 Ibid., p. 3–4.
45 Jarves, James Jackson (1843): *History of the Hawaii or Sandwich Islands*, London, p. 164.
46 For example, to the battle at Nu'uanu Pali refers the track "Pali Gap" from the posthumous 1971 album "Rainbow Bridge" by the guitarist Jimi Hendrix, on: *youtube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJ7AttIb-kc, accessed 1 April 2022.
47 Uhde (1861), *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner*, p. 4.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Uhde (ibid., p. 5) refers to the botanist Franz Julius Ferdinand Meyen's (1804–1840) traveller report (1835): *Reise um die Erde ausgeführt auf dem königlich preussischen Seehandlungs-Schiffe Prinzess Louise, commandirt von Capitain W. Wendt in den Jahren 1830, 1831 und 1832*, Berlin, p. 161.
51 Uhde (1861), *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner*, p. 7.
52 Ibid, p. 12.
53 Ibid.
54 Label at AIG.754.
55 Uhde (1861), *Über die Schädelform der Sandwich-Insulaner*, p. 10.
56 The handwriting suggests that the labels were inscribed by Hugo Fuchs.
57 Andrews, Lorrin (1836): *A vocabulary of words in the Hawaiian Language*, Lahainaluna, p. 64.
58 NLA Wolfenbüttel, 12 Neu 4 980, p. 34.
59 Oehme (1992), *Ausbildung und Bedeutung der Handwerkschirurgen*, p. 295.
60 Ahrens, Sabine (2004): *250 Jahre Naturhistorisches Museum in Braunschweig. Eine "Pflanzstätte für die naturgeschichtliche Bildung"*, Braunschweig, p. 111.
61 AIG.808, AIG.809, AIG.810, AIG.811, all mummies.
62 AIG.694.
63 AIG.754, AIG.755.
64 AIG.547.

65 AIG.695. Today "Kaffir" is a hate speech term to identify Black African people. At that time, it was a term for Bantu-speaking people in Eastern Cape region in South Africa, especially of the Xhosa. See Modest, Wayne; Lelijveld, Robin (2018) (Eds): *Words Matter. An Unfinished Guide to Word Choices in the Cultural Sector*, Amsterdam, p. 121.
66 AIG.309, AIG.310, AIG.311.
67 Fuchs to the curator of the University of Göttingen, 1 October 1934, in: University Archive Göttingen (UniA Goe), Kur 984, p. 35.
68 Ibid.
69 University curator to Fuchs, 9 October 1934, in: UniA Goe, Kur 984, p. 37.
70 The plaster cast of a "Sandwich Islander" (AIG 751) came into the Blumenbach skull collection between 1840 and 1874. Nothing is known about the origin of the cast and the original skull.
71 Ayau (2021): *Responsibility*, p. 125.
72 Sylvia M. Hussey (OHA Chief Executive Officer) to Metin Tolan (President of the University of Göttingen), 21 September 2021, copy in possession of the authors.
73 "Hawaiian delegation to bring home 58 iwi kūpuna from Germany and Austria", 7 February 2022, on: https://www.oha.org/news/hawaiian-delegation-to-bring-home-58-iwi-kupuna-from-germany-austria/, accessed 4 November 2023.

Appendix

Biographies of the Authors

Sophia Annweiler
Sophia Annweiler has studied Modern History and French at the University of Hamburg and at the Georg August University in Göttingen; at the latter, she was part of the research project on animal trading companies Reiche and Ruhe. Additionally, she worked in historical-political education at the Museum Friedland. She is currently working as a scientific trainee at the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. Her research interests include provenance research, global history, migration history and the history of National Socialism.

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Dr Barrie Blatchford is an environmental historian who focuses on the transformation of American wildlife and environments in the 19th and 20th centuries. He earned his doctorate in 2024 from Columbia University for his dissertation entitled "America's Acclimatization Exchange: Animal Acclimatization, Settler Colonialism, and the Transformation of American Nature, 1840–1975." He has held fellowships at the American Philosophical Society and the Smithsonian Institution, among others, and his writing has been honoured with the 2022 Fishel-Calhoun Prize from the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

Callum Fisher
Callum Fisher is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH) at the Humboldt University of Berlin and the Eco-Anthropologie department (UMR 7206) of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). He studies contemporary museums' colonial legacies and his work focuses on the entanglements of ethnology and the natural sciences. This research was made possible thanks to funding from the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes and the Observatoire des patrimoines de l'Alliance Sorbonne Université.

Te Herekiekie Herewini
Dr Te Herekiekie Herewini is the head of repatriation at Te Papa in New Zealand. From August 2022 for a three-month period, Te Herekiekie was based at the Georg August University in Göttingen, Germany, on a fellowship with the Sensitive Provenance Research Project. Te Herekiekie completed his PhD at University of Victoria in Wellington in mid-2023.

Charlotte Marlene Hoes
Charlotte Marlene Hoes is a PhD candidate and has worked as a research fellow in a provenance research project at the History Department of the Georg August University in Göttingen. She completed her master's degree in History and Philosophy of Knowledge at ETH Zurich. Her thesis looks at the networks and practices of the global wildlife trade; her broader research interests include global history, the history of knowledge, gender and body history, and historical human-animal studies.

Prima Nurahmi Mulyasari
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