

2 Global Labour History *in* the Indian Ocean

2.1 From the History of the Indian Ocean to a History *in* the Indian Ocean

It is still worth taking the trouble to write histories of labor [. . .] that keep the entire world in mind, even when focussing on a specific region.

Andreas Eckert. 'Area Studies and the Development of Global Labor History'. 2018.¹

Compared to other seas, general historical research on the Indian Ocean is still scarce and no overarching scholarly consensus has yet been reached. Thus, the concept of the Indian Ocean remains porous and open to numerous interpretations and approaches. Nevertheless, one can identify central parameters that denote the characteristics and significance of the Indian Ocean. First, the Indian Ocean is the third largest of all global waters and has been crossed by various civilisations for over 5,000 years. It is therefore the world's ocean with the longest history of human (long-distance) voyages. Central for this mobility and thus also decisive for the ocean's economy were the monsoon winds. With the monsoon enabling long-distance travel and goods transportation, it also posed seasonal limitations to mobility. Without the seasonal winds, there was hardly the possibility of any longer voyages before steam power also equipped cargo ships with engines from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Using the monsoon, trading routes for luxuries and cargo existed from the Arabian Peninsula via the East African islands and the continent's coast to the Cape of Good Hope via India to southern China and to western Oceania. Regarding culture, the Indian Ocean facilitated the spread of Islam in these regions while the religion also intermingled with numerous local traditions. Despite the wide range of themes and research foci of many scholars, there is consensus about the fact that the characteristics and developments of the Indian Ocean Area were independent from other world regions for the majority of the past centuries and millennia. European traders and seafarers like the Portuguese from ca. 1500 onwards were only one minor player among many and more important others. These others remained dominant until ca. the middle of the nineteenth century when the Indian Ocean experienced slow but steady integration into the gradually globalising world economy.²

¹ Eckert. 'Area Studies', p. 173.

² Cf. Schnepel, Burkhard. 'Konnektivität in Bewegung: Der Indische Ozean als maritime Kontakt- und Austauschzone'. *Forschungsbericht – Max Planck Institut für ethnologische Forschung*: 2016. Web. https://www.eth.mpg.de/4393439/research_report_10998872?c=2923387 (6 June 2021). Cf. Nagel, Jürgen G. 'Schiffahrt auf dem Indischen Ozean im 19. Jahrhundert. Technologie und Wis-

Michael Pearson expresses this transformation of the entire Indian Ocean by describing the history of the area before ca. 1850 as history *of* the Indian Ocean. By the history *of* the Indian Ocean Pearson stresses the area's general independence from other world regions, which only slightly influenced the seas between Africa and Oceania. In contrast to this understanding, Pearson coined the concept of a history *in* the Indian Ocean. The history *in* the Indian Ocean stresses that the area was "profoundly influenced by wider matters coming from outside its geographical boundaries"³ and highlights that the waters were increasingly dominated by Europe and North America from the middle of the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century and onwards. Despite such profound influence from places outside the Indian Ocean from ca. 1850 onwards, many characteristics of the Indian Ocean remained resilient and were not entirely altered by the influence of the other world regions. In cultural terms, Islam played a central role in this respect. But economic aspects must be considered as well. Although steam ships ousted many old-established sailing cargo boats and the opening of the Suez Canal revolutionised long-distance trading routes from 1869 onwards, local sailing boat trading routes via *dhaus* (sailing boat) remained intact; and the technological evolution of the transport system even enabled new trading routes that required and or used these traditional sailing boats as well. Moreover, the latest European technology often drew a lot on local expertise and knowledge in navigation and communication. Approaching history *in* the Indian Ocean must therefore be somewhat relativised without rejecting this concept entirely. Although the Indian Ocean experienced gradual integration into a globalising world from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, many of its genuine characteristics remained intact. Furthermore, old-established protagonists of the region also managed to adapt to the changing circumstances. For the present global history of labour, the concept of history *in* the Indian Ocean urges a focus also on local specifics, especially as far as the East African coast and its hinterland are concerned.⁴ In partic-

sen in der Transportrevolution der Moderne'. 61–80. *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte*, Jahrgang 18, Heft 2. Berlin: 2017. Cf. Alpers, Edward A. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. Oxford: 2014, pp. 1–18. Cf. Vink, Markus P.M. 'The Ocean Studies and the 'new thalassology''. 41–62. *Journal of Global History*, 2. London: 2007. Web. [Cambridge.org](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022807002033). doi:10.1017/S1740022807002033 (4 June 2019). Cf. Pearson, Michael. *The Indian Ocean*. London and New York: 2006, pp. 1–13. Cf. Gupta, Ashin das (Ed.). *India and the Indian Ocean World. Trade and Politics*. Oxford: 2004. Cf. Markovits, Claude. *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947. Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama*. Cambridge: 2000. Cf. Alpers, Edward A. *East Africa and the Indian Ocean*. Princeton: 2009. Cf. Pearson, M.N. (Ed.). *The World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800. Studies in Economic, Social and Cultural History*. Burlington: 2005. Cf. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 9–12, 190–248.

³ Vink. 'Indian Ocean Studies', p. 57.

⁴ Cf. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 9–12, 190–248. Cf. Nagel. 'Schiffahrt', pp. 78–79.

ular, the area's climate remained crucial for all three places of work under investigation. Although colonial labour regimes altered labour relations mostly violently, they were not able to influence general conditions of the environment. Especially the steady rhythm between the dry and rainy season in East Africa conditioned by the monsoon winds was the strongest force that constituted any colonial labour regime. Although varying to a certain degree when compared to each other, the intensity of labour at the *Central Railway*, at the *Otto* plantation in Kilossa and at the Tendaguru Mountain decreased to a minimum during the rainy season. As heavy precipitation inhibited any railway, plantation or excavation works, most of the East African workers employed went back home and cultivated their own subsistence fields. During the dry season, in turn, workers generally returned to or arrived at their workplaces. Evoking thus the shift from colonial wage labour to subsistence farming, the climate of the Indian Ocean Area was fundamental to any place of work under investigation.

2.2 The Indian Ocean, East Africa and the History of (Un-)free Labour

It would be difficult today to begin an analysis of the precolonial economy and its external connections without setting them in a global or comparative context.

Hopkins, G.A. *An Economic History of West Africa*. Second Edition. 2020.⁵

Passing his study on the economic history of West Africa published in the 1970s in review, G.A. Hopkins' observations are also relevant for the analysis of the socio-economic environment of pre-colonial East Africa. Particularly regarding its history of (un-)free labour, i.e. slavery, the Indian Ocean has received recurring scholarly interest recently. Although slavery was the most widespread form of unfree labour well into the nineteenth century, scholars seldom included slave labour into the realm of (global) labour history.⁶ Yet, in the history of the Indian Ocean Area, the

⁵ Hopkins, G.A. *An Economic History of West Africa*. Second Edition. New York: 2020, p. 19.

