Cattle and colonialism: an animal-centred history of southern Africa, 1652-1980s
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Conclusion

This thesis explored core impacts of colonialism in southern Africa, from the perspective of cattle. Its overarching question was: What were some of the major impacts of colonialism on the experiences of cattle? The aim was to present cattle as sentient subjects, and to centre cattle in the historical analysis. The thesis opted out of the orthodox human-centred approach of historical scholarship. Instead, it shifted to an animal-centred paradigm. It explored how colonialism impacted cattle at the individual- and group-levels. The thesis is the first to focus exclusively on how colonialism in southern Africa affected cattle. The thesis was divided into five main parts.

The Introduction located the study within the animal history literature, and animal histories that depict animals as subjects. Outside of some exceptions, it noted that previous animal histories have neither pursued animals' historical experiences in sustained ways, nor explored them in relation to colonialism in southern Africa. That is the space in which this thesis innovated: it investigated colonial impacts on cattle as experiential subjects. To do this, the Introduction developed a notion of species-characteristic animal agency that sees agency as sentient striving towards a species-specific good. This notion of agency informed subsequent chapters' investigations. The methodology section discussed the thesis' regional, multidisciplinary, animal-centred approach, and also its use of archival materials, which were read in light of an interdisciplinary understanding of cattle's experiential capacities. The Introduction distinguished this thesis as an innovative attempt to centre cattle and explore their experiences of colonialism in the region. The Introduction then outlined the chapters' core questions and summarised their investigations. Each chapter, except Chapter One, was devoted to exploring a specific major impact of colonialism on cattle. These impacts were colonial wagon labour (Chapter Two), disease epidemics and veterinary regimes (Chapter Three), the development of slaughterhouses (Chapter Four), and breeding regimes (Chapter Five). These historical and empirical chapters were arranged chronologically and thematically.

Since there is no precedent of a sustained history of southern African colonialism from a cattle perspective, Chapter One of the thesis opened unconventionally. It positioned cattle as

experiential beings, with minds, neurochemicals, emotions, sensory faculties, modes of communication, and rich social relationships. This was done via an interdisciplinary reading of literature on cattle's experiential capacities. This depiction of cattle as sentient subjects formed the basis on which subsequent chapters' empirical, historical investigations interpreted historical sources, so as to understand how historical processes and shifts affected cattle as subjects. The second part of Chapter One historically located cattle in southern Africa before Dutch colonialism began. It covered the period from 8 000 BCE to the 1650s. It drew on evolutionary anthropology, geomorphology, zooarchaeology, and genetic histories. It sketched a broad history of cattle from domestication and their movement from north Africa to southern Africa. Drawing on Raevin Jimenez's comparative historical linguistics research, it showed that from the eleventh century CE cattle in southern Africa became increasingly connected to the social and economic worlds of Proto-Nguni speakers and their descendants. Chapter One's contribution, therefore, was to use an interdisciplinary approach to present cattle as sentient subjects, and to historically locate cattle in southern Africa before the beginning of colonialism. The chapter provided a foundation for the subsequent chapters to investigate cattle's experiences of colonialism.

Chapter Two focused on oxen's experiences of wagon labour. It addressed two questions. How did wagon labour affect the experiences of cattle in Southern Africa? And, what if any contribution to the development of southern Africa did oxen's wagon labour comprise? It covers the period from the VOC first compelling oxen to pull wagons in 1653 until transport wagons were largely replaced by trains in the late nineteenth century. The core contribution and primary innovation of this chapter was that it read over twenty accounts of travellers, missionaries and officials, to analyse specifically how wagon labour affected the oxen themselves. The travellers' writings include hundreds of often vivid descriptions of oxen's wagon labours. The cattle-centred approach enabled a novel reading of the travellers' texts and revealed the ways in which oxen experienced wagon labour. As colonial labours, oxen constituted the primary mode of colonial transport in southern Africa for over two centuries. The chapter recognised cattle as core forced labourers in the development of the region, playing significant roles in the development of the region's motor car roads, and providing crucial transport at the beginning of the Transvaal and Kimberley mining booms. Oxen suffered harsh physical and psychological abuses as colonial transport labourers, which the

chapter demonstrated by reading contemporary accounts in light of an interdisciplinary understanding of cattle as experiential agents. The chapter argued that their labour was a precondition for colonial settlement, trade, and regional transport. The chapter provided the first lengthy history of cattle as experiential, colonial labourers.

Chapter Three investigated three regional cattle epidemics during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1853–1920s). These were Lungsickness, rinderpest, and East Coast fever. Neither of these major epidemics has been studied from a cattle perspective. Gary Marquart's research into rinderpest in Bechuanaland innovated by studying rinderpest's epidemiology, in an attempt to see like rinderpest. My approach was to analyse the epidemics by placing cattle at the centre of the analysis; to see the epidemics like cattle. Its core questions were: How were individual cattle impacted by Lungsickness, rinderpest and East Coast fever, and how were cattle as groups affected? The chapter reinterpreted the disease epidemics by shifting to a cattle-centred reading of them. This chapter argued that the epidemics shifted the course of cattle history in the region. While oxen performed colonial wagon labour, they also spread Lungsickness and rinderpest. Focusing on individual-level impacts, the chapter described the disease courses and symptoms animals endured. It also discussed the interesting absence of scholarship on the colonial cattle massacre policies that were deployed across the region after the epidemics, especially in contrast to the numerous accounts of the Xhosa Cattle Killing in response to Lungsickness. It showed that, regionally, in the first four months of rinderpest, cattle faced both massacre policies and the disease. For cattle, the group-level impacts of the epidemics were stark. Outside of the diseases' death tolls, cattle's transhumant relations with Africans were eroded, and vast fences carved up the landscape and demarcated colonial territory. Although the process began in the mid-nineteenth century in the Cape and colonial Namibia, especially after rinderpest, cattle became biomedical subjects under inchoate nineteenth century colonial states. Cattle were subject to live experiments, and in response to rinderpest and Lungsickness, various crude vaccines were trialled on them. Veterinary officials appeared across the region after rinderpest struck in 1896. Cattle became controlled and monitored by veterinary regimes which were backed by state force. A core part of colonial state-building involved controlling cattle. Rinderpest did much to speed up the transition away from wagons towards trains, for cattle implying a profound change in their roles and forms of labour. Building on the previous chapter, the

