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UNTERWEGS MIT WILDEN TIEREN – WANDERMENAGERIEN ZWISCHEN BELEHRUNG UND KOMMERZ 1750–1850 by Annelore Rieke-Müller and Lothar Dittrich. Basilisken-Presse, Marburg, 1999 (*Acta Biohistorica* 5). 171 pp., 40 illus., hardback. ISBN 3–925347–

52–6. DM 69.00 (c. £23 or US\$35).

As a child I didn't always have the privilege of living in or near a town with a zoo. Thus when the circus came to town, I was as keen to visit the circus menagerie as the show itself. One could usually get right up to the animals behind bars in their painted waggons, and the thrill of seeing, hearing and smelling the exotic beasts up so close that one could feel their (usually bad) breath helped impress on me the fascination for animals that I've always retained. Later on, with hindsight, of course, I realized that those menageries were quite horrible homes for animals in captivity, and that the lions and sea lions and hippos and apes who spent most of their presumably miserable lives in quarters as small as a lift cage would be for us, paid a high price for making people like me fond of animals. Nowadays travelling menageries – at least in the countries I know – are a thing of the past, and I believe no one regrets this. Yet 150, 250 years ago few people interested in exotic animals had any alternative but to visit a travelling menagerie.

Over the years, the historian Annelore Rieke-Müller and the former director of Hannover Zoo, Lothar Dittrich, have written – both jointly and individually – many books and articles on the history of animals in captivity, including a history of early zoological gardens in mid-nineteenth-century Germany and the animal dealer Carl Hagenbeck (reviewed in *I.Z.N.* 46:2, pp. 102–105). Their latest cooperative venture has produced a marvellous book on a fascinating aspect of zoo history on which virtually nothing has been published in book form until now. The century from 1750 to 1850 was the heyday of the travelling menagerie not only in Germany but in Europe in general. Wild animals suffered the indignity of a life on wheels before then, of course, but with rare exceptions each was alone with his or her Tierführer, the owner who would lead (führen) his charge from one town to the next. In German one spoke of Königstiere, 'animals meant for kings' that the public too could now admire – for a small fee, of course. Even today there are inns across Central Europe named for an elephant or lion or ostrich that 'stayed' at that establishment for a week or two, two or three centuries ago. Most Tierführer in Germany were not Germans at all, but Dutch or Britons profiting from their nations' colonial connections. The Netherlanders Anton and Bartel Verhagen were among the first to organize a travelling menagerie with more than just one or two animals. In 1692 the brothers travelled through Germany with an Asiatic elephant, a leopard, parrots and (presumably) a mandrill and other trained monkeys. Later Italians and Frenchmen, many of them originally comedians and stuntmen, would come to dominate the

travelling menagerie circuit in Central and Western Europe, whereas British menagerists seldom left their island for a tour of the Continent.

Rieke-Müller and Dittrich not only cover well the development, the rise and fall of the travelling menagerie as an institution in Central Europe, but also look at specific aspects usually ignored or at best only touched upon in histories of zoological gardens: entrance fees, for example, and the publication of guide-books. A very useful appendix, both for reference and trivial pursuit, is a glossary of now obsolete menagerie names for animals. In order to coax visitors to their collection, menagerists would frequently give their animals promising appellatives. The llama was known as the '(West) Indian giraffe', for example, the emu as the 'New Holland ostrich', the mandrill and occasionally the chimpanzee as the 'satyr', the rhesus as the 'Chinese monkey' and the spider monkey as the 'monkey-snake'. The illustrations, particularly the reproductions of menagerists' flyers and broadsheets, are delightful. What Rieke-Müller and Dittrich's book really lacks is an index. I found myself making my own while reading the book, to be able to make better use of it as a work of reference in the future, but one really could expect an index in a scholarly publication so full of useful, well-researched information.

Considering the commercial value of exotic wild animals, one might have expected menagerists to have been as considerate towards their charges as possible. Untimely deaths could bring ruin to a travelling menagerie. But of course two centuries ago people had different ideas of what was 'possible' from what we have today. Nevertheless, many animals lived in travelling menageries as long as – or even longer than – in mid-nineteenth-century zoos. An Asiatic elephant belonging to the travelling menagerie of Jacques Tourniaire apparently survived for at least 23 years. For 27 years Tourniaire travelled through Central and Western Europe with a Javan rhinoceros, and Huguet likewise exhibited a Javan rhinoceros for 13 years before selling it to the Marseilles Zoo in 1860. L.C. Rookmaaker, it should be noted, in *The Rhinoceros in Captivity* (SPB Academic Publishing, 1998), has identified both these specimens as great Indian rhinoceroses on the basis of illustrations said to have been made of them, but Rieke-Müller and Dittrich accept the contemporary descriptions of one-horned rhinoceroses from the Great Sundas, assuming apparently that the pictures in question, if really drawn after those two animals, were idealized drawings made to resemble those of the more impressive Indian species. Rieke-Müller and Dittrich also give lifespans slightly different from Rookmaaker's, and identify the Marseilles rhinoceros as that originally belonging to Huguet, which Rookmaaker does not. When it comes to rhinoceroses, one is usually well advised to defer to Rookmaaker. But as *Unterwegs mit Wilden Tieren* was published after *The Rhinoceros in Captivity*, of which Rieke-Müller and Dittrich did make use, and as they had access to archival material in the Museum of Natural History in Berlin which Rookmaaker does not refer to, they may well be onto something. As both Rieke-Müller and Dittrich, and Rookmaaker, deplore, Marseilles acquired a cripple kept far too long in a narrow waggon-cage. But before we condemn that heyday of the travelling menagerie too harshly, perhaps we should bear in mind under what appalling conditions to this very day cattle, horses and swine are transported across Europe.

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