⁶ Cf. Madacho, Pedro et al. (Eds). *Pearls, People, and Power. Pearlring the Indian Ocean Worlds*. Athens (Ohio): 2020. Cf. Seetah, Krish (Ed.). *Archaeology and the History in the Indian Ocean*. Athens (Ohio): 2018. Cf. McDow, Thomas F. *Buying Time. Debt and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean*. Athens (Ohio): 2018. Cf. Soske, Jon. *Internal Frontiers. African Nationalism and the Indian Diaspora in Twentieth-Century South Africa*. Athens (Ohio): 2017. Cf. Hooper, Jane. *Feeding Globalization. Madagascar and the Provisioning Trade, 1600–1800*. Athens (Ohio): 2017. Cf. Stiles, Erin E. and Thompson, Katrina Daly (Eds.). *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean. Islam, Marriage, and Sexuality on the Swahili Coast*. Athens (Ohio): 2015. Cf. Allen, Richard B. *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850*. Athens (Ohio): 2015. Cf. Campbell, Gwynn et al. (Eds.).

gradual replacement of slave labour and the slave trade by other varieties of trade and labour were central to the region's history throughout the period of interest. In East Africa, the Zanzibar Archipelago acquired a central role in slavery and the slave trade as well as in the overall socio-economy of the area. Especially, the archipelago's major Island Unguja with its capital Stone Town was a cultural centre and an economic trading hub. Not far from the East African mainland – today's Tanzania – caravan routes starting at numerous coastal towns at the shores of the Indian Ocean, crossed vast lands, and reached as far as the Congo Basin. In particular, slaves and ivory came from the African interior to coastal towns like Bagamoyo from where enslaved men and women as well as precious elephant tusks were shipped via *dhaus* to Stone Town. Although a significant number of slaves remained on the archipelago, important trading routes also went through numerous East African coastal towns, stretching from as far as today's Somalia to today's southern Mozambique. Of course, close links existed also to the Indian subcontinent as it was the Ocean's centre, located halfway between the African continent and Oceania. Furthermore, there were also strong economic ties to the Arabian Peninsula and especially to today's Oman. Given these profound connections to distant regions, the East African mainland simultaneously experienced a very dynamic phase of economic change, integrating a great variety of different populations into larger economic networks characterised by "Zanzibar-based merchant capital".⁷ This merchant capital was not marked by capitalist accumulation of monetary means but rather by 'social wealth' through the establishment of social ties by means of marriage within a network of mutual quasi-client relationships. As far as the East African mainland is concerned, the most important import goods were cotton and beads, whereas internally traded goods on the mainland were primarily bark-cloth, salt, copper and several other items. Yet, the connections between Zanzibar, the East African mainland and the Arabian Peninsula went beyond the economy and included significant political ties. With the Sultan of Oman also being the Sultan of Zanzibar, he acted as the protector not only of the naval trade at the East African shores of the Indian Ocean, but also along the caravan routes reaching into central Africa. With the import and export trade centring on Zanzibar, the Omani Sultan Seyyid Said even transferred his place of residence to Unguja's Stone Town in 1837. Although the Sultan certainly had political power on the Zanzibar Archipelago and in Oman, his might gradually diminished with increasing distance from his place of residence and was only scarcely felt on the mainland's hinterland. Having still significant influence

Women and Slavery, Volume One. Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic. Athens (Ohio): 2007.

⁷ Koponen, Juhani. *People and Production in late precolonial Tanzania. History and Structures.* Helsinki: 1988, p. 383.

on the East African Swahili coast and along the caravan routes, his political power must nevertheless not be taken as territorial sovereignty. Especially further inland, and regarding his protection of the caravan routes, the Sultan's influence rested primarily on his personal ties to local 'big men' and thus had the characteristics of an interpersonal client system that must not be mistaken as clear-cut territorial rule.⁸

Over the nineteenth century, European influence in the Indian Ocean, on Zanzibar and its neighbouring mainland, intensified significantly. Although the Portuguese had been the most important European players in the ocean since the Early Modern period, British influence became dominant. The Anglo-Saxons not only slowly but surely controlled all strategically important ports as well as waterways, but also gradually established direct territorial rule, e.g. in today's Uganda and Kenya from the 1880s onwards. In 1890, they established a protectorate on Zanzibar as well. The major reason for the growing interest of Britain in the area was its loss of the North American colonies in the late eighteenth century. Restructuring their empire, the British subsequently concentrated their imperial aspirations on India. As they soon regarded India as their imperial 'jewel in the crown', the subcontinent became the empire's most important imperial possession after the suppression of the Indian rebellion against the East India Company in 1857.⁹ Shortly afterwards, the British influence and focus on India became even stronger after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Primarily financed by British and French capital, traversing this isthmus by the canal reduced travel time and transport costs profoundly. Especially after steam technology became more efficient than transportation via sailing boats also in respect to cargo shipment, the impact of the Suez Canal multiplied British trade to India from the last third of the nineteenth century onwards. Before these revolutions in international trade, transport and communication – postal delivery service speeded up via steamers, too – the defeat of the Netherlands and France, during and by the end of the Napoleonic Wars, had already facilitated British influence especially in the eastern Indian Ocean:

⁸ Cf. Deutsch, Jan-Georg. 'Inventing an East African Empire: The Zanzibar Delimitation Commission of 1885/86'. *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus in Afrika. Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Peter Sebald*. 210–219. Eds. Peter Heine and Ulrich van der Heyden. Pfaffenweiler: 1995, pp. 210–211. Cf. Koponen. *People and Production*, pp. 383–389. Cf. Iliffe. *A Modern History*, pp. 6–87. Cf. Marsh, Zoe and Kingsnorth, G.W. *A History of East Africa. An Introductory Survey*. Cambridge: 1972, pp. 64–77. Cf. Kreye, Lars. «Deutscher Wald» in Afrika. *Koloniale Konflikte um regenerative Ressourcen, Tansania 1892–1916*. Göttingen: 2021, pp. 60–86.

⁹ Cf. Darwin, John. 'Imperialism in Decline? Tendencies in British Imperial Policy Between the Wars'. 657–679. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 23, no. 3. Cambridge: 1980, pp. 667–670. Cf. Darwin, John. *Das unvollendete Weltreich: Aufstieg und Niedergang des Britischen Empires, 1600–1997*. Frankfurt o. M.: 2013, pp. 135–208.

