

THE LONG HISTORY OF CLAIMS FOR THE RETURN OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FROM COLONIAL CONTEXTS

November 17–19, 2021

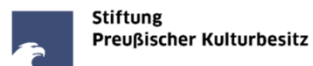
2021 ONLINE CONFERENCE OF THE GERMAN LOST ART FOUNDATION
IN COOPERATION WITH THE STIFTUNG PREUßISCHER KULTURBESITZ
AND THE RESEARCH CENTER FOR MATERIAL CULTURE
OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES, THE NETHERLANDS



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SPEAKERS

SPEAKERS	2
Prof Dr George Okello Abungu.....	4
Dr Rakesh Ankit	5
Dr Amber Aranui	5
Isabella Archer.....	6
Panggah Ardiyansyah	6
Dr Marion Bertin	7
Dr des Julia Binter.....	7
Dr Sarah van Beurden	8
Odile Boubakeur.....	8
Fabienne Chamelot	9
Dr Forget Chaterera-Zambuko	9
Dr Caroline Drieënhuizen	10
Dr Larissa Förster.....	10
Sarah Fründt.....	11
Prof Dr Albert Gouaffo	11
Prof Monika Grütters	11
Amanda H. Hellman	12
Dr Dag Henrichsen.....	13
Prof Dr Markus Hilgert	13
Dr Christine Howald	14
Dr Jan Hüsgen.....	14
Gracia Lwanzo Kasongo.....	15
Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu.....	16
Honor Keeler	16
Stefan Koldehoff.....	17
Dr Jan Küver	17
Riley Linebaugh	18
Dr Pierre Losson	19
Prof Dr Gilbert Lupfer	19
Wim Manuhutu	20
Prof Dr Wayne Modest.....	20
Dr des Lars Müller	20
Nana Oforiatta Ayim	21
Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard	21
Prof Dr hc mult Hermann Parzinger	21
Audrey Peraldi.....	22

Prof Dr Barbara Plankensteiner	22
Prof Dr Ciraj Rassool.....	22
Dr Aura Lisette Reyes Gavilán	22
Prof Dr Bénédicte Savoy.....	23
Dr Wolbert G.C. Smidt, adj Prof (MU)	23
Dr Klaas Stutje	24
Dr Fenneke Sysling	25
Prof Dr Nira Wickramasinghe.....	26
Dr Claire Wintle	26

Prof Dr George Okello Abungu

Okello Abungu Heritage Consultants

CV

Prof Dr George Okello Abungu is a Cambridge-trained archaeologist and Emeritus Director-General *National Museums of Kenya*. He has been a guest scholar at *the Getty Conservation Institute* and *Getty Research Institute* and visiting professor in numerous universities worldwide. He is a recipient of the *Ife Prize in Museology 2007*, *Distinction of Passeur du Patrimone 2009*; *Lifetime Achievement in Defense of Art 2012*, ARCA; *Chevalier de l'Order de Arts et des Lettres 2012*, Republic of France; *Africa World Heritage Fund Award 2016*; and *Ordre National Du Lion Chevalier, 2018*, Republic of Senegal. Prof Dr Abungu has widely published in archaeology, heritage management, illicit trafficking in heritage, restitution, museology, and heritage and sustainable development. He was vice president of ICOM and Kenya's representative to *the UNESCO World Heritage Committee*. He is a Fellow of the *Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Stellenbosch*, South Africa, was Elizabeth Eddy Professor of Applied Anthropology, *University of Florida*, USA and founding Professor of Heritage Studies, *University of Mauritius*, Mauritius. He presently serves as Special Advisor to the Director General of ICCROM, Rome, Italy.

Abstract

The lost past: reclaiming a history and identity broken

Africa is an old continent with rich and diversified heritage resources. Its natural and cultural heritage is often un-marched in authenticity and integrity. Movable and immovable, tangible and intangible, natural and cultural, the heritage is as rich and diverse as the peoples of the continent. It is a continent that nature and culture are intertwined and interact in harmony and heritage is produced and used as part of the living life. Africa therefore produces and lives its heritage with an attachment that at times is religious in nature. The heritage of Africa however goes beyond the remembered. It is the cradle of humankind with unquestionable evidence of origins. From Tumaï at 7 million and Olorin at 6 million years ago, the continent has produced evidence of human evolution over the years to the recent times. Both fossil and stone tool rich layers of its environment have contributed immensely to the understanding of human and other lives. The dinosaur's evidence from its soils attests to a life long gone millions of years ago. However Africa has also been a victim of its riches. From its natural to cultural resources and even people, it has been a land of extraction and exploitation to the present. Today these heritages of various nature and form are not only held in museums and other institutions outside the continent, some of which were illegally transferred, but have become an issue of contestation and restitution debate. At home, they have also become heritage of honor, national identity and symbols of decolonization and national/continental empowerment. However at times lost in the process of this dialogue of restitution are the heritages that define Africa as the cradle of humankind; the rich archaeological and paleontological materials extracted from Africa during the colonial period and after in the name of research but that have not found their way back. This discussion focuses on these heritages within and without Africa whose present locations are contested as objects/heritage for restitution and return.

Dr Rakesh Ankit

Loughborough University

CV

Rakesh Ankit is lecturer in history at *Loughborough University* (UK). He studied at Delhi, Oxford, and Southampton universities and taught previously at *OP Jindal Global University*, Sonipat (India).



Abstract

'In trust for the three nations'? *The India Office Library & Records dispute, 1947-72*

Between 1947 and 1972, governments of India and Pakistan laid repeated claims to ownership, management and share of the India Office Library & Records (IOL&R). These attempts and the British government's responses to them have been bypassed by scholars of decolonisation, belying the multifarious importance of that collection to its claimants. This article traces the trajectory of that dispute, waged in three distinct phases, wherein different proposals were mooted from both sides in their efforts to wrest and retain, respectively the riches and records of the IOL&R. Unlike the more-studied African and Southeast Asian cases from the former British Empire, this dispute was less clear-cut and therefore more demanding of both sides in their manoeuvres to pursue their desires. Legal, administrative, and technical bids were made in historical and moral arguments, with cultural and economic factors listed in support. In providing their details, this article demonstrates a difficult episode for decolonisation, where at stake was both its curated imperial past and yet-to-be written national narratives. It shows how symbols of a shared history as well as sources of that history's separate writing became an arena of contest as much for the old glory as for new profits. At a time when decolonising history is in vogue, this article depicts the difficulties of even diversifying the artifacts of colonial history.

