

Jürgen Zimmerer and Julian zur Lage
**Preface: Global Memories of German
Colonialism**

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Preface: Global Memories of German Colonialism

Jürgen Zimmerer and Julian zur Lage

This book is both a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and of years of research in the fields of memory and colonialism. Paradoxical as this may seem, both phenomena are testament to today's globalized world, which is rooted in centuries of colonial globalization. While past scholarship shaped the contents of the volume and its individual essays, the 'virus' determined their origins in practice.

In order to address the pertinent questions of colonial legacies around the world, we had originally planned to invite fellows to Hamburg – an endeavour that the Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius had generously agreed to support. In 2020, however, it became obvious that in-person visits from international scholars would not be feasible for the foreseeable future. With the new conditions of the pandemic order in mind, we concluded that postponing these visits would be impractical. We therefore switched to a model of in-place fellowships, to be conducted by scholars whose work focused on 'Global Memories of German Colonialism' – including Nancy Rushohora, Mercia Kandukira, and Amina Djouldé Christelle. These fellowships funded the scholars' research and writing wherever they worked or lived.

This turned out for the best, and we are now able to present this collection of essays from the fellowship programme (which also gave the book its title), supplemented by reports of other scholars working on similar topics, also in association with the research centre on 'Hamburg's (post-)colonial legacy'. The project's particular genesis has allowed us to bring together texts from esteemed authors in Africa and Europe, with backgrounds in a number of different disciplines – including history, archaeology and heritage studies, creative nonfiction writing, and performing and visual arts. We thus achieved our goal from the beginning: a diversity of approaches that characterise the projects of the research centre here at the University of Hamburg.

It is particularly important not to limit our understanding of global memories with the constraints of European academic historiography. As demonstrated in the introduction, this limitation risks perpetuating Eurocentric patterns and omissions. Instead, approaches that are both international and interdisciplinary to the core have proven extraordinarily fruitful – as exemplified in the German-Namibian project 'Visual History of the Colonial Genocide', which provided the impetus for exhibitions in Hamburg,

Windhoek, and online.¹ Project members Nashilongweshipwe Sakaria and Vitjitua Ndjiharine contributed to this volume with a reflection on their work.

The articles by Oswald Masebo, and by Melanie Boieck and Reginald Elias Kirey, grew out of a longstanding cooperation on entangled German-Tanzanian history, which highlighted elements of colonialism that had received limited attention in Germany.² Their contributions to this volume are all the more important for combating colonial amnesia.³ Both articles were first published in German in ‘Hamburg: Tor zur kolonialen Welt’ (Eds. Jürgen Zimmerer and Kim Sebastian Todzi), and are now available for the first time in English.⁴

As with every edited volume, numerous people and institutions played an instrumental role. To name but a few: We extend our thanks to the Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius for funding the original ‘Global Memories of German Colonialism’-project, and, together with the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, for contributing to the publication costs of this volume. The flexibility of these foundations allowed us to proceed with this project despite the challenges of the global pandemic. The Gerda Henkel Stiftung also funded the earlier project ‘Visual History of the Colonial Genocide’.⁵ We are particularly grateful to both foundations.

For the selection of fellows in the Global Memories project, we thank the international jury, which was comprised of experts with whom we had previously cooperated:

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- 1 See Vitjitua Ndjiharine, Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Nicola Brandt et al., *Ovizire • Somgu: From Where Do We Speak? – Von woher sprechen wir?* (Hamburg: Eigenverlag Museum am Rothenbaum (MARKK), 2018).
 - 2 See for example: Reginald Elias Kirey, *Memories of German Colonialism in Tanzania*, Dissertation (Berlin: de Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023); Melanie Boieck, *‘Heia Safari’ in der Hafen-City – (Post-)Koloniales Erinnerungsbewusstsein in Hamburg*, Dissertation, (Hamburg: Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 2018) <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:gbv:18-94353>.
 - 3 The concept of ‘colonial amnesia’ was first developed by Jürgen Zimmerer in ‘Kolonialismus und kollektive Identität: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte’, in: Jürgen Zimmerer (ed.), *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, Frankfurt a. M. 2013, pp. 5–33, here p. 5.
 - 4 Oswald Masebo, ‘Epistemologische Leerstellen in den verflochtenen Geschichten Tansanias und Deutschlands. Eine Sicht aus Hamburgs Partnerstadt Dar es Salaam. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Daniel Fastner’, in Jürgen Zimmerer and Kim Sebastian Todzi (eds.), *Hamburg: Tor zur kolonialen Welt. Erinnerungsorte der (post-)kolonialen Globalisierung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021), pp. 549–65; Melanie Boieck and Reginald Elias Kirey, ‘„Kolonialheroen“ in deutscher, tansanischer und britischer Erinnerungskultur. Das Beispiel des Wissmann-Denkmal und des „Askari“-Monuments in Hamburg beziehungsweise Dar es Salaam. Aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Julian zur Lage’, in Jürgen Zimmerer and Kim Sebastian Todzi (eds.), *Hamburg: Tor zur kolonialen Welt. Erinnerungsorte der (post-)kolonialen Globalisierung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021), pp. 517–30.
 - 5 See the four-part online video produced by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung on the project: ‘Kolonialgeschichte Kreativ’ https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/gemeinsame_aufarbeitung?nav_id=7776 (last accessed 27.7.2024).

Vitjitua Ndjiharine, Jessica Nupen and Reginald Elias Kirey. A special thank you for the support of all our colleagues in Hamburg – particularly Josèfa Cassimo, Arne Meinicke and Kim Sebastian Todzi, who contributed to the publication of the volume, and also to Marianne Weis-Elsner for her administrative support. We are grateful to James Powell for his proofreading, and also to Tobias Buck and his colleagues at Hamburg University Press for their work on the volume. We thank the Wallstein Verlag for allowing us to publish the contributions of Oswald Masebo, and Melanie Boieck and Reginald Elias Kirey, in their original English versions here.

As the editors of this volume, we especially thank our contributors, in alphabetical order: Amina Djouldé Christelle, Melanie Boieck, Mercia Kandukira, Reginald Elias Kirey, Oswald Masebo, Vitjitua Ndjiharine, Nancy Rushohora and Nashilongweshipwe Sakaria. Their outstanding articles made this volume possible.