At the end of the eighteenth century, with the defeat of the Netherlands by France in 1795, Great Britain seized upon this enforced alliance between its main European and Indian Ocean rivals to take Cape Town, Ceylon (today Sri Lanka), and Java and Melaka from the Dutch, and the Mascarene Islands of Bourbon (now La Réunion) and Ile de France (now Mauritius) from the French. Twenty years later, by 1815, the British controlled the Cape, Ceylon, Melaka, and Mauritius, while Bourbon was returned to France by the Treaty of Paris. Just a few years later, the unauthorized occupation of Singapore [. . .] in 1819 and its formal possession by the British in 1823 almost immediately reduced the economic significance of both Melaka and Dutch Jakarta. [. . .] Thus, two decades into the nineteenth century the basic framework of British domination in the eastern Indian Ocean was established, with the Dutch limited to Indonesia and the French an afterthought.¹⁰

With this dominance in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, it is therefore not very surprising that British imperial influence gradually expanded along the African continent and on the Arabian Peninsula as well. Strategically important ports like Aden fell under British sovereignty from 1839 onwards, and when direct rule could not be established for the time being, Britain established strategic alliances and political as well as economic dependencies in the region. This was especially the case regarding British influence in Oman. As the Sultanate of Oman was closely linked to the Zanzibar Archipelago, the British Empire also slowly but surely dominated the entire region from the Red Sea to the Cape, which included numerous islands in the region and parts of the East African mainland, too. In fact, as the economy of East Africa with Zanzibar at its heart relied heavily on the slave trade, British policies mainly followed the directive to introduce what they called 'legitimate trade' and to oust trading in slaves accordingly. Apart from the slave trade, piracy too limited British power in Oman and on Zanzibar until the 1880s. Both hindered British economic expansion in the Indian Ocean and to their view thus had to be restricted severely. As Britain had banned the slave trade already in 1807, she could no longer actively participate in this business. Seeking alliances in these strivings, the British-Dutch Treaty of 1824 settled "imperial divisions of maritime space and colonial territory in maritime Southeast Asia [. . .]. The European powers agreed to eliminate slavery and destroy the markets where pirates sold their captives."¹¹ Both measures were intended to secure as well as facilitate 'legitimate trade' and thus serve commercial interests of the European powers. The British policies were partly successful as there had been a sharp decline of piracy and slave trading by the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, they were never completely abolished and both the slave trade and piracy in the entire Indian Ocean persisted to a certain extent. Of course, this

¹⁰ Alpers. *The Indian Ocean*, p. 99.

¹¹ Alpers. *The Indian Ocean*, p. 102. Cf. Eckert. 'Capitalism and Labor', pp. 170–173.

holds also true for the area between the Arabian Peninsula, the Zanzibar Archipelago, its neighbouring East African islands and the continent's mainland. As bans alone were not enough to oust competition for her economic interests, Britain pursued other strategies. As especially the control of the Arabian Sea was a great challenge to the British, they sought an alliance with the rulers of Oman. Together with the Omanis, the British particularly targeted the Qawasim, who were notorious for their activities in what the British called the 'Pirate Coast', and who frequently attacked cargo ships at the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. The Omanis on their part primarily challenged the Qawasim because the latter were allies of the Wahhabis residing in central Arabia. With the Wahhabis challenging Omani rule on the Arabian Peninsula, the Omanis joined forces with the British to weaken the allies of their direct opponents close to their heartland. This alliance with the strongest European imperial power ultimately turned out fatal to the Omanis, however, as the British took advantage of these Arab political rivalries in the Gulf. The ultimate outcome was a greatly increased economic and political dependency of the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar on Britain, leading to the establishment of a British Protectorate over Zanzibar as a result of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890.¹²

In the meantime, growing British dominance along the East African coast and its hinterland fostered the position of India within the Indian Ocean. With India having had decisive trading links to East Africa for centuries, British influence in Zanzibar, Kenya and Uganda not only strengthened these trading links, but also altered the character of Indian migration to East Africa. Already before 1839, when the Omani Sultan Seyyid Said transferred his residence to Zanzibar, there had been a substantial number of Indian traders doing business in the Omani capital Muscat, as well as in Mombasa and on Zanzibar. With India becoming a British crown colony and with the Omani-British alliance against piracy and the slave trade in the western Indian Ocean, Indian commercial activities and Indian (labour) migration in the area benefited and increased profoundly. Usurping the Qawasim, the Omani-British cooperation encouraged Indian trade under the British flag and Indian merchants took the opportunity to enhance their commercial networks between their subcontinent and East Africa. Consequently, Indian settlement on Zanzibar, which had had a primarily seasonal character and strongly influenced by the monsoon seasons, became more permanent: Indians even occupied or financed offices that were representative for the British Empire. The British Consulate in

12 Cf. Alpers. *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 99–105. Cf. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 196–199. Cf. Allen. *European Slave Trading*. Cf. Campbell et al. (Eds.). *Women and Slavery*. Cf. Deutsch, Jan-Georg. *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa, c. 1884–1914*. Oxford: 2006, pp. 1–52.

Zanzibar's Stone Town was not only appointed, but also financed by the Bombay government and the *British India Steam Navigation Company*. The latter further established a regular steamer service between Bombay and Zanzibar and the British Indian Post Office on the archipelago, too. As a result of increased economic and political ties, the number of Indians living on Zanzibar rose from ca. 1,000 in 1840 to almost 6,000 in 1860. There, Indians with diverse backgrounds acquired the central role not only in long distance trade, but also in petty trading, retailing, and money lending. For example, any European planning an expedition starting at the Zanzibar Archipelago to the African mainland could not help but purchase his *safari*¹³ equipment from an Indian businessman. This advancing Indian dominance in the western Indian Ocean is also reflected by the increasing importance of the Indian Rupee, which soon dominated Zanzibar and the East African mainland. Replacing the old-established Maria Theresa Taler as the most common trade coin in the region, the Rupee became not only the official colonial currency of British Zanzibar, Kenya and Uganda, but also of German East Africa. With the subsequent expansion of the British and German colonies from the East African shores to the interior, Indian merchants also first settled in coastal trading hubs such as Bagamoyo, Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Lindi and later followed the railway lines and started business in more remote places such as Tabora and Ujiji. In the realm of labour, Indian migration was further fostered by indentured labour schemes from the subcontinent, especially during the construction of the British *Uganda Railway*. As the British Empire had banned slavery and the slave trade, allegedly free forms of wage labour, such as contract or rather indentured labour spread in the spheres of British dominance, largely replacing other forms of unfree, i.e. the most widespread form of unpaid labour, slavery. But there was also widespread unorganised and voluntary migration devoid of legal constraints from India to East Africa and back throughout the entire colonial period in the Indian Ocean.¹⁴

For the majority of the nineteenth century, German enterprises and German states played a negligible role in both politics and the economy in the Indian Ocean. Single companies, for example, the trading enterprise *O'Swald & Co.* from Hamburg, started their economic activities centring on Zanzibar where they established branches in Unguja's Stone Town from the 1840s onwards. Overall, German companies were only one out of many insignificant European players in the region, not to mention an almost negligible German political influence there. With the ab-

¹³ Safari (Swahili) = journey. In colonial contexts rather expedition accompanied by a caravan.