focus on epidemics and veterinary regimes showed that cattle shifted to becoming biomedical subjects whose productive health was monitored by colonial agricultural and veterinary departments. Exerting wide-ranging and pervasive control over cattle was an integral part of colonisation processes in the region. The chapter's novel contribution is that it provided a regional view of the impact of three epidemics from a cattle perspective.

Chapter Four focused on one of the legacies of the VOC's colonisation of the Cape, namely the development of mass animal slaughter. It asked, how did industrial slaughter enterprises develop and affect the lives and experiences of cattle in the Cape? For domesticated animals like cattle, slaughterhouses are a major and unacknowledged impact of colonialism in southern Africa. This chapter traced the emergence of VOC slaughterhouses at the Cape harbour until slaughterhouses became formalised, regulated, and industrialised in South Africa in the early twentieth century. It drew on new archival material to indicate that various arms of state in the Cape worked together to construct and administer a centralised, public slaughterhouse in Maitland. It also creatively combined sources, such as architectural designs of slaughterhouses and SPCA investigations, to explore cattle's likely experiences of slaughterhouses in the Cape and South Africa. The chapter's core contribution is that it is the first history to investigate slaughterhouses as an impact of colonialism and explore how industrialised slaughterhouses were developed and affected cattle's experiences. It showed that social and political shifts impacted the ways in which cattle were slaughtered, and that government departments – including veterinary, health, and agricultural departments – worked in concert with engineers, the town clerk, and municipalities to construct and administer state-run centralised slaughterhouses from the early twentieth century. The chapter drew on diverse, previously unexplored archival material to investigate this core impact of colonialism in the region and its affective and physical consequences for cattle.

Having discussed cattle's role as colonial wagon labourers, the impact of disease epidemics and veterinary regimes, and the development of slaughterhouses, the final chapter, Chapter Five, explored one further major impact of colonialism, namely the development of colonial breeding regimes, specifically in Botswana and South Africa. The chapter focused on two questions. How did colonial breeding regimes impact cattle as a group in Botswana and South Africa? And, how did breeding processes affect the lives and experiences of cattle? Attempts

at colonial breeding regimes in colonial Swaziland are also explored. The chapter showed that pedigree cattle breeding in South Africa had emerged by the early twentieth century at agricultural colleges and schools and via pedigree breeding societies. It described how colonial authorities in Bechuanaland and Swaziland attempted to implement cattle breeding regimes based on British Livestock Improvement Centres. The chapter also investigated the emergence of progeny testing and modern breeding practices via a case study of Bonsmara cattle breeding in South Africa. A key contribution of the chapter is that it contextualised breeding regimes in southern Africa, both as explicit impacts of colonialism and against the backdrop of major global developments in animal eugenics. The chapter argued that for domesticated animals forced artificial insemination from the mid-twentieth century comprised the industrialisation of animal reproduction and in this way likely constituted the most significant shift in the history of domesticated animals. While human eugenics lost much of its appeal after WWII, animal eugenics proliferated and became a core feature of modern animal agriculture across the globe. While slaughter was industrialised in South Africa and parts of southern Africa in the early twentieth century, reproduction was industrialised in South Africa from the mid-twentieth century and after political independence in Botswana. Significantly, in that forced artificial insemination emerged just after political independence in Botswana, the chapter indicated one way in which cattle history and human history chronologies became clearly distinct: human independence in Botswana saw a deepening of colonial breeding practices for cattle.

This thesis shifted away from a human-centred paradigm by centring cattle and presenting cattle as experiential subjects with minds, sensory faculties, and emotions. It offered a regional and chronological investigation of core impacts of colonialism, as viewed from an animal-centred paradigm. It argued that British and Dutch colonialism had discrete impacts on cattle, and that over the colonial period cattle were dramatically and experientially affected by colonial processes. In its most significant contribution, and by drawing on diverse evidence, the thesis demonstrated that it is possible to write cattle-centred histories that explore cattle's historical experiences.

Not all impacts of colonialism on cattle were explored. Owing to space constraints, this thesis did not explore the development of dairy industries, nor did it explore the colonial

experiences of cattle in rural settings, such as in the Transkei or Lesotho, for example. Future research can explore these and other impacts, such as the role of cattle raiding in colonial conquest. The methodological approach of centring animals and interpreting historical sources on the basis of an interdisciplinary understanding of animals' experiential capacities opens new vistas for future research. A multi-species conception of colonialism enables historical investigations of other animals, such as goats, donkeys, and sheep, or free-roaming animals. This thesis focused almost exclusively on the colonial period; future research could examine how animals fared in post-colonial contexts. This thesis's epilogue shows how animal histories are connected to pressing contemporary crises.