

Krethlow, Carl Alexander (Hrsg.): *Hofjagd – Weidwerk – Wilderei. Kulturgeschichte der Jagd im 19. Jahrhundert*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh 2015. ISBN: 978-3-506-78258-8; 296 S., 64 s/w und 25 farb. Abb.

Rezensiert von: Yme Kuiper, University of Groningen

In my own country – the Netherlands – hunting is currently an emotional topic of debate. Recently, the Dutch branch of Earth First protested fiercely against the hunting of deer in The Hoge Veluwe National Park. This park is one of the largest and most popular nature reserves in the Netherlands. It is also well known for an international museum of modern art and the Saint Hubertus Hunting Lodge, designed by the Dutch architect Berlage in 1914. But any debate about hunting immensely profits from a historical perspective. In that sense, the *cultural* history of hunting will benefit significantly from a well-chosen diachronic (long-term) and comparative perspective, as Carl Alexander Krethlow's 2015 collection of essays „Hofjagd – Weidwerk – Wilderei“ proves. In this book 'culture' is a broad concept. It refers to a whole complex of practices and ideas, ranging from hunting territories to hunting rights, from courtly hunting to farm hunting, and from forest science to hunting associations. Other topics covered by this beautifully illustrated compendium include poachers, female hunters, sharpshooters, hunting aviators, weapons and fashions, alongside texts about typologies and styles of hunting, the influence of hunting on modern sports and its connection with the love-of-nature fashion in popular literature around 1900.

The crucial period that the twelve authors deal with has been labelled in recent historiography 'the long nineteenth century', the period from 1789–1914. In his introduction to the book, the editor, the Swiss historian Krethlow, remarks that since the late 1990s German historians have been inspired by British and French colleagues to instigate serious research on hunting, especially dealing with the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era. However, even today hunting is still regarded as a typical leisure time activ-

ity of the nobility, and historians, especially those inspired by the social sciences, have a critical attitude towards hunting as a research topic. One of the challenges of this study was to make clear that 'the old order' changed drastically in European society and culture after 1848, and this had a great impact on hunting and poaching. Hunting was no longer a royal or noble privilege and became a leisure activity for other landed elites as well: the urban high bourgeoisie, rich entrepreneurs, large farmers and the rural well-to-do. Poaching or illegal hunting remained strongly associated with the lower strata in nineteenth-century rural society, and punishments were still relatively harsh, even after penalties became less strict in Central Europe after the 1850s. Poaching can be regarded as a counter-cultural history. It clashed with property rights in general, and on a symbolic level it challenged the power and privileges of the nobility in particular. Nevertheless, aristocratic large landowners (including emperors, kings and tsars) stayed at the top of 'European hunting society' until the Great War.

Already in the eighteenth century, the crueler aspects of royal and noble hunting were fiercely criticized by intellectuals and even by the enlightened King Frederick II of Prussia. Particularly in countries with a powerful nobility, hunting was the exclusive domain of privileged nobles; only in less feudal regions in Europe (like the Dutch Republic, Switzerland, Scandinavia and some parts of the Holy Roman Empire) did burghers also hunt. In his essay on hunting in Europe in the eighteenth century, Marcel Berni paints a colourful portrait of the French *par force* hunt, including aspects of its ritualization and dissemination to other countries as the most prestigious hunting practice in Europe. Even more impressive are his descriptions of 'institutionalized animal abuse', met with in all those hunting practices which end in the mass killing of prey animals or in fox tossing, demonstrating an extreme human domination over nature.

In her comparative chapter on hunting in Britain and France, Beatrice Kaufmann argues that hunting practices began to change after the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, respectively. The original, early-modern French aristocratic tradition of *chasse*

à courre was transformed in Britain into the more sportsmanlike English traditions of fox-hunting and coursing. Nevertheless, feudal structures and the aristocratic mentality continued to dominate the British hunting culture, as we can also see in the rise of the popularity of the phenomenon of the shooting party in the late nineteenth century. In France, on the other hand, the abolition of hunting privileges initially caused uncoordinated decimation of wildlife. New hunting legislation linked landownership to the right to hunt. No longer were nobles permitted to hunt freely over someone else's land; from that point on they needed the permission of the landowner. Another crucial difference between both countries was the breed of hunting dogs and dog packs. The construction of railways had a great impact on the popularity of hunting in some specific British regions (Scotland, for example); the modernization of the French infrastructure began much later so it took some time before French hunters could travel en masse to their best hunting grounds.

In his contribution on hunting in Russia, Hannes Theinhardt stresses the huge gap between the worlds of hunting for pleasure (in leisure time) and hunting for sale (or for home consumption). Due to historical and geographical conditions, there was hardly any competition between these two worlds in large parts of Russia. In the Baltic region, Theinhardt argues, the hunting ethos of the large landowners kept its German identity throughout the nineteenth century. Only during the last quarter of this century did the influence of hunting associations grow to some extent there. Like the last German emperor Wilhelm II, the last Russian tsar Nicolas II was a passionate hunter, but, according to Theinhardt, this passion was also a flight from reality. Ramona Brügger has written an entire essay on the hunting passions of the emperors Franz Joseph I of Austria and Wilhelm II of Germany. Franz Joseph evolved from a court hunter into a simpler, more 'ethical' hunter, detaching himself more and more from his son and crown prince Franz Ferdinand, who shot anything that moved. Wilhelm II was particularly fond of deerstalking, but also participated in the larger scale imperial court hunts. Every year he led the Saint Huber-

tus hunt, a *par force* hunt, in Grunewald on 3 November, and every year he spent a total of about forty days on his hunting activities. The German emperor shot about 75,000 game pieces between 1872 and 1913. Both hunting emperors publicly exhibited the masculine habitus that still acted as a pillar of the whole complex of aristocratic, European hunting culture around 1900.

The two key contributions in the book are written by Marcel Berni and Carl Alexander Krethlow. The first analyses the effects of the introduction of the 'science of hunting' (Jagdwissenschaft) on the German world of hunting in the long nineteenth century; the second deals with the major changes in hunting in Central Europe (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). Berni argues that, in the course of the nineteenth century, processes of the 'scientification' and institutionalization of hunting transformed the German Sunday hunter into a more ethical and professional hunter. The broader context of these processes was also formed by the rise of the science of forestry and good care of the forests in Germany. In addition, technological innovations made it possible to organize more precise shoots that were held in increasingly restricted hunting areas. Krethlow has a keen eye for the complexities and ambivalences that were inherent in the changes in hunting culture, especially after the revolutionary year 1848. His core argument demonstrates that the positions of the nobility, the bourgeoisie and the peasantry rearranged themselves in the field of hunting practice and culture. To give just one striking figure here, around 1914 there were about 100,000 nobles in Germany, but about 600,000 people had a permission to hunt. Even in pre-war Pomerania, strongly dominated by the nobility, the ratio of noble to bourgeois hunter was one to three. The most cultural-historical part of Krethlow's fine essay is the analysis of six forms of identification with hunting. The most fascinating topic here is the different ways noble individuals appropriated hunting as an expression of their 'newly invented' (or revitalized) noble identity. Some used hunting to create their own world of traditions, living in harmony with nature and separate from the urban political centres, while others joined new power elites

and used hunting for strategic networking, or strove for economic leadership in rural society by breeding fine hunting horses.

Anyone who wants to understand why hunting is widely practised today and why it is such a controversial topic must study its history. Reading this compendium of essays edited by Krethlow would be a very good place to start.

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