¹⁴ Cf. Mangat. *A History of the Asians*, pp. 27–62. Cf. Voigt-Graf, Carmen. *Asian Communities in Tanzania: A Journey to Past and Present Times*. Hamburg: 1998, pp. 27–38, 100–110, 170–180. Cf. Bertz, Ned. *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean. Transnational Histories of Race and Urban Space in Tanzania*. Honolulu: 2015, pp. 13–30.

sence of the German nation state, which only became a reality after the foundation of the German *Kaiserreich* in 1870/1871, German influence in the Indian Ocean in general, and in East Africa in particular, remained very limited. This only changed in the middle of the 1880s, when Carl Peters, with his *Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation*, and the *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellgeschaft* (DOAG), urged not only for profound German colonial expansion in East Africa, but also scammed local rulers considerable territory and claimed it as a possession of the colonial chartered company. Although German Chancellor Bismarck did not regard the establishment of German colonies as a major political goal, still he agreed that the privately run chartered company DOAG should be granted colonial sovereignty over its conquered regions. Acknowledging the general consent on behalf of the *Reich*, Bismarck further declared these colonial territories conquered by the DOAG as a 'German Protectorate' (*Deutsches Schutzgebiet*) in 1885.¹⁵ However, this indirect German colonisation, on the part of the chartered DOAG, fundamentally changed its character in the following five years and found its ultimate transformation resulting from the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890.

Fundamental for this binational European political agreement in 1890 was not only British expansionism in the Indian Ocean but also the DOAG's political and economic mismanagement. The German chartered company aimed at ousting Zanzibari dominance on the East African mainland and legitimised their policy primarily by the argument of ousting slavery and the slave trade in the region. While the German colonial administration would tolerate slavery throughout the entirety of German colonial rule nevertheless, the attempt to disempower the Arab-Swahili dominance in politics and the (slave) trade provoked local resistance, of course.¹⁶ Trying to replace the powerful caravan traders with strong links to Zanzibar, as well as attempting to enforce colonial claims to power ruthlessly along the East African coast, German colonialism was resisted by the East African coastal population by force of arms. The resulting so-called 'Abushiri-Revolt' fundamentally challenged the DOAG's military capacities, and the company had to call upon the German government for military reinforcements. Devoid of any official German colonial military, the *Reich* hastily commissioned Hermann Wissmann to recruit mercenaries especially in the newly established British spheres of influence in Egypt and Sudan. Bloodily subduing the East African forces, the so-called *Wissmanntruppe* (Wiss-

15 Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 45–86. Cf. Pearson. *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 190–191. Cf. Hausschild-Thiessen, Renate. 'O'Swald, William'. *Hamburgische Biografie. Band 2*. 310–311. Eds. Franklin Kopitzsch and Dirk Brietzke. Hamburg: 2003. Cf. "Oswald & Co.". *Deutsches Koloniallexikon. Band II*, 1920, p. 691. Web. *University of Frankfurt o.M.* <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=O%27Swald> (9 July 2021).

16 Cf. Deutsch. *Emancipation*. Cf. Eckert. 'Capitalism and Labor', pp. 170–173.

mann-troops) slowly but surely conquered all strategically significant locations between 1888 and 1890. On the East African mainland, the German military victory thus created facts on the ground and underlined German claims to territorial rule in the region. On the diplomatic level, both the Germans and the British had pressured the Sultan of Zanzibar both non-violently and literally by gun boat diplomacy to accept the German seizures in what subsequently became the colony of German East Africa. With the British acceptance of considerable German colonial influence on the East African mainland, the *Reich* renounced its claims on the Zanzibar Archipelago. The archipelago thus became a British Protectorate after the Anglo-German Agreement in 1890 while the Germans fostered their rule on the mainland. As a quasi-compensation for giving up their colonial claims to the most important trading hub in the western Indian Ocean, the British granted the North Sea's Heligoland Archipelago and the Caprivi Strip connecting the colony German South West Africa to the Zambesi River to the *Reich*. Furthermore, indirect German colonisation in East Africa came to an end and the *Reich* took over all competences formerly obtained by the *DOAG*, with the latter remaining an important economic power throughout German colonial rule in the region, nevertheless. With this Anglo-German horse-trading in the western Indian Ocean, old-established political and economic ties between the Zanzibar Archipelago and the East African mainland suffered severely and led to profound economic disintegration of the region. This entailed an economic downturn in the newly established colony of German East Africa. With their colony now cut off from its natural trading centre Zanzibar, German colonial policy makers and economic protagonists of the region called especially for the construction of railways to make the newly established colony an economic success and a symbol for German international standing.¹⁷ From its very beginning, any German railway in the East African colony was embedded in the western Indian Ocean and beyond, as it had profound links to the Arabian Peninsula both during planning stages and in the course of its construction.

17 Cf. Glassman, Jonathon. *Feasts and Riot. Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888*. Portsmouth: 1995, pp. 177–270. Cf. Deutsch. 'Inventing', pp. 210–219. Cf. Ratliff, William G. "Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty of 1890". *Historical Dictionary of European Imperialism*. 279–280. Ed. James S. Olson et al. Westport: 1991, pp. 279–280. Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, pp. 72–100, 177–191, 287, 292–293. Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way. Kenya Uganda*, pp. 3–23. Cf. Dernburg. *Zielpunkte des deutschen Kolonialwesens. Zwei Vorträge*. Berlin: 1907, p. 35. Cf. Schinzing. *Die Kolonien*, pp. 154–158.

2.3 East Africa and German *Weltpolitik*

Two incidents are both symptomatic and symbolic for German colonialism in East Africa: The Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 and the construction as well as opening of the Suez Canal ca. two decades earlier. With the Suez Canal revolutionising global trade, transport and communication, it became one of the most famous symbols of technological mastery achievement built in an age of progress. The Major perpetrators of this technological progress were primarily the western imperial powers. In global politics towards the end of the nineteenth century “control over the major transport routes eventually became an obsession of European geopolitics.”¹⁸ Besides gigantic artificial water ways like the Suez Canal, the establishment of telegraphy underwater and overland, the construction of cable cars, as well as the construction of railroads crossing whole nations and entire continents was integral to this mania centring on the erection of infrastructure throughout the world. Several assumptions were held as certainties by the colonising nations regarding the establishment of such infrastructure. First of all, advocates of infrastructure – ranging from geographers to economists and politicians – held the opening up of space and the exploitation of resources all around the globe as a necessity. Even leftist critiques first articulated by Marx assigned the opening of vast territories via colonial infrastructure as an unavoidable phase in human history. Furthermore, European imperialism profoundly changed its face in the nineteenth century. Especially until the 1850s, the religious-missionary approach to allegedly enlighten extra-European territories by means of Christianity increasingly receded into the background. It gave way to an ideology that centred on the spread of modern civilisation that had materialism and technology at its heart. As a consequence of such thinking, non-capitalist societies were increasingly denied their right to existence: it was believed that any population that did not follow this credo necessarily had to yield to the expanding forces. Central to this understanding was the idea that those nations who would not jump on the bandwagon of global expansionism would certainly fall behind and lose their chances to survive the race of the fittest. The global construction of infrastructure was thus not only perceived as the lifeblood of an expanding imperial body but also as the neuralgic point to hit a competing rival the hardest. In turn, this was also where one’s own empire was most vulnerable. Technical supremacy was thus regarded as the yardstick that determined a nation’s