Dr Amber Aranui

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa



CV

Dr Amber Aranui (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) is the former project lead for *Ngākahu – National Repatriation Project*, which supports New Zealand museums and iwi in the return of ancestral remains held in museums collections. She is a founding member and former chair of the *New Zealand Repatriation Research Network*, set up to assist repatriation researchers to work collaboratively with the aim of proactively returning ancestral remains back to iwi, hapū and other communities around the world. Amber has worked to develop the national policy on repatriation for the New Zealand museum sector. She is also working with her own iwi (tribal group) on repatriation initiatives relating to the return of taonga (objects of cultural significance). Amber has recently taken up the position of Curator Mātauranga Māori at *Te Papa*. Over the past 12 years Amber has published and presented at international conferences on the topic of repatriation relating to ethics, provenance research, collecting, indigenous perspectives, community collaboration and human rights. Amber has been the researcher for the *Karanga Aotearoa Repatriation Programme* for over 11 years, and has developed an interest in the research, collection and trade of human remains and the effects on indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Isabella Archer

Université de Poitiers, École du Louvre

CV

Isabella Archer is a graduate student at the *Université de Poitiers* (archaeology) and the *École du Louvre* (museum studies). Her PhD research focuses on the politics of display of endangered Middle Eastern heritage sites in museums and cultural institutions. She holds Master's degrees from the *University of North Carolina* at Chapel Hill and *Université Paris-Sorbonne* (Sorbonne Université). She has experience working in the art market, museums, and the cultural heritage sector as a consultant, curator, and project manager.



Panggah Ardiyansyah

SOAS University of London



CV

Panggah Ardiyansyah is a PhD candidate of History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS *University of London*. His primary interest is on the afterlives and knowledge production of Hindu-Buddhist materials in Indonesia, which bring him to research on colonial collecting practice and object restitution, as well as historiography of modern Indonesia. He recently co-edited *Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution* (with Tythacott, 2021)

Abstract

Object as Pusaka: the 1930s return of Bone-Gowa regalia and how it resonates into the contemporary Indonesian restitution debate

As a social construction, object as pusaka materialises the spiritual connection between the past and the present and with aspiration for the future. The sacred and magical power stored in pusaka brings blessing, authority, and well-being for the bearers. Often translated as 'heirloom' in English terminology, pusaka is considered the kingdom's regalia in the context of monarchical reign. A collection of regalia from Bone and Gowa were returned in the 1930s from Batavia and Leiden museums. Along with other valuables, they were looted and then acquired by the museums following the sacking of local rulers during a series of Dutch East Indies' military campaigns in South Sulawesi in the 1900s. Arguments given for the return were related to the issue of legitimacy for the new rulers of Bone and Gowa under the agreement of the colonial government. Using pusaka as a frame of reference in thinking about this historical episode, I will highlight the regalia's unique characters, ownership, and agency. The discussion will compare the gained insights to the return of and claim to repatriate objects to Indonesia in the 1970s and, more recently, in the last ten years. It highlights resonances with the contemporary debate on restitution Indonesia to understand the historical context better, with an eye to pave moves forward.

Dr Marion Bertin

Centre Norbert Elias – Avignon Université &
Centre de Recherche en Histoire Internationale Atlantique

CV

Marion Bertin, PhD, graduated with degrees in art history and museum studies from the *École du Louvre*, and in anthropology from *La Rochelle Université*. Her research focuses on the circulation and valuation of Oceanic objects in the art market and in public collections worldwide. She is currently Associate Lecturer in heritage and museum studies at the *Université d'Avignon*, and researcher in the *Centre Norbert Elias* (UMR 8562). She is also a board member of the *International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM)*, and of *CASOAR*.



Abstract

The “Gomen Affair” (1970-2020): the long history of protests and claims against trafficking Kanak objects

This poster presents the “Gomen Affair”, as it was called by Luc Chevalier, the former director of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie in Noumea, in a diachronic perspective. This case study is used as a tool to understand how the New Caledonian authorities took action against the international traffic of Kanak objects between the 1970s and the 2020s, and how their actions were received at the global level. Articles from the daily press are considered in order to understand the different reactions to the case and the evolution of these reactions. Furthermore, this poster reflects on the history of New Caledonian and international legislation and law in order to prevent the illegal removal of ancient Kanak objects. Finally, the “Gomen Affair” is compared to other actions taken by the New Caledonian authorities and cultural institutions, such as the “Inventaire du Patrimoine Kanak Dispersé” (the “Inventory of the Scattered Kanak Heritage” in English) and the temporary loans of Kanak objects, thought as “ambassadors” representing their original territory in international museums, in Noumea. This comparison helps to develop an understanding of how and why the objects of the “Gomen Affair” were different from the other scattered objects.

Dr des Julia Binter

Zentralarchiv, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



CV

Julia Binter has been working as a provenance researcher at the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* since 2018 where she is currently responsible for a collaborative research project on the collections from Namibia. She studied social and cultural anthropology as well as theatre, film and media studies in Vienna, Paris, Brussels and Oxford where she completed her doctoral thesis on transatlantic trade, cultural exchange and related forms of memory in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Julia Binter has worked in numerous museums and, from 2016 to 2017, curated the exhibition *The Blind Spot. Bremen Colonialism and Art* at the *Kunsthalle Bremen*. Her publications include *Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire? Challenging Chronotopes in the Museum*, *Third Text*, 2019, 33:4-5, 575-593, and *Unruly Voices in the Museum. Multisensory engagement with disquieting histories*, in: *The Senses and Society* 9(2), 2014: 342-360. She recently co-edited the companion *macht II beziehungen: Ein Begleitheft zur postkolonialen Provenienzforschung in den Dauerausstellungen des Ethnologischen Museums und des Museums für Asiatische Kunst im Humboldt Forum*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2021.

Dr Sarah van Beurden

The Ohio State University



CV

Sarah Van Beurden (PhD *University of Pennsylvania*) is an associate professor of History and African-American and African Studies at *The Ohio State University*. She is the author of *Authentically African: Arts and the Transnational Politics of Congolese Culture* (2015) and co-author of the recent project restitutionbelgium.be (2021.) She currently serves as expert for the Belgian Special Parliamentary Commission on the country's colonial past.

Abstract

Les Contentieux: past and present Belgian-Congolese debates about restitution

This talk will take a long view on African-European debates on the restitution of museum collections by tracing its roots to the independence period. By considering the national, regional and international dimensions of the Congolese-Belgian debates, I will discuss what this history teaches us about today's debates. To what extent have the arguments changed, and why do they continue to surface? What dynamics have animated them? What has been the role of international organizations such as the UN and its subsidiary UNESCO? The talk will close with a reflection on how this colonial past and restitution are regarded in Belgium today.

Odile Boubakeur

École du Louvre – Paris-Saclay



CV

After graduating from the École du Louvre and a first long-lasting work experience both at the Musée du Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, Odile Boubakeur spent one year working abroad: first at the Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal (Qc, Canada) and then at the British Museum of London for 6 months. Once back in Paris, she wrote her master thesis at the École pratique des hautes études about the crossed history of the Louvre and the British Museum in the acquisition of Greek architectural remains, especially the Parthenon marbles. She also took part in the research project "Vente aux enchères d'antiques" (Antics auctions in the sixteenth century) in the National Institute of History of Art and led some work about the most important Louvre benefactors. For her PhD at the École du Louvre and Paris-Saclay, she enlarges her research to the Middle East plunged in the context of the sixteenth century Franco-British rivalry, raising questions about patriotism, nationalism and Nation-States in parallel of the constitution of national collections at the time of the "jeunesse des musées"

Fabienne Chamelot

University of Portsmouth, UK

CV

Fabienne Chamelot is a PhD candidate at the University of Portsmouth, UK. Her research explores French colonial administration and policy in the 20th century, focusing specifically on the management and organisation of colonial archives throughout the empire and within the French state. She has an MA in Social Sciences from the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and the École normale supérieure in Paris, and has completed one year as a visiting student at New York University. Before starting her PhD, she worked in the non-fiction publishing field in France, mostly at Gallimard and as a freelance editor.



