Introduction

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

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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

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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.

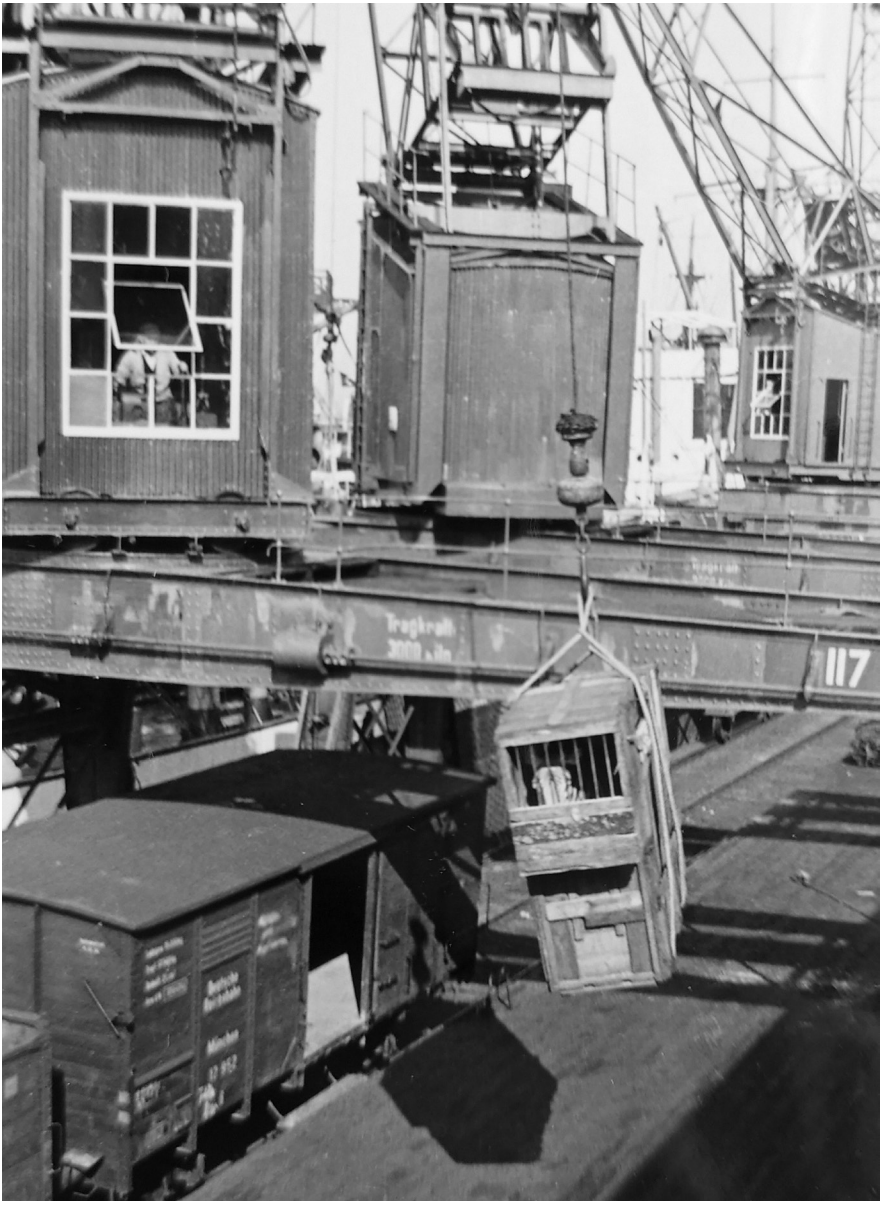

Figure 2 | Trading wild animals or indeed any live animal was a huge challenge, also logistically. Many of them lost their lives on the journeys alone. © Municipal Archive Alfeld

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

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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.

2 Ashby, Jack (2023): "How Colonial Violence in Tasmania Helped Build Scientists' Reputations and Prestigious Museum Collections", in: *The Conversation*, on: https://theconversation.com/how-colonial-violence-in-tasmania-helped-build-scientists-reputations-and-prestigious-museum-collections-218642, accessed 17 January 2024.