¹⁸ Laak, Dirk van. “‘Auf den Hochstraßen des Weltwirtschaftsverkehrs’. Zur Ideologie der ‘Erschließung’ im ausgehenden 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert”. 104–126. *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung*, vol. 19, no. 5. Leipzig: 2009, p. 108. Cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 77–103.

level of civilisation. Lagging behind in this technological race threatened the right to one's own existence and stirred fears of an empire's decline.¹⁹

To win the imperial race of the fittest, the German geographers, economists and politicians generally identified three spheres for potential German imperial expansion by means of infrastructure: eastern Europe bordering the contemporary kingdom of Prussia aiming at the colonisation of Poland and Russia; middle- and South-East European territories along the Danube River with a potential ending in Constantinople or even Baghdad; and a third sphere further south via Italy to the African continent and the southern Pacific.²⁰ Before WWI, only the second and third potential spheres for German imperial expansion experienced the construction of large scale infrastructures such as railways. In this respect, the most famous German imperial infrastructure project found its realisation in the Ottoman Empire and went down in history as the *Bagdadbahn* (Berlin-Baghdad railway). The vision was a long-distance railway track connecting the *Reich's* capital Berlin via Istanbul to Baghdad in today's Iraq. Financed by the *Deutsche Bank* and built by the company of *Philipp Holzmann* from Frankfurt o.M., intense construction works started in the early 1890s, only finding their end decades later in 1940. Already in the earlier phases of construction, the works experienced various setbacks. Major interruptions occurred especially around 1908 with the agitation of *Les Jeunes Turcs* who pushed for reforms in the Ottoman Empire and during the war between the Sultan's realm and Italy around 1912. Later, the construction progress almost came to a standstill during WWI and WWII, of course. After its independence from Britain in 1932, the newly established state of Iraq nationalised the railway in the same year and finished the tracks between 1936 and 1940, when the railhead ultimately reached Baghdad. By then, the railway had lost its economic and political significance, however, and German influence in the region after WWII diminished almost entirely after the defeat of the NS-Regime. Of course, the *Bagdadbahn* was not built in a German colony as such. The Ottoman Empire remained politically independent despite German imperial agitation in the Ottoman territories. Nevertheless, Malte Fuhmann described German geopo-

19 Cf. Wenzlhuemer, Roland. *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World. The Telegraph and Globalization*. Cambridge: 2013. Cf. Laak. "Auf den Hochstraßen", pp. 104–124. Cf. Jahn, Nicola. *Der gute Draht zum Nachbarn. Die deutsch-niederländische Kooperation im Telegrafienwesen ihrer Kolonien und Interessenssphären im pazifischen Raum 1899–1936*. Münster: 2020, pp. 31–35, 291–307. Cf. Rösser, Michael. 'Die Firma Wilkins & Wiese in "Neu-Hornow". Ein Drahtseilakt zwischen Rhein/Ruhr, Weißer Elster und Ostafrika'. *Nordrhein-Westfalen und der Imperialismus*. 128–150. Eds. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst et al. Berlin: 2022.

20 Cf. Laak. "Auf den Hochstraßen", pp. 118. Cf. Seemann, Martin. *Kolonialismus in der Heimat. Kolonialbewegung, Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialkultur in Bayern 1882–1943*. Berlin: 2011, pp. 281–305.

litical policies towards the Ottoman Empire in general, and the project of the *Bagdadbahn* in particular, as “semi-colonial”²¹ throughout ‘the long nineteenth century’, as the *Reich* sought indirect political, military and economic benefits in the region. Indeed, the *Bagdadbahn* was intended to challenge French plans of a trans-Sahara railway and the projected English Cape-Cairo railway. To the imagination of its staunch supporters, the *Bagdadbahn* was thought to serve political and economic ends, just as the transcontinental railways had contributed to the rise of the USA and was similarly regarded as significant as the Trans-Siberian Railway that connected the European parts of Russia to China in the Far East. Of course, the *Reich* searched for sales markets for their produce as well. Moreover, the Germans sought cultural imperial influence in the Ottoman Empire just as it hoped to gain raw materials – especially cotton – from the vast lands along the railroad. At the same time, the *Bagdadbahn* also challenged the privileged British access to the Indian subcontinent via the Suez Canal. Thus, the construction of this railway also had the potential to alter the economic and geopolitical realities prevailing in the Indian Ocean. The same applies to other infrastructure like the *Hijaz Railroad* built between 1900 and 1908 in the Ottoman Empire on the Arabian Peninsula in the Indian Ocean, which also featured German influence.²²

Although the *Hijaz Railway* was primarily built to facilitate Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, it was certainly also a successful attempt by the Ottoman Sultan to centralise power in his vast and decentralised administrative realm. By fostering his rule in the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan also attempted to fend off especially French and English imperial aspirations in his territories, but also flanked this railway infrastructure with the establishment of other technological large-scale projects. Like the Europeans with their imperial infrastructure, the Ottoman Empire attempted to generate geopolitical influence on the African continent as well.

21 Fuhrmann, Malte. ‘Deutschlands Abenteuer im Orient. Eine Geschichte semi-kolonialer Verstrickungen’. *Türkisch-Deutsche Beziehungen. Perspektiven aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*. 10–33. Eds. Claus Schönig et al. Berlin: 2012. Cf. Fuhrmann, Malte. ‘Anatolia as a Site of German Colonial Desire and National Re-awakenings’. 117–150. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 41. N.p.: 2009.

22 The *Hijaz Railroad* connected Syrian Damascus to Medina and found its terminus at the ca. 1,300-km-distant Muslim pilgrimage hotspot Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula. Financed by Muslim donations and particularly by the Ottoman Empire, its leading technicians and engineers were German, like Heinrich August Meißner Pascha, one of the senior engineers for the *Hijaz Railroad*, the *Bagdadbahn* and other railways in Southeast Europe cf. Laak, Dirk van. *Über alles in der Welt. Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Munich: 2005, pp. 92–95. Cf. Laak, Dirk van. *Imperiale Infrastruktur*, pp. 150–164. Cf. Fuhrmann, Malte. ‘Die Bagdadbahn’. *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*. 190–207. Ed. Jürgen Zimmerer. Bonn: 2013. Cf. Pohl. *Philipp Holzmann*, pp. 97–108.