Abstract

Archives and the decolonisation process in French West Africa, 1958-1960

Throughout the decolonisation process across the French empire, the general rule for the French colonial archives was to divide them into administrative archives and sovereignty archives. The former would stay on the newly independent countries' soil while the latter would be sent to France. In that context, the case of French West Africa (AOF) in the late 1950s consists in a noticeable exception in which all colonial archives remained in Senegal. This was the result of the intervention of a French archivist, Jean-François Maurel, who was head of archives in AOF during the colonisation, and whose professional opinion was that these archives should under no circumstances be dismantled and were to remain as a whole for the sake of research. As a consequence, he used his influence and his professional network amongst French archivists and French cultural heritage institutions to advocate the remaining of the colonial archives in Senegal. He succeeded in this initiative with the support of other archivists who joined his view and expertise. This case study is therefore a unique illustration of a decolonisation negotiation in which archival expertise took over national politics. This negotiation has had consequences on both Senegalese and French cultural development and heritage policy as it challenged the dynamic of power between France and its former colony and set up an enduring and sometimes challenging cooperation between the two countries with regards of cultural heritage policy.

Dr Forget Chaterera-Zambuko

Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi



CV

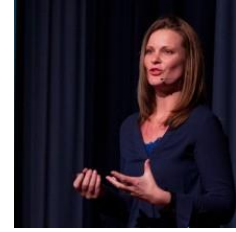
Forget Chaterera-Zambuko is an Assistant Professor at Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. She previously lectured at the National University of Science & Technology and the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. She is a rated researcher by the National Research Foundation of South Africa and an editor for *Archives and Records Journal*. Her research interests include displaced archives, access to archives and the application of emerging technologies in records and archives management.

Dr Caroline Drieënhuizen

Open University of the Netherlands

CV

Caroline Drieënhuizen is assistant professor of Cultural History at the Faculty of Humanities, *Open University of the Netherlands*. She has published on collecting in colonial contexts, the transnational dimensions of colonialism and the history of colonial objects in (natural history) museums. Her last publication was on Dutch feminist icon Belle van Zuylen (1740-1805) and her personal and literary work's relation to colonialism. Caroline is presently working on the European cultural dimension of colonialism and Indonesia's decolonisation in both Indonesia, the Netherlands and Europe from a museological and material object-driven approach.



Abstract

Java Man: Indonesian claims and Natural History Museums (Caroline Drieënhuizen & Fenneke Sysling)

One of the earliest restitution claims by the new independent state of Indonesia was for the fossils of Java Man in the Netherlands. These fossils consist of a skullcap, femur and molar of a *Homo erectus*, and they were found in 1891-92 by a team led by Dutch palaeontologist Eugène Dubois on the island of Java in Dutch colonial Indonesia. Dubois took his finds to the Netherlands where they ended up in the Natural History Museum in Leiden (now: Naturalis). Since the museum reopened after a renovation in 2019, they are showcased as one of the museum's most important treasures. Already in 1951, Indonesia first specified restitution claims which included collections of fossilized human skulls. Java Man was important in the list of objects because it fit in Mohammad Yamin's (Minister of Education and Culture) visions for a new Indonesia that could be proud of its (prehistorical) past. The claim was reiterated in the 1970s, and led to nervous activity by Dutch government officials, but the fossils were never handed back to Indonesia. Until very recently, these fossils have also escaped discussion when in the Netherlands, like in other countries, cultural objects and human remains collections became the subject of debate. On the other hand, several *Homo erectus* fossils from Java in the collection of palaeontologist Ralph von Koenigswald did return to Indonesia from the Senckenberg Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Frankfurt am Main in 1975 and 1978. This paper looks at the *Homo erectus* fossils as products of postcolonial histories, nationalist politics, and discourses of power, and explains the different trajectories of the Java Man fossils and the Von Koenigswald's fossils.

Dr Larissa Förster

German Lost Art Foundation



CV

Dr Larissa Förster is a social anthropologist. She is Head of the newly established *Department for Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts* at the *German Lost Art Foundation*, Magdeburg/Berlin, and Associate Member of the *Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at the Humboldt University*, Berlin. Her research focuses on the memory of colonialism in Namibia, on the nexus between colonialism and the formation of (ethnographic) museums in Europe, and on the return of objects and human remains from European collections to their countries of origin. She is a member of the Berlin project team of *Confronting Colonial Pasts, Envisioning Creative Futures*, a research and visual arts project centering around Namibian artefacts held at *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin*. She co-edited *Museumsethnologie - Eine Einführung. Theorien - Praktiken - Debatten* (2019) and *Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte* (2018), and co-authored *Haut, Haar und Knochen: Koloniale Spuren in naturkundlichen Sammlungen der Universität Jena*. She is also a member of two working groups of the *German Museums Association* for guidelines for German Museums (*Care of Human Remains in Museums and Collections*, 2021, and *Care of Collections from Colonial Contexts*, 2021).

Sarah Fründt

German Lost Art Foundation

CV

Sarah Fründt, M.A., is a research advisor at the department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts at the *German Lost Art Foundation* (Magdeburg/Berlin). Her area of expertise centres on questions of provenance research on human remains. At the same time, she is writing her Ph D dissertation in interdisciplinary anthropology at *Freiburg University*. After being trained in both social anthropology and biological anthropology, she has been conducting several research projects on human remains from Australia, New Zealand, and several African countries (being responsible for the osteological analysis). As early as 2011, she published a thesis on how to deal with human remains in museums ("Die Menschen-Sammler"). Her areas of interest include the history of biological and forensic anthropology and the debate on other sensitive collections in museums and other institutions. She has been part of several research projects in these areas (e.g. at the Cluster Normative Orders at *Frankfurt University*) and has been working for a number of museums and collections, e.g., the *Übersee-Museum Bremen*, the *Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum* in Cologne, and the *BASA (Bonn Collection of the Americas)*. Additionally, she has repeatedly been teaching in programmes of the *Free University Berlin*, *Freiburg University* and *Würzburg University*.



Prof Dr Albert Gouaffo

Université de Dschang/Cameroon



CV

Prof Dr Albert Gouaffo teaches German literature and German studies, as well as intercultural communication in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages at the *Université de Dschang* in Western Cameroon. He is Vice-President of the *Association of Sub-Saharan Germanists (GAS)*. His current research interests include German literature of the colonial period in Africa, German literature of the African diaspora, memory studies and provenance research on cultural goods and collections taken during German colonization.

His current book is entitled *Koloniale Verbindungen - transkulturelle Erinnerungstopografien: Das Rheinland in Deutschland und das Grasland Kameruns*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag 2019. He is currently part of the project team "Reconnecting 'Objects'" and the *Technische Universität Berlin*.

