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.

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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.

32 My ongoing doctoral research deals in more detail with further examples of such objects, including that of a now-extinct Samoan bird sold to museums in Europe and multiple duplicates of an Australian plant collected in the 1860s, one of which was recently sampled in a lab in Paris.
33 Penny (2000), *Science and the Marketplace*, p. 15.
34 Ibid.
35 See Bieler, Rüdiger; Petit, Richard E. (2012): "Molluscan Taxa in the Publications of the Museum Godeffroy of Hamburg, with a Discussion of the Godeffroy Sales Catalogs (1864–1884), the Journal Des Museum Godeffroy 1873–1910, and a History of the Museum", in: *Zootaxa,* vol. 3511, no. 1, p. 1–80.
36 Lüders, Carl (1887): "Museum für Völkerkunde. Jahresbericht des Vorstehens C. W. Lüders", in: *Jahrbuch der Hamburgischen Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten*, vol. 4, p. LXVI–LXVII.
37 Bollard (1981), *The Financial Adventures of J. C. Godeffroy and Son in the Pacific,* p. 18.
38 Sack, Peter (1986): "German New Guinea. A Reluctant Plantation Colony ?", in: *Journal de la Société des océanistes*, vol. 42, no. 82–83, p. 109–127.
39 *"Wenn die neue Kolonialpolitik einstmals die Hoffnungen erfüllen sollte, welche sich gegenwärtig daran knüpfen, so wird man sich sicher daran erinnern, dass ein eiufacher hanseatischer Kaufmann es gewesen ist, welcher das erste Fundament dazu gelegt hat."*; in: Virchow, Rudolf; Ritter, Wilhelm; Studer, Theophil; Nehring, Alfred et al. (1885): "Sitzung vom 19. December 1885", in: *Zeitschrift Für Ethnologie*, vol. 1, p. 539–576, translated by the author.
40 Liebherr, James (2017): "Bryanites Graeffii Sp. n. (Coleoptera, Carabidae). Museum Rediscovery of a Relict Species from Samoa", in: *Zoosystematics and Evolution*, vol. 93, no. 1, p. 1–11.
41 For more on the idea of object biographies which is today pervasive in museum work, see Kopytoff, Igor (1999): "The Cultural Biography of Things. Commoditization as process", in: Arjun Appadurai (Ed.): *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, p. 64–92, and: Gosden, Chris; Marshall, Yvonne (1999): "The Cultural Biography of Objects", in: *World Archaeology,* vol. 31, no. 2, p. 169–178.
42 Fairmaire, Léon (1879): "Descriptions de Coleopteres Nouveaux Ou Peu Connus Du Musee Godeffroy Par Leon Fairmaire ä Paris", in: *Journal Des Museum Godeffroy,* vol. XIV, p. 80–114.
43 Author's own translation from the original French "Je dois les éléments de ce travail à l'obligeance inépuisable de M Godeffroy, de Hambourg, dont le Musée est bien connu de tous les savants." Fairmaire, Léon (1881): "Essai sur les Coléoptères des îles Viti (Fidgi)", in: *Annales de la Société entomologique de France*, p. 243–318.
44 Taken from an interview between the author and an entomology professor at the MNHN in Paris, recorded on 11 June 2022.
45 For more on the *Kiore* as a companion species, see Boswell, Anna (2018): "Stowaway Memory", in: *Pacific Dynamics,* vol. 2, no. 2, p. 89–104. For biodiversity information concerning invasive species of rats in Oceania, see Harper, Grant A.; Bunbury, Nancy (2015): "Invasive Rats on Tropical Islands. Their Population Biology and Impacts on Native Species", in: *Global Ecology and Conservation*, vol. 3, p. 607–627.
46 Harper; Bunbury (2015), *Invasive Rats on Tropical Islands,* p. 609.
47 Laiton, Laura (2022): "The impacts of modern agriculture on insect diversity", on: *Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences Entomology Blog*, https://ento.psu.edu/news/the-impacts-of-modern-agriculture-on-insect-diversity#:~:text=Vast%20monocultures%20can%20alter%20the,soils%20and%20complex%20insect%20communities, accessed 18 August 2023.
48 Giraud, Eva; Hadley Kershaw, Eleanor; Helliwell, Richard; Hollin, Gregory (2019): "Abundance in the Anthropocene", in: *The Sociological Review,* vol. 67, no. 2, p. 357–373.
49 Chao (2020), *(Un)Worlding the Plantationocene*, p. 182.

50 Ibid, p. 183.
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.
52 Collection of Index Cards consulted in the archives of the MARKK in December 2021.
53 See Küchler, Susanne (1988): "Malangan. Objects, Sacrifice and the Production of Memory", in: *American Ethnologist,* vol. 15, no. 4, p. 625–637. Or more recently Poser, Alexis (2019): "Malangan-Schnitzereien aus Neuirland. Ist ihr Besitz grundsätzlich unproblematisch?", in: Edenheiser, Iris; Förster, Larissa (Eds): *Museumsethnologie. Eine Einführung. Theorien, Debatten, Praktiken*, Berlin, p. 76–77.
54 For detailed descriptions of the ceremonies, including details of the use of such dance ornaments (albeit from an external, Western point of view), see Lewis, Phillip H. (1969): "The Social Context of Art in Northern New Ireland", in: *Fieldiana. Anthropology*, vol. 58, p. I–186.
55 Küchler, Susanne (2012): "Malangan. Objects, Sacrifice and the Production of Memory", in: Sandra H. Dudley (Ed.): *Museum Objects. Experiencing the Properties of Things,* New York, NY, p. 57–71.
56 Küchler (1988), *Malangan. Objects, Sacrifice and the Production of Memory*, p. 625.
57 Lewis (1969), *The Social Context of Art in Northern New Ireland*.
58 Weszkalnys, Gisa (2023): "Stranded Liabilities", on: *Theorizing the Contemporary*, *Fieldsights*, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/stranded-liabilities, accessed 31 March 2023.