As Mostafa Minawi points out, the Ottomans established a telegraphy system that generally followed the *Hijaz Railway* but was primarily erected to gain imperial influence on the African continent. Analogically, the Ottoman Sultan had similar quasi-colonial ambitions in Libya, the Eastern Sahara, and the Central African kingdoms. Although the ‘Ottoman scramble for Africa’ ultimately failed, as the Sultan was ousted by his European competitors in his strivings, it shows that large scale infrastructure projects in the Ottoman Empire in general, and on the Arabian Peninsula in particular, had the potential to influence the conditions in the Indian Ocean Area and were thus an important background to colonial infrastructure in East Africa as well.²³ Imperial infrastructure projects like the *Bagdadbahn* must therefore be considered in relation to other large-scale railway building of the German *Reich* and its empire in the nineteenth century.

In the context of such imperial infrastructural projects on behalf of all empires of the nineteenth century, the abovementioned Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 was one of the first contracts that fell into the era of German *Weltpolitik* (‘world politics’). The contract between Britain and the *Reich* was signed only a few weeks after *Kaiser* Wilhelm II had dismissed Chancellor Bismarck and appointed Leo von Caprivi as the latter’s successor. The release of Bismarck marked a significant turning point in German foreign policies under the young and ambitious German *Kaiser*. It heralded the credo of German *Weltpolitik*:

In short, Wilhelmine *Weltpolitik* was the German Empire’s claim to play an ongoing significant role in international politics. Behind this was the basic assumption that the credo of Bismarckian ‘saturation’ was to be abandoned after the founding of the [Kaiserreich] in 1870/71 and that the empire was now no longer primarily concerned with preserving its newly acquired position on the European continent but was instead to pursue an expansive foreign policy.²⁴

With imperial infrastructure regarded as one of the most significant tools to secure economic and political influence beyond the borders of the nation state, the *Reich* also intensified the planning and construction of large-scale railway projects, of course. The *Bagdadbahn* in the Ottoman Empire was only one of these projects. Especially from 1890 onwards, the *Reich*, internationally operating German companies, and also their financing banks increasingly expanded their fields

²³ Cf. Minawi, Mostafa. *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa. Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. Stanford: 2016, pp. 99–146. Cf. Ochsenwald, William. *The Hijaz Railroad*. Charlottesville: 1980, pp. 25–58, 151–156.

²⁴ Rösser, Michael. “‘Den Seegedanken zu pflegen’? Hagener Krieger- und Marinevereine. Krieg und Gewalt in China und im Kolonialen Afrika’. *Fernes Hagen. Kolonialismus und Wir*. 14–29. Eds. Fabian Fechner and Barbara Schneider. Hagen: 2021, p. 17.

of activity to foreign countries all around the globe. Regarding banking, especially the *Deutsche Bank* took centre stage, whereas companies such as *Philipp Holzmann* from Frankfurt o.M., *Arthur Koppel & Co.* as well as *Lenz & Co.* from Berlin acquired contracts for the construction of (railway) infrastructure in the Americas, Asia, Asia Minor and colonial Africa. Railway component suppliers like *Krupp* from Essen or bridge building enterprises such as *MAN* from Bavaria or the company of *Gutehoffnungshütte* from Oberhausen were the larger players of numerous vendors of railway equipment who were involved in this construction of imperial infrastructure all around the world. Naturally, many of these globally expanding German companies operated also in German East Africa. Observing both their German partners and foreign competitors closely all around the globe, there was also intercontinental cooperation and exchange among them in respect to various imperial infrastructures. As far as German East Africa is concerned, the most important connections existed between the construction of the *Bagdad-bahn* and the *Central Railway* in the German colony in the Indian Ocean. Both railways were not only financed by the *Deutsche Bank* but also constructed by *Philipp Holzmann*.²⁵

2.4 German Colonial Policies in the Indian Ocean

If in the past one colonised with means of destruction, today one can colonise with means of preservation, and this includes the missionary as well as the doctor, the railway as well as the machine, that is, advanced theoretical and applied science in all fields.

German Colonial State Secretary Bernhard Dernburg. Berlin: 1907.²⁶

In the context of *Weltpolitik*, German planning and construction of imperial infrastructure intensified after 1890 all around the world. With German policies, banks and construction companies designing and building railways in the Near

25 Cf. Rösser. 'Transimperiale Infrastruktur?'. Cf. Plumpe. *Deutsche Bank*, pp.79–164. Cf. Kleinöder. 'A Place in the Sun?'. Cf. Pohl. *Philipp Holzmann*, pp. 81–120. Cf. Bähr. *MAN*, pp. 201–230. Cf. Historisches Archiv der Firma Krupp (HA Krupp). N 13/7. Gustav Neumann. Baumeister in Tanganyika und Ruanda, WA 70/1471. Abkommen über Klemmplatten für Kolonial-Eisenbahnen zw. 27.10.09–05.03.12., WA 4/1771. Schienenlieferung an die Eisenbahngesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika (Usambara-Linie) 1894/96/97, WA 16 g/4.3/231. Bau einer Brücke über den Sanaga-Fluss bei Edea, Kamerun. Cf. Historisches Archiv der Deutschen Bank (HADB). S 1514 Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn, S. 1515 Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn, S 1516 Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft Expedition 1903 Ausrüstung, S 1518 Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn. Verhandlungen Koppel. Cf. Historisches Archiv/Museum der MAN AG Augsburg. Erzeugnisse Werk Gustavsborg. 42. 352/a/3-2.

26 Dernburg. *Zielpunkte*, p. 9.

East, Asia and the Americas, infrastructures in the *Reich's* colonial territories, especially in Africa took centre stage, too. In fact, most of these projects on the African continent did not leave the planning stage and construction seldom started before ca. 1900. The first 1,000 km of railways took twelve and a half years of construction until the opening of operations.²⁷ Only after 1905/1906 did the construction process in the German colonies intensify and by 1913 more than 4,000 km had been built and were in use accordingly. In terms of infrastructure building, German East Africa was the early, yet very slow, bird. The very first German colonial railway was the *Usambara Railway* in the north of the colony. It was originally intended to connect the coastal port Tanga to the *Nyanza* ('Lake Victoria') in the colony's northwest but never reached the great African lake, but finally going only to the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. The first part of the railway was finished quickly and opened as early as 1894. However, it was only fourteen km long, and the next interim destination Mombo (ca. 130 km), took eleven years to complete. In the German colony at the Indian Ocean, intense railway construction took off only between 1905 and 1906 when the construction of the *Central Railway* started in coastal Dar es Salaam and finally reached ca. 1,200-km-distant Kigoma on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in summer 1914. The railroad's opening celebrations were held only a few weeks before WWI started. Although the *Central Railway's* construction progressed rapidly especially after 1907, it was only started with a huge delay as its planning had already begun in the early 1890s.²⁸

The reasons for the delay were manifold. First, various protagonists of the colonial administration, the military and the economy, held conflicting views over the priorities of railway construction. Those favouring the immigration of German settlers to the colony supported the enhancement of the northern *Usambara Railway*, whereas others supported the construction of a central railway connecting coastal Dar es Salaam with Lake Tanganyika, arguing that the neighbouring British *Uganda Railway* was enough to open the north of the German colony. Influential officials like Governor Götzen (1900–1906), who attempted to intensify the cultivation of cotton especially in German East Africa's south in order to attain independence particularly from US American raw cotton, favoured a southern railway line to facilitate the production of this cash crop. Besides these conflicting views on where to best build a railway in German East Africa, the *Reichstag* often rejected the colonial budget and thus prevented any costly railway projects. The decisions of the German parliament additionally reflected the increasing scepticism towards German

²⁷ Baltzer, Franz. *Die Kolonialbahnen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Afrikas*. Berlin: 1916, p. 28.