Prof Monika Grütters

Minister of State for Culture and the Media



Amanda H. Hellman

Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University



CV

Dr Amanda H. Hellman is the curator of African art at the *Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University*. Her upcoming exhibition, *And I Must Scream*, features contemporary artists who use the visual trope of the monster to examine inconceivable acts such as environmental destruction, displacement, human rights violations, and corruption. Other exhibitions include *DO or DIE: Affect, Ritual, Resistance*; *The Carlos as Catalyst*; *Between the Sweet Water and the*

Swarm of Bees; and *Strata: an installation by Shannon Collis*. Her research on museum development in West and East Africa reveals how heritage formation and artistic practice are inextricably linked. Most recently she has published “Die and Do: Egungun as a form of resistance and recovery,” in: *Visible Man: Fahamu Pecou* and “To Store is to Save: Kenneth C. Murray and the founding of the Nigerian Museum, Lagos,” in: *Museum Storage and Meaning*. Amanda’s dissertation, *Developing the Colonial Museum Project in British Nigeria*, utilized archival material in Nigeria and Great Britain. Amanda received a BA from Georgetown University, an MA from Williams College, and she obtained an MBA and a PhD from Emory University.

Abstract

Building a cultural legacy and a national memory: the repatriation of the Bascom bronzes

In 1938, William Bascom, a doctoral student from Northwestern University, purchased two cast bronze Ife sculptures that had been recently excavated and brought them back to the United States. This led to a campaign by the Oṣoni of Ife and colonial officer Kenneth C. Murray for the repatriation of these works, and also helped them create a strategy to request the return of other looted visual culture, including works stolen during the Benin punitive expedition in 1897 and Leo Frobenius’s collecting campaign in 1910. This incident also led Murray and the colonial office to establish the department of antiquities in 1943, in part to address growing concerns that Nigerian cultural material was being removed from the country. The Bascom incident, in particular, gave Murray the rhetoric and helped him build the connections he needed to begin a larger movement to define antiquities, protect the removal of antiquities, and request the repatriation of antiquities that had already been exported. It also emphasized the need to develop export policies and create a museum that would protect the material and make it available to a diverse Nigerian and expatriate audience. It led to new legislation to prevent the removal of antiquities in 1953 and, with the return of the Bascom bronzes in 1950, set the precedent that the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments still uses today to demand the return of visual heritage. This paper will look deeply at the Bascom case to show how it brought the colonial office and local leaders together to develop an argument for the return of cultural material that still resonates today.

Dr Dag Henrichsen

Basler Afrika Bibliographien & Department of History, University of Basel

CV

Dag Henrichsen (PhD) is a Namibian historian based at the *Basler Afrika Bibliographien* and the *Centre for African Studies, University of Basel* (Switzerland). He has published widely on 19th century central Namibian history.



Abstract

'No ozohongue, no medicine'. Ancestral 'objects' and sacredness, claims and bargaining in early colonial central Namibia

European museums incorporated so-called sacred objects from 19th century central Namibia such as ozohongue ('ancestral sticks') or otuzo insignia from Otjiherero-speaking families whose histories remain unresolved. In this paper I follow the grains and tracks in the colonial archive and listen to historical and contemporary narratives and, in particular, silences about ancestral representations in order to evaluate the multi-layered and conflicting claims and manipulations attached to these spiritually imbued 'objects'. In two case-studies the claims by European representatives led ovahona ('chiefs') and commoners to resort to finely tuned conversations and strategic actions in order to safeguard ancestral sacredness and, simultaneously, stave off, resist and manipulate colonial haggling and greed. And yet, several such 'objects' ended up in museum collections and have been recently exhibited. Whilst one omuhona in 1885 raised the question: 'What would my ancestors say?', a missionary's wife claimed that the – assumed – discharge of 'these sacred objects had broken paganism. The centre was henceforth missing'. Did ovahona discharge of 'sacred objects' and relinquish ties with their ancestors? European museums usurped these 'objects' on the basis of celebrated colonial actions, Christian mission narratives and western scientific conceptualisations of difference. The paper suggests that the interventions by the ovahona to manage colonial greed reflected long-learned experiences of living with the ancestors and expanding their powers, the reverberations of which continue to shape people's lives, ancestral lands and museums alike.

Prof Dr Markus Hilgert

Secretary General and CEO of the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States and Director of the recently established German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts



CV

Prof Dr Markus Hilgert is the Secretary General and CEO of the *Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States*. A specialist in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Hilgert served as Director of the *Ancient Near East Museum* at the *Pergamonmuseum* in Berlin from 2014 until 2018. From 2007 until 2014, he was Professor for Ancient Near Eastern Studies (Assyriology) at *Heidelberg University*. Hilgert is the Director of the recently established *German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts*. In addition, he is a member of several governing bodies and advisory boards, including the Board of the German Commission for UNESCO, the Culture Advisory Council of the *NFDI4Culture Consortium*, the Foundation Board of the *International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH)*, the Advisory Board of the *Arcadia Fund*, the Advisory Group of the Cultural Protection Fund of the *British Council*, and the Finance and Resources Committee of the *International Council of Museums (ICOM)*. Hilgert received several awards for his academic achievements and holds honorary professorships at *Heidelberg University*, *Marburg University*, and *Berlin University (Freie Universität)*.

Dr Christine Howald

Zentralarchiv, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

CV

Christine Howald, PhD in history, is deputy director of the *Zentralarchiv (Central Archive)* and provenance researcher for the Asia collections at the *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (National Museums in Berlin)* and heads the research focus *Tracing East Asian Art (TEAA)* at *Technische Universität Berlin*. Her projects focus on the European market for East Asian art and colonial withdrawal contexts in Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Howald is the cofounder of the international network and workshop series *Provenance Research on East Asian Art* and of the webinar series *Hidden Networks. Trade in Asian Art*. She has published on the marketing of the Yuanmingyuan loot in Paris and London in the 1860s and is coeditor of the volume *Acquiring Cultures: Histories of World Art on Western Markets* (de Gruyter, 2018) and of two issues of the *Journal for Art Market Studies*: “Asian Art: Markets, Provenance, History” (Vol. 2, No. 3, 2018) and “Asian Art: The Formation of Collections” (Vol. 4, No. 2, 2020).



Dr Jan Hüsgen

German Lost Art Foundation



CV

Dr Jan Hüsgen is a research advisor at the Department of Cultural Goods and Collections from Colonial Contexts at the *German Lost Art Foundation (Magdeburg/Berlin)*. He provides expert advice to projects focusing on basic and contextual research that deal with general and overarching questions regarding cultural goods from colonial contexts. This might entail, for example, research on trade networks or plundering in the context of “punitive expeditions”. His special interests include the nexus between mission societies and colonialism with a particular focus on the context of missionary collecting. As a trained historian he has conducted archival research in North America, the Caribbean and West Africa. Before joining the *German Lost Art Foundation*, he has been working in various research projects with a focus on colonial history. In the course of his research, he held visiting fellowships at the German Historical Institutes in Washington, D.C. and Paris.

Gracia Lwanzo Kasongo

Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain)

CV

Gracia Lwanzo Kasongo is a PhD Student at *Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain)* within the Institute of Political Science, Louvain-Europe (ISPOLE). She has a degree in Public Law and a specialization degree in International Humanitarian Action. She was a fellow of the *American Bar Association*. Her research interests centre of attention on post-colonial reconciliation. Her doctoral research focuses on the negotiation of restitution of Congolese cultural heritage acquired during Belgian colonization.