3 "Wilde Tiere ganz aus der Nähe", Stadt Alfeld (Leine) (Ed.): Tiermuseum – Alfeld (Leine), on: *Website Stadt Alfeld (Leine)*, on: https://www.alfeld.de/leben-lernen/stadtmuseum-tiermuseum/tiermuseum, accessed 19 January 2024.

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.

9 See works such as Larsson, Elle (2022): *Collecting, Curating and the Construction of Zoological Knowledge. Walter Rothschild's Zoological Enterprise, c. 1878–1837,* London; Reinert, Wiebke (2020): *Applaus der Robbe. Arbeit und Vergnügen im Zoo, 1850–1970*, Bielefeld; Bender, Daniel E. (2016): *The Animal Game. Searching for Wilderness at the American Zoo*, Boston; Tait, Peta (2016): *Fighting Nature. Travelling Menageries, Animal Acts and War Shows*, Sydney; Cowie, Helen (2014): *Exhibiting Animals in the Nineteenth-Century Britain. Empathy, Education, Entertainment*, London.

10 See for example Kirchberger, Ulrike; Bennett, Brett M. (2020) (Eds): *Environments of Empire. Networks and Agents of Ecological Change*, Chapel Hill; Chaiklin, Martha; Gooding, Philip; Campbell, Gwyn (2020) (Eds): *Animal Trade Histories in the Indian Ocean World*, London; Schürmann, Felix (2018): *Der graue Unterstrom. Walfänger und Küstengesellschaften an den tiefen Stränden Afrikas (1770–1920)*, Frankfurt am Main; Anderson, Virginia DeJohn (2004): *Creatures of Empire. How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*, Oxford.

11 See here Flint, Richard W. (1996): "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. 97–108, but also Reinert (2020), *Applaus der Robbe*; Tait (2016), *Fighting Nature*; Bender (2016), *Animal Game*; Rothfels, Nigel (2002): *Savages and Beasts. The Birth of the Modern Zoo*, Baltimore.
12 See Reinert, Wiebke (2019): "Enlivening Exhibitions. Zoos, Open-Air Museums, and the History of Living Animals in Human Sceneries of Display", in: *Ethnologia Europaea*, vol. 49, no. 2, p. 15–30; Roscher, Mieke; Reinert, Wiebke (2017): "Der Zoo als Anderer Raum. Hamburger und Berliner Heterotopien", in: Thomas E. Hauck (Ed.): *Urbane Tier-Räume*, Berlin, p. 103–114.
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.
14 For a theoretical framework of the merging of different knowledge systems, see Fischer-Tiné, Harald (2013): *Pidgin-Knowledge. Wissen und Kolonialismus*, Zürich.
15 See the correspondence between Ruhe and the zoological garden of Leipzig, where they discuss that a hyena is "unuseful" to the zoo due to their appearance: Archive of the Zoo Leipzig, boxes "Tierhandlung L. Ruhe", folder 148, letter by L. Ruhe to the zoo of 13 April 1937.
16 Grier, Katherine C. (2006): *Pets in America. A History*, Chapel Hill, NC, p. 240. See also Reiches own accord cited in Busch, Hugo (1993): *Von Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern. Heimat und Elternhaus*, Alfeld, p. 102.
17 According to showman William Cameron Coup, Reiche tried already to catch wildlife on his travels through Panama in 1851, see Coup, William C. (1901): *Sawdust & Spangles. Stories & Secrets of the Circus*, Chicago, p. 20. For a local account on the Reiche company, see Busch (1993): *Tafelmachern und Vogelhändlern*. For a brief overview of the Alfeld trade, refer to Dittrich, Lothar (1997): "Alfeld. Hundert Jahre ein Zentrum des Handels mit fremdländischen Wildtieren", in: *Jahrbuch des Landkreises Hildesheim*, p. 57–65.
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.
20 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.
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.
31 Steinkrüger, Jan-Erik (2015): "Kultur im Zoo. Von Menschenzoos und Völkerschauen", in: *Tierstudien,* vol. 7, p. 45–53.
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.