²⁸ Cf. Baltzer. *Die Kolonialbahnen*, pp. 27–29.

colonialism in German politics, economic circles and the public. By the early 1890s, the once widespread enthusiasm of German society in favour of colonial conquest had given way to general disappointment about the *Reich's* overseas territories. Various scandals about excessive colonial violence, general mismanagement of the chartered German colonial companies, largely absent economic benefits and the high costs of the first colonial wars in almost all overseas territories disillusioned almost the entire spectrum of German society. Hence, there was also hardly any love lost for costly large-scale colonial railway projects until the turn of the century.²⁹

This widespread scepticism towards more committed colonial expansion and investments only changed in the course of even more intense colonial warfare. Severely challenging aspects of German colonial rule especially in Africa – particularly, German genocidal warfare against the Ovaherero and Nama in German South West Africa, and to a certain extent the Maji Maji War in German East Africa (1905–1908) – reawakened interest in German colonialism in the *Reich*. Thus, debate about German colonial policies in general, and colonial warfare in particular, dominated the general elections held in the *Reich* in 1907. With the resulting win of the pro-colonial parties in the elections, the German parliament supplemented large sums to the colonial budgets to finance the extraordinary costs needed for the colonial military to win the wars in the African colonies. Resulting from these wars and their broad media coverage during the elections, colonial scepticism receded into the background and gave way to a willingness to restructure the administration of the German colonies. Moreover, broader circles now agreed to invest in various political and economic colonial projects. Subsequently, the *Reich* restructured its colonial administration and created the Colonial Department in Berlin in 1907. In this context, the newly appointed Colonial State Secretary Bernhard Dernburg took centre stage. Pursuing an unorthodox style of politics and having an individual public appearance and manner of speaking, this trained banker with international experience soon acquired the reputation of a hands-on and pragmatic politician. Although observed with suspicion by those colonial policy makers who urged for large-scale German overseas settlements, Dernburg was generally regarded as the politician with the right strategies to settle the colonial chaos and to stir the economy of overseas territories, especially at the beginning of his political career. Drawing a lot on his pre-

²⁹ Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 45–86, 167–250. Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, pp. 25–80. Cf. Conrad. *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, pp. 22–37, 54–61. Cf. Habermas. *Skandal in Togo*. Cf. Baltzer. *Die Kolonialbahnen*, pp. 35–60. Cf. Kolonialpolitisches Aktionskomitee (Ed.). *Die Eisenbahnen Afrikas. Grundlagen und Gesichtspunkte für eine koloniale Eisenbahnpolitik in Afrika. Nach der gleichnamigen amtlichen Denkschrift*. Berlin: 1907, pp. 65–75, 150–156.

ceding professional experience in the USA, Dernburg's colonial policies centred on three major objectives. First, he urged a scientific colonialism, aiming to use all the modern technology of Germany in the early twentieth century for the opening and development of its overseas territories. Secondly and strongly related to that, colonial infrastructure and especially railways were deemed central to both stimulate economic activity and enhance the capacities of the colonial military. Thirdly, Dernburg intended the imperial infrastructure to both attract large scale German plantation enterprises and to facilitate local African economic activity. The longer Dernburg stayed in office, the more he regarded the colonised population as 'the most valuable asset' of the entire colony instead of regarding them as a hindrance to German colonial conquest. Rhetorically, this was a radical departure from previous opinions that blustered of the 'necessary evil' to extinguish the African races for the good of the German colonisers. Dernburg's approach has thus long been labelled the 'reformed colonial policies'. Although his four-year term of office between 1906 and 1910, as head of the *Reich's* Colonial Department, appears as a radically new approach to the German colonies, Dernburg's reforms had very limited effects on the spot, however. All in all, his 'reformed colonial policies' have generally been overrated by historical research. Although several laws supported by Dernburg intended to improve the living and working conditions of the colonised populations, the actual effects of these policies were marginal. In essence not much changed for those men and women working daily on German colonial plantations or at the railway.³⁰

30 Cf. Becker, Frank. 'Die Hottentotten-Wahlen (1907)'. *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*. 177–190. Ed. Jürgen Zimmerer. Bonn: 2013. Cf. Utermark, Sören. "Schwarzer Untertan vs. schwarzer Bruder". *Bernhard Dernburgs Reformen in den Kolonien Deutsch-Ostafrika, Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Togo und Kamerun*. Unpublished Dissertation. N.P.: 2011. Web. *Universität Kassel*. <https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/bitstream/handle/123456789/2012082441677/DissertationSoerenUtermark.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y> (21 July 2021), pp. 318–329. Cf. Schiefel, Werner. *Bernhard Dernburg. 1857–1937. Kolonialpolitiker und Bankier im wilhelminischen Deutschland*. Zürich: 1974, pp. 45–142. Cf. Rathenau, Walther. 'Erwägungen über die Erschließung [sic!] des Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Schutzgebietes'. *Reflexionen*. 143–198. Ed. Walter Rathenau. Leipzig: 1908. Cf. Pfeil, Joachim. *Vorschläge zur praktischen Kolonisation in Ost-Afrika*. Berlin: 1890, p. 59. Cf. Iliffe. *Tanganyika under German Rule*, pp. 49–81, 166–200. Cf. Naranch, Bradley D. "Colonized Body," "Oriental Machine": Debating Race, Railroads, and the Politics of Reconstruction in Germany and East Africa, 1906–1910'. 299–338. *Central European History*, vol. 33, no. 3. Cambridge: 2000. Web. *Jstor*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4546983> (13 July 2018). Cf. Schröder. *Gesetzgebung und 'Arbeiterfrage'*, pp. 380–382, 584–598. Cf. Zimmerer, Jürgen. 'Deutscher Rassenstaat in Afrika. Ordnung, Entwicklung und Segregation in "Deutsch-Südwest" (1884–1915)'. *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*. 120–139. Ed. Jürgen Zimmerer. Berlin: 2011, pp. 134–136, FN 34. Cf. Dernburg, Bernhard. *Koloniale Erziehung*. Munich: 1907, pp. 9–11. Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 670–671.