Abstract

Decolonizing negotiation for the restitution of Congolese heritage acquired during Belgian colonization

This poster analyses the ongoing negotiation on the restitution of Congolese cultural heritage. With an inclusive perspective of narratives using a qualitative approach, it allows understanding from a dialectical perspective, how individuals perceive the negotiation of the restitution of the Congolese cultural heritage acquired during the Belgian colonization. In particular, we analyzed the Belgian government's decision to reconstitute Congolese cultural heritage on the basis of the criterion of 'goods acquired by violence' or "illicitly acquired goods". The provisional results of our analysis tend to show that the Belgian decision is an advanced stage that breaks the silence and the deadlock on the issue of restitution. However, there is still a strong balance of power between the DR Congo and Belgium that leads to asymmetric negotiations. As the DRC intervenes after the fundamental criteria have been set, it becomes involved in a form of validation of the decisions taken by Belgium without a substantive discussion on the substance of the restitution criteria. In order to allow for a balanced negotiation that will prevent possible future conflicts, systemic cooperation on the common substantive criterion and collaboration on an equal footing are indispensable.

Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa



CV

Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu (Kanaka 'Oiwi/Native Hawaiian) is a fifteen-year veteran of the *Bishop Museum* in Honolulu, HI, where she developed scores of exhibitions and programs. She worked on the renovation of Hawaiian Hall (2009), Pacific Hall (2013), and the landmark E Kū Ana Ka Paia exhibition (2010). She has a law degree from the *University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*, where she currently serves as an associate specialist in Public Humanities and Native Hawaiian Programs within the American Studies Department. She has over 25 years of experience in repatriation and reburial matters, and recently assisted with the return of ancestral remains from Germany and England. Her current research and practice explores the liberating and generative opportunities when museums "seed" authority.

Abstract

In pursuit of pono: seeking justice through the return of ancestral Hawaiian remains from the collection of Eduard Arning

From 1883 to 1886, Dr. Eduard Arning, a German microbiologist and dermatologist with an interest in leprosy, worked for the Kingdom of Hawai'i. In this brief time, he assembled one of the largest collections of Hawaiian ethnographic material. Less well known is that his collection practices included stealing human remains and burial goods, resulting in nearly two dozen iwi kupuna (ancestral remains) who are being held at the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte. This presentation will consider this history and how Arning's actions violated Hawaiian cultural practices, Kingdom laws, and ethical norms of the time. Given this "context of injustice," Hawaiians seek pono (justice), not only to rectify past wrongs, but to transform museum practices, creating generative and liberating opportunities for a shared, collective future.

Honor Keeler

The Australian National University

CV

Honor Keeler is a citizen of Cherokee Nation and a legal scholar with expertise in international repatriation, sacred lands protection, Indigenous intellectual property, Indigenous entrepreneurship, transnational crime, and nonprofit management. In the spring of 2021, Keeler taught an Indian law-based course at *Brown University* as a Visiting Assistant Professor. She is the former Assistant Director of *Utah Diné Bikéyah*, where she focused on the protection of *Bears Ears National Monument*. In March of 2020, Keeler's co-edited volume, *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Repatriation: Return, Reconcile, Renew*, was released. She currently serves on the *NAGPRA Review Committee*, a federal advisory committee. Keeler also served as Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the *Cherokee National Historical Society*, which encompassed the *Cherokee Heritage Center*, *Cherokee National Archives*, and *Cherokee National Museum* within Cherokee Nation. Past work has included: the *AAIA*, *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, and *American Indian Law Center*. She is a former Visiting Assistant Professor at *Wesleyan University* and taught courses surrounding Native youth, federal Indian law, and repatriation. Keeler has her A.B. from *Brown University* and a J.D. and Indian Law Certificate from the *University of New Mexico School of Law*. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the *Australian National University*.



Stefan Koldehoff

Deutschlandfunk



CV

Stefan Koldehoff studied art history, German studies and political science and worked as a freelance journalist for *FAZ*, *taz* and *WDR*. From 1998 to 2001 he was editor and most recently deputy editor-in-chief of the art magazine *art* in Hamburg. Today he works as a culture editor at *Deutschlandfunk* in Cologne and writes regularly for *Die Zeit* and *art*, among others. In 2008 he was awarded the *puk-Journalistenpreis* of Deutscher Kulturrat for his investigative research, in 2012 the *Prix Annette Giacometti* and the *Otto Breuer Prize* for critical journalism. In 2014 he received an award as “Journalist of the Year” in the culture/entertainment category (5th place). In 2020 the magazine *monopol* listed him among the “100 most influential personalities in the art world”. Book publications include: *Van Gogh. Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (2003) - *Aktenzeichen Kunst. Die spektakulärsten Kunstdiebstähle der Welt* (with Nora Koldehoff, 2005) - *Wem hat van Gogh sein Ohr geschenkt. Alles, was Sie nicht über Kunst wissen* (with Nora Koldehoff, 2007) - *Die Bilder sind unter uns. Das Geschäft mit der NS-Raubkunst* (2009, extended new edition 2014) - *Falsche Bilder – Echtes Geld: Der Fälschungscoup des Jahrhunderts – und wer alles daran verdiente* (with Tobias Timm, 2012) - *O-Ton Pina Bausch - Interviews und Reden* (as publisher, 2016) - *Kunst und Verbrechen* (with Tobias Timm, 2020)

Dr Jan Küver

University of Iringa, Tanzania and Managing Director, *fahari yetu Tanzania*

CV

Jan Küver is an anthropologist and heritage practitioner holding an MA in Sociology and Ethnology from the *University of Goettingen* and a PhD in Heritage Studies from the *BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg* in Germany. Since 2007 he serves as a lecturer and administrator at the *University of Iringa*, Tanzania. He is also the Managing Director of *fahari yetu Tanzania*, an NGO implementing applied culture and heritage conservation projects in the country.



Abstract

Stirring up a hornet's nest or letting sleeping dogs lie? Historical narratives of the whereabouts of human remains from Iringa, Tanzania

Iringa Region in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania is known for the history of the Hehe kingdom which culminated in a grim war of resistance against the German colonial conquest at the end of the 19th century. In the course of the war, the remains of several Hehe rulers were allegedly taken to Germany for keep in anthropological collections. The current discourse on accountabilities arising from colonial history between Tanzania and Germany has put the provenance of these remains on the political agenda. This study traces local people's narratives in Iringa attached to selected cases of Hehe ancestral remains to sound out opinions towards possible restitution projects. For the Hehe case it can be argued that the return of human remains would not necessarily be embraced as an act of restoring cultural integrity, but rather as an attempt of undermining local historical narratives which challenge the authenticity of the desecrated skulls that were taken to Germany. While the written historiographic accounts are based on the trope of European colonizers victimizing subjugated African bodies, orally transmitted alternative versions elude the same bodies from foreign control and thus maintain not only the deceased chiefs' human dignity but the colonized people's cultural integrity. From this point of view, acknowledging the remains' authenticity by receiving them from Germany would circumvent such narrative claims for sovereignty of historical interpretation.

Riley Linebaugh

International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture at Justus-Liebig-University Gießen



CV

Riley Linebaugh is currently a doctoral fellow at the Leibniz Institute for European History in Mainz. Her research focuses on decolonization and archival restitution debates. Her Ph.D., based at Justus Liebig University, is the first systematic history of record removal and subsequent dispute following decolonization in the British empire, with a focus on Kenya and Eastern Africa. She holds an M.A. in archival studies and has worked professionally as an archivist in England, Uganda, and the U.S.

Abstract

Pursuing Colonial Archival Restitution: The Kenyan Case

The search for and retrieval of removed colonial documents has been a part of the Kenya National Archives' (KNA) regular activities since its founding. Two years after gaining independence, the Kenyan government passed The Public Archives Act of 1965. Among its provisions, the act empowered the Chief Archivist to "take such steps as may be necessary to acquire and have returned to Kenya any public records of historical value to Kenya which may have been exported before [independence]." KNA and the Kenyan government were especially interested in recovering the thousands of files airlifted out of the country by outgoing colonial officials who had received instructions from the Colonial Office in London to remove any "embarrassing" or incriminating evidence. After the removal of these files, the Colonial Office organized secret and securitized storage space in London for not only Kenyan records but for documents that originated across Britain's falling empire. With the support of international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Council on Archives and the UN's International Law Commission, KNA pursued the reinstatement of these files at the bilateral level for a number of reasons related to nation-building. This presentation will outline Kenya's long history of claims for restitution and conclude with some thoughts on the still unresolved matter of the location and custody of colonial archives.

Dr Pierre Losson

Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University

CV

Pierre Losson graduated in international relations from the *Institut d'Études Politiques of Strasbourg*, holds an MA in Arts Administration from *University of Lyon*, an MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from *Florida International University*, and a PhD in political science from *The Graduate Center, CUNY*. Pierre has held several positions in French cultural centers in Mexico City and Lima, where he has lived for ten years in total. In fall 2020, he was a post-doctoral fellow at *Columbia University's Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America*. He currently lives in New York City. Pierre's research focuses on cultural policy in Latin America and the politics of restitutions and returns of cultural heritage objects; he has published peer-reviewed articles in scholarly publications in English and Spanish, among which the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. His book *The Return of Cultural Heritage to Latin America: Nationalism, Policy, and Politics in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru* will be published in 2022 by Routledge.



Abstract

Archaeology in the neocolonial era: why were early calls for the return of cultural objects to Peru and Colombia ignored?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – an era often referred to by historians of Latin America as that of “neocolonialism” – a renewed interest appeared throughout the region for the material remains of pre-Hispanic cultures. European travelers and archaeologists, as well as local scientists and collectors, unearthed cultural, religious, and funerary objects that sparked their interest as well as the appetite for exotic and rare objects among collectors worldwide. Soon, these objects left the borders of their “country of origin” (Latin American modern states being largely colonial constructs, following the administrative subdivisions of the former Spanish-American empire) and ended up in the collections of public or university museums in the United States and Europe. Since the late 1990s, a new interest in the return of these objects has emerged in Latin America. However, a closer examination of the history of their removal shows that their departure did not go unnoticed. Local dignitaries and, in some instances, government officials protested their removal and (unsuccessfully) asked for their return immediately after. This paper draws on case studies from Peru and Colombia (e.g. the Machu Picchu collection taken to Yale University by Hiram Bingham in 1914-15, and returned to Peru in 2010-2011; the Quimbaya collection, gifted by Colombian president Holguin to the Queen of Spain in 1893 following the Iberian American Exhibition of 1892 in Madrid, where it is now exhibited in the Museum of the Americas; a series of San Agustín statues taken by Konrad Preuss to Berlin after WWI, and now in the collections of Berlin's Ethnologisches Museum) to discuss why these calls were ignored at the time. The paper proposes several hypotheses, including the neocolonial patterns of relations between Western countries and the former colonies of the Spanish Empire; the barely emergent interest in the pre-Hispanic past at the time in Colombia and Peru; the undemocratic nature of local politics in both countries in the early twentieth-century; and the lack of a coordinated policy of cultural heritage conservation at the time.

Prof Dr Gilbert Lupfer

Executive Board German Lost Art Foundation



Wim Manuhutu

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

CV

Wim Manuhutu is a historian who obtained his MA at the *University of Utrecht*. He specializes in colonial history and the history of Indonesia in particular. From 1987 to 2009 he was one of the directors of the *Moluccan Historical Museum* in the Netherlands. Since 2009 Manuhutu has been an independent researcher and curator in the field of heritage, diversity and inclusion. In 2019 he joined the history department at the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam* where he teaches courses in modern European History. His research interests include colonial history, postcolonial societies in Europe and beyond, decolonization and the politics of representation in museums and archives.

Prof Dr Wayne Modest

Content Director of the National Museum of World Cultures, the Netherlands

Dr des Lars Müller

State Museum of Lower Saxony, Hanover

CV

Lars Müller is a historian. He worked as a Research Fellow at the *Georg Eckert Institute* on a project which examined the practices of textbook production and social negotiation processes of knowledge about Africa – this is the context in which he wrote his PhD. In 2019 he joined the *PAESE project* as academic coordinator. He is doing research on transnational debates on (postcolonial) returns of objects with a focus on calls to Germany and the United Kingdom.



Abstract

The return of the Mafue stone in the 1920s and the struggle of its collector Hans Schomburgk for his reputation

In 1924 the Liberian Consul General Momolu Massequoi (1869–1938) informed the German Foreign Office that Hans Schomburgk (1880–1967), a citizen of Germany, was on his way from Iberia to Hamburg. He would be carrying a "monumental stone" which he had taken out of the country without permission. Massequoi called on the German authorities to take possession of the stone and to return it to Liberia – The police confiscated the stone and after some negotiations it was returned to Liberia. During the negotiations, both sides presented their positions in detail. However, the case shows that it was no longer merely a question of whether the stone had been legally exported or not. The involvement of the Foreign Office and the later intervention of business associations shows that it was also a highly political process. The focus of the paper, however, will be on the personal dimension. Schomburgk was not strictly averse to returning the stone but he was anxious that doing so might be interpreted as an admission of guilt. Schomburgk was one of the most important conveyors of knowledge about Africa in Germany on account of his work as an author, touring lecturer and documentary filmmaker, and as newspapers were already reporting on the matter he was concerned for his good name. It is argued that the question of personal guilt was crucial to the negotiations. It is thus shown that, in addition to the question if it was right or wrong to take the cultural property, the political as well as personal dimensions are also valuable for the study of claims for the returns of objects.