Nevertheless, Dernburg succeeded in mobilising German capital for the colonies and in generating public support for his colonial policies. As Colonial State Secretary he certainly did his share in setting in motion large-scale investments in vast plantations, such as the *Otto* cotton plantation or the massive expansion of the railway networks. Besides the abovementioned geopolitical and economic strategies of infrastructure building, a desire for German autarky from decisive globally traded and manufactured raw materials was significant. In this respect, the most important crop was cotton as its global market price had profound influence on the profitability of the large German textile industry. As one of the largest industrial sectors in the country, the textile industry employed not only a great share of the German working classes, but it was also one decisive factor in the *Reich's* overall economic policies. Envisioning control over the entire supply chain of textile manufacturing from raw materials to clothing, Dernburg and colonial lobby groups such as the *Kolonialwirtschaftliche Komitee* – KWK (colonial economic committee), alongside other European colonial powers, urged for independence especially from the USA as the largest raw cotton producer in the world. By cultivating cotton in its own colonies, many German experts, politicians and entrepreneurs hoped not only to gain economic independence from the USA, but to overtake competing British textile producers as well.³¹

Apart from such well-received geopolitical and economic colonial visions, Dernburg further popularised German colonialism among the largest part of German society, as he also improved the reputation of German colonialism internationally. Besides modern technology and financial investments, any science serving the German colonial cause came in handy to raise the prestige of German imperialism and her colonies.³² In this respect, the discipline of palaeontology played a significant part. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the emerging scientific discipline of palaeontology – which was strongly related to zoology, botany, archaeology, ethnology and geology – had tried to explain the origin of man and the genesis of the earth's species, flora and fauna. From its very beginning, the young academic discipline had strong links not only to the scientific debate, but its re-

31 Cf. Dernburg. *Koloniale Lehrjahre. Vortrag Gehalten in Stuttgart am 23. January 1907*. Stuttgart et al.: 1907, pp. 9–14. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 1–25, 113–135. Cf. Beckert. *Empire of Cotton*. Cf. Riello. *Cotton*. Cf. Zimmerman. *Alabama in Africa*. Cf. Robins. *Cotton and Race*. Cf. Powell. *Losing the Thread*.

32 Cf. Methfessel, Christian. *Kontroverse Gewalt. Die imperiale Expansion in der englischen und deutschen Presse vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*. Cologne et al.: 2018, pp. 296–300. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 1–25, 165–192. Cf. Bleifuß and Hergenröder. *Die "Otto-Plantage"*, pp. 14–26. Cf. Dernburg. *Zielpunkte*. Cf. Dernburg. *Koloniale Lehrjahre*. Cf. Dernburg. *Koloniale Erziehung*, pp. 13–16.

search results were also widely debated in public via the media. In the course of this widespread interest, palaeontological research results intertwined with larger political and societal themes and generally reflected the contemporary worldview of European societies. Of course, this included tropes of racism and “the colonial image of the non-European world”.³³ Often, palaeontological finds and related dominant scientific or public opinions were instrumentalised to legitimise colonial rule, and to insinuate European civilisational advantage over peoples living in the Americas, Asia, Oceania, or Africa. Although palaeontological research results had genuinely been generated and debated transnationally, the nation (state) remained one of the most significant focal points for the academic discipline. Thus, nationalist and even jingoist attitudes were also widespread in the field of science. In this context, the nations entered a race about research on the most efficient machines, the biggest guns and the largest navy, and used their economic and technological skill to expand their imperial spheres of influence.³⁴ Despite the fact that research results of palaeontology can hardly be transformed into matters of technological progress, military might or economic profits, the science of fossils became a matter of intense national interest. Like German archaeological excavations of ancient Babylon in today’s Iraq, around 1900, for instance, academic success of any research institute in the *Reich* in any field easily translated into national prestige. Thus, the field of palaeontology also became a matter of international standing for the German *Reich* around 1900. In the overall context of imperial competition, any nation having imperial ambitions sought to generate the most spectacular research results. Regarding palaeontology, especially dinosaur fossils provided for the most sensational material. As the huge size of many bones discovered was quickly associated with the alleged greatness of the nation which had conducted the petrified bones’ excavation, a veritable ‘dinomania’ emerged around 1900. This great scientific and popular interest led to a race for the discovery of the largest and most spectacular prehistorical dinosaur bone among the European imperial nations and the USA. With the dinosaur fossils found at the Tendaguru mountain in the south-eastern region of *Lindi* in German East Africa, only shortly after the Maji Maji War had devastated the area between 1905–1907, palaeontological excavations by German scientists in the German colony were the perfect opportunity to refurbish the blemished imperial prestige of the German *Reich*, after the wars in German South West Africa (1904–1907) and German East Africa (1905–1908). For the time being, these fossils from the German colony in the Indian Ocean proved to be the largest

³³ Schweighöfer, Ellinor. *Vom Neandertal nach Afrika. Der Streit um den Ursprung der Menschheit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: 2018, p. 9.

³⁴ Cf. Schweighöfer. *Vom Neandertal*, pp. 7–26, 369–378.

in the world and led many contemporary Germans to believe that the *Reich's* colonial ambitions really enhanced their motherland's greatness. In line with this perception, Germany had accordingly won a scientific battle especially against competing palaeontologists from Britain and the USA.³⁵ Yet, despite this widespread enthusiasm among German society resulting from the gigantic dinosaur bones from the Tendaguru in German East Africa, German colonial policy makers around Dernburg likewise regarded the construction of imperial infrastructure as the decisive tool that symbolised German civilisational advance. Of course, railways were also intended to enhance the economic success of the *Reich's* colonies by opening up the colonial territory and enabling the extraction of urgently needed raw materials like cotton. The construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa between ca. 1905 and 1916, and the labour conditions at the construction sites as well as the labour relationships of all protagonists involved in the building process are analysed in the following first case study of this global history of labour.

35 Cf. Steinecke, Ernst-Christian. 'Die Ausgrabung von Babylon. Wissenschaftsförderung im Deutschen Kaiserreich am Beispiel der Archäologie'. *Von Käufern, Märkten und Menschen. Kolonialismus und Wissen in der Moderne*. 285–296. Eds. Rebekka Habermas and Alexandra Przyrembel. Göttingen: 2013. Cf. Rieppel. *Assembling*, pp. 80–90. Cf. Nieuwland. *American Dinosaur*, pp. 3–48. Cf. Tamborini, Marco. 'Die Vermarktung der Tiefenzeit. Paläontologie im Umbruch'. *Dinosaurier Fragmente. Zur Geschichte der Tendaguru-Expedition und ihrer Objekte, 1906–2018*. 124–135. Eds. Ina Heumann et al. Göttingen: 2018. Cf. Mehtfessel. *Kontroverse Gewalt*, pp. 266–316.