Nana Oforiatta Ayim

ANO Institute of Arts & Knowledge, Accra, Ghana



CV

Nana Oforiatta Ayim is an award-winning writer, art historian and filmmaker. She is the founder and director of the cultural research organisation, ANO, in Ghana. After writing extensively on contemporary African arts and creating numerous research and exhibition projects internationally, she established ANO as a permanent centre in Ghana in 2012. In 2016, she created the online version of the pan-African *Cultural Encyclopaedia*, a large-scale documentation and archive project, dedicated to the re/ordering of knowledge, narratives and representations from and about the African continent. She became a filmmaker after working with economist Thi Minh Ngo and filmmaker Chris Marker on a new translation of his 1954 film *Les Statues Meurent Aussi*. Her films, which often have cultural themes, are a cross of fiction, travel essay, and documentary. She is the recipient of the 2015 *Art & Technology Award* from the *Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)* and of the 2016 *AIR Award*, which “seeks to honour and celebrate extraordinary African artists who are committed to producing provocative, innovative and socially-engaging work”. She was named by *The Africa Report* as one of 50 African Trailblazers and by *Okayfrica* as one of 12 African women making history. Her first novel, *The God Child*, a story of personal and national identity and described as ‘a debut novel by one of the most exciting African literary voices to emerge in recent years’ was published in November 2019 by Bloomsbury.

Nadja Ofuately-Alazard

Dekoloniale, Berlin

CV

Nadja Ofuately-Alazard ist Kulturaktivistin, Kuratorin, Produktionsmanagerin, Journalistin, Moderatorin und Filmemacherin. Jüngste Projekte umfassen u.a. die Veranstaltungs- und Filmreihe *ReMIX. Africa in Translation* (2016/17) sowie die Buchpublikation *Narrating African FutureS* (co-ed., Taylor & Francis 2018). Von 2011-2017 co-leitete sie das *BIGSAS Festival Afrikanischer- und Afrikanisch-Diasporischer Literaturen* an der Universität Bayreuth. Seit Oktober 2017 arbeitet sie als Projektleiterin und Co-Geschäftsführerin/künstlerische Leitung bei *Each One Teach One (EOTO) e.V.* in Berlin. Hier zeichnet sie u.a. verantwortlich für das Literatur- und Kunstfestival *AFROLUTION*. Seit 2020 ist sie zudem als Teilbereichsleitung im 5-jährigen Verbundprojekts »Dekoloniale Erinnerungskultur in der Stadt« für den Bereich *In[ter]ventionen*, und damit für die diskursiven und performativen Formate, zuständig.

Prof Dr hc mult Hermann Parzinger

President Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz



Audrey Peraldi

Aix-les-Bains

CV

Audrey Peraldi has a degree in cultural sciences (Kulturwissenschaft) and holds an MA in Cultural Mediation from the *University of Hildesheim* and the *Aix-Marseille Université*. Since 2009, she has worked in museums, galleries, auction houses, art centers, and with researchers and artists in Europe, Switzerland, and Africa. She is a journalist for the German cultural magazine *Kunst & Kontext*, and also participates in the writing of articles on museums conserving non-European pieces, on the return of cultural property to Africa, and on Nigerian art. Among her recent publications are *Emmanuel Macrons Restitutionsprojekt afrikanischer Kulturgüter oder das Streben Frankreichs, seine Präsenz in Afrika zu festigen* (2021), *Le projet de restitution du patrimoine africain d'Emmanuel Macron ou l'art de la France de s'implanter en Afrique* (2021), and *Le rapport Sarr-Savoy. À qui profitent les restitutions?* (2019).

Prof Dr Barbara Plankensteiner

Museum am Rothenbaum, Hamburg



Prof Dr Ciraj Rassool

University of the Western Cape

Dr Aura Lisette Reyes Gavilán

University of Antioquia



CV

Aura Reyes's research focuses on the history of anthropology, heritage and anthropology, museum studies, and curatorial practices. She is co-director of the "Anthropology and History of Anthropology in Latin America"'s research group and correspondent for *the International Encyclopedia of the Histories of Anthropology Bérose*. She graduated in anthropology and history from the *National University of Colombia* and received her Dr. phil. in social anthropology from the LAI of the *Freie Universität Berlin*.

Prof Dr Bénédicte Savoy

Chair for Modern Art History, TU Berlin

CV

Prof Dr Bénédicte Savoy was born in Paris in 1972. Since 2009, she is Professor of Modern Art History at the Institute of Art Studies and Historical Urban Studies at the *Technische Universität Berlin*. In 2016, she was awarded the Leibniz Prize by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*. Bénédicte Savoy is a member of the *Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities* as well as of the *German Academy for Language and Literature*. In 2016 she was made professor at the *Collège de France* in Paris.



Abstract

About institutional and other lies

What is fake, what is fact? Looking at the history of restitutions and claims of cultural property as a historical phenomenon of the *longue durée*, it turns out that institutional intransparency and deliberate lies have always been used to defame petitioners and manipulate public opinion. This lecture will examine institutional and individual lies, half-truths and omissions as structural features of the restitution debate.

Dr Wolbert G.C. Smidt, adj Prof (MU)

Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany / Mekelle University, Ethiopia



Abstract

The deep history of restitution and monarchical power in Ethiopia: the cultural and local political context of demands for restitution of looted regalia by king of kings Yohannes IV from 1872

In the course of its unification during the long 19th century, the Ethiopian state built up a multifaceted, highly active diplomacy with neighbors and world powers. This non-European diplomacy was marked by a quick adaptation to the increasing imperialist and colonial aspirations of greater powers. These constituted a serious threat to the existence of Ethiopia as an independent state. A diplomatic conflict with Great Britain led to a military intervention of an Anglo-British army in 1867/68, which resulted in the suicide of the Ethiopian ruler Tewodros II and the massive "Meqdela loot", during which British soldiers and officials took possession of virtually the entire imperial collection of cultural items and manuscripts, including the regalia of the king of kings, consisting of the Book of Kings, an emblematic icon linked with the sacredness of royal power, and the crown. While the loot as a whole became a subject of discussions and claims by Ethiopia in the 20th century, the issue of the looted regalia was immediately addressed already by king of kings Yohannes IV after his ascent to the throne in 1872. Remarkably, the loot and doubts about its legality became a subject of debate in the British parliament in this time already, and some part of the regalia was quickly returned to Yohannes IV, as he underlined that these were crucial for his rule. Some of it had, however, disappeared and could only be located many decades later and has, since then, remained mostly hidden from the world. This paper discusses the active role of the ruler, who, based on his own inherited rights, disputed the legality of the British loot, refuting any possibility of recognition based on the right of war. Indeed, their importance within the political culture of Ethiopian rulership was crucial: The sacred icon (which has not been returned until today), the Book of Kings (returned based on the ruler's request) and the crown (returned only in the 1920s in a gesture of good-will, not in recognition of the past misdeeds) are to be seen as culturally and politically highly loaded objects signifying the intactness of the state and monarchy, emblematically constituting its sacred and legal basis. The role of these objects shows that the looting - directed towards "precious objects of curiosity" - was in reality an action to undermine the very legitimacy of the state itself. As mere objects of collection they were just a static phenomenon for the European looters, nothing than museal objects, while locally they were interactive objects within a dynamic political setting, which had been damaged by their removal. Restitution thus meant not just the return of an object, but a restitution of a living socio-political culture. This perspective has set the basic pattern for future active Ethiopian claims of restitution. Thus, later modern developments in Ethiopian restitution debates and initiatives, such as the 2005 return of the Aksum Stelae from Rome, campaigns regarding the return of the Meqdela loot (by Afromet) and the recent formation of the National Heritage Restitution Committee (2020), are based on a deep and long history of uninterrupted challenges of European claims over Ethiopian heritage.

CV

Klaas Stutje is a provenance researcher at the NIOD Institute in Amsterdam. Within the *Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era* (PPROCE) he studies a selection of museum objects from the collections of the *Rijksmuseum* and the *National Museum of World Cultures* that were acquired in colonial Indonesia, to gain experience and to define methodological recommendations for future research. Previously, Stutje published about Indonesian anticolonialism and colonial prisons.



Abstract

Between 'everything' and the most important few: the long history of the Indonesian Dutch restitution debate

Analysing the post-independence Indonesian-Dutch restitution debate, scholars and policy makers often refer back to a few eye-catching restitutions in the 1970s. They took place in a supposedly trailblazing yet interrupted golden era of mutual understanding and cultural reconciliation. In my presentation, I will recontextualize these golden 1970s in the longer postcolonial history of Indonesian-Dutch cultural relations. I will argue that subsequent Indonesian lawmakers and heritage experts have always - in the immediate post-colonial period after 1945, in the 1970s and, one could argue, up until today - operated from a disadvantaged information position. This led to misdirected claims, to secretive missions in Dutch museums and hints about self-compiled long lists of objects. While Indonesian policy makers tried to gain an overview of the full landscape of Indonesian heritage in the Netherlands, Dutch officials and museum experts tried to reduce the debate to concrete cases of clear historic provenance, thereby sharply reducing the number of objects under discussion. As an effect, the debate narrowed down to a few master pieces, which functioned as a *pars pro toto* for the entire collection of Indonesian objects in the Netherlands. This implied that once the most eye-catching objects were returned in the end of the 1970s, it was difficult to pursue further claims, leading to a premature end of the process.

Dr Fenneke Sysling

Leiden University



CV

Fenneke Sysling is an assistant professor at the *Leiden University*, the Netherlands. She specializes in the history of science and colonialism and her interests include colonial heritage, museum objects, race, the body and natural history. Her PhD research (defended in 2013 at the VU University in Amsterdam) looked into the history of physical anthropology in the Dutch colonies. Her book *Racial Science and Human Diversity in Colonial Indonesia* was published in 2016. Her next project looked at the history of the human sciences and technologies of the self. It led, among others, to a special issue about 'Measurement, self-tracking and the history of science' in *History of Science*. She has also published on the history of colonial objects in natural history museums.

Abstract

Java Man: Indonesian claims and Natural History Museums (Caroline Drieënhuizen & Fenneke Sysling)

One of the earliest restitution claims by the new independent state of Indonesia was for the fossils of Java Man in the Netherlands. These fossils consist of a skullcap, femur and molar of a *Homo erectus*, and they were found in 1891-92 by a team led by Dutch palaeontologist Eugène Dubois on the island of Java in Dutch colonial Indonesia. Dubois took his finds to the Netherlands where they ended up in the Natural History Museum in Leiden (now: Naturalis). Since the museum reopened after a renovation in 2019, they are showcased as one of the museum's most important treasures. Already in 1951, Indonesia first specified restitution claims which included collections of fossilized human skulls. Java Man was important in the list of objects because it fit in Mohammad Yamin's (Minister of Education and Culture) visions for a new Indonesia that could be proud of its (prehistorical) past. The claim was reiterated in the 1970s, and led to nervous activity by Dutch government officials, but the fossils were never handed back to Indonesia. Until very recently, these fossils have also escaped discussion when in the Netherlands, like in other countries, cultural objects and human remains collections became the subject of debate. On the other hand, several *Homo erectus* fossils from Java in the collection of palaeontologist Ralph von Koenigswald did return to Indonesia from the Senckenberg Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Frankfurt am Main in 1975 and 1978. This paper looks at the *Homo erectus* fossils as products of post-colonial histories, nationalist politics, and discourses of power, and explains the different trajectories of the Java Man fossils and the Von Koenigswald's fossils.

Prof Dr Nira Wickramasinghe

Leiden University

CV

Nira Wickramasinghe is Chair and Professor of Modern South Asian Studies at *Leiden University* in the Netherlands. Trained as a historian in Paris and Oxford, she has written on late colonial and modern Sri Lanka using a variety of archives. Her most recent books include: *Slave in a Palanquin: Colonial Servitude and Resistance in Sri Lanka* (Columbia University Press 2020); *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age. A History* (Oxford University Press 2015). She is presently spearheading a small academic press in Sri Lanka called *Tambapanni Academic Publishers*.



Abstract

The making of national objects: the return of a throne and a skull in colonial Sri Lanka

In the past as today, claims for the return of objects by former colonized states, such as Sri Lanka, are equally entwined with a deeply felt sense of cultural loss as with notions of selfrepresentation and posturing by claimants before a public made of quasi-citizens. In the early 20th century, in parallel fashion to the Lankan nationalist movement's overtures to Kandyan representatives and eventual absorption of Kandyan symbols into the new nation, British colonial rulers too were defining what in their view were the emblems of the 'authentic' Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The culture of Kandy, the kingdom in the central highlands that had remained independent until 1815, was considered by colonial rule as less hybrid, more authentic, an idea that would soon be endorsed by nationalists as well. It is only in this entangled context that we can fully understand the return of artefacts from British museums and private collections in the last decade of British rule, especially the return of the cranium of the Kandyan hero Keppetipola and the throne of the Kandyan kings.

Dr Claire Wintle

University of Brighton (UK)



CV

Dr Claire Wintle is Principal Lecturer in Museum Studies at the *University of Brighton*, UK. Her books include *Colonial Collecting and Display* (Berghahn, 2013) and *Cultures of Decolonisation: Transnational Productions and Practices, 1945-1970* (Manchester UP, 2016). Her current project, entitled *Curating Decolonisation: Museums in Britain, 1945-1980*, is funded by a mid-career fellowship from the *Paul Mellon Centre for British Art*.

Abstract

Repatriation without ethics: apathy and isolationism in the return of colonial collections from UK museums, 1945-1970

Between 1945 and 1970, practitioners in UK museums discussed and sometimes realised the repatriation of cultural heritage to countries of origin. Later, in the 1970s, repatriation debates were partly linked to anti-colonialism and universalist ideals of collaboration. Yet in the immediate post-war period, in the UK, the discourse on return was largely related to conservative apathy and even resentment, both towards collections from beyond Britain and their rightful owners. In the post-war crisis of funding for museums and storage space for objects, British curators experienced a deep sense of collections excess and anxiety. As empire and immigration became increasingly controversial, some museums shifted to policies of 'regionalisation', focusing instead on 'local' (white) cultures. These and other factors motivated a policy of disposal that contravened several of the ethical benchmarks expected of museums today. Indeed, in most cases before 1970, return resulted in an abdication of responsibility to collections and communities of origin. Drawing on extensive archives in UK national, regional and private museums, this paper explores the social and political context for post-war repatriation. It examines the language and material conditions that characterised these practices, acknowledging that return does not equate to decolonisation. The paper uses problematic historic practices of return to help advocate for an ethical practice of the future that centres claimant needs.

