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Trade and Socioeconomic  
Change in Ovamboland,  
1850–1906

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HARRI SIISKONEN

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## *ABBREVIATIONS*

AA	Auswärtiges Amt
AAKA	Auswärtiges Amt Kolonialabteilung
APD	Antti Piirainen's Diary
APeD	August Pettinen's Diary
ASD	Albin Savola's Diary
AWD	August Wahlberg's Diary
BRMG	Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft
BzDKB	Beilagen zum Deutschen Kolonialblatt
CJAD	Charles John Andersson's Diary
DKB	Deutsches Kolonialblatt
ELC	Emil Liljeblad's Collection
FMS	Finish Missionary Society
FMSA	Finish Missionary Society Archives
GDVD	Gustaf De Vylder's Diary
JAH	Journal of African History
MBC	Minutes of Brother Conferences
MMC	Minutes of Missionary Conferences
MRD	Martti Rautanen's Diary
NAF	National Archives of Finland
NAW	National Archives, Windhoek
PC	Private Collection
RKA	Reichskolonialamt
RMS	Rhenish Missionary Society
SLSa	Suomen Lähetyssanomina
SUL	Stockholm University Library
UEMA	United Evangelical Mission Archives
WLD	William Latham's Diary
ZBU	Zentralbureau des Kaiserlichen Gouvernements
ZStA	Zentrales Staatsarchiv



## *PREFACE*

This study is part of a research project, initiated in 1984, on Cultural and Social Change in Ovamboland, 1870—1915. The project has provided a good foundation for the work of a young researcher. Just the collection of the required dispersed source materials from various archives would have been an impossible task, both technically and economically, for a single researcher.

Current events in Namibia have made this study particularly interesting. During the whole research process Namibia's past, present and future have been tangibly close to the author.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Humanities Committee of the Academy of Finland for the support which made long-term work possible.

In addition to economic support, the multifarious help provided by various institutions and private individuals has been of decisive importance for the progress of my study. Seppo Rytönen deserves special thanks. As the director of the mentioned research project and the supervisor of my work, he has continually contributed to the advancement of my study with his advice. I would like to thank the members of our research group, Martti Eirola and Märta Salokoski, for their valuable cooperation.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Jukka Siikala, who examined my work at the licentiate stage, and Horst Drechsler, who acted as the examiner of the present work in draft form, for their constructive criticism. I thank Heikki Kirkinen, Olli Kaikkonen and Antero Heikkinen for the valuable advice and support I received from them during the various stages of my studies.

Without forgetting all those whose names it is not possible to mention here, I would like to especially thank the following people for helping

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I thank the Finnish Missionary Society and the Rhenish Missionary Society for allowing me access to their invaluable archives.

In addition to the Academy of Finland I owe a debt of gratitude to the following sources of financial support for my study: the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, the Finnish Academy of Science, the Oskar Öflund Foundation, the E.J. Sariola Foundation, the Scholarship Center of the Ministry of Education and the University of Joensuu.

I thank the Finnish Historical Society for accepting my study for publication in its series and for providing funds for its translation. I am grateful to Rauno Endén for his frictionless cooperation during the printing stage of the work. Steven Huxley deserves special thanks for his protracted labor as the translator of my study. He is not responsible for the notes or for any final changes in the text.

Most of all I would like to thank my parents. They have supported and encouraged me at all stages of my studies. I dedicate this study to my father's memory; unfortunately he could not witness its completion.

Joensuu, February 1990

*Harri Siiskonen*



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The Tradition of Research on Namibian History

The problems of Namibia's legal and international political status and the long liberation struggle of the Namibian people have given rise to an extensive literature. A corresponding wave of research has not, however, arisen within the field of Namibian history, even though Namibia has been an object of international interest for decades.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, historical research concerning Namibia has remained meager. One of the main factors hindering historical research is the dispersion of source materials. The written sources of Namibian history were mainly produced by Europeans; a significant part of them are housed abroad, in countries such as the Republic of South Africa, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Democratic Republic of Germany, Finland, Sweden, Portugal and France. The coordinated use of these sources for research is further restricted by a language problem, in that they were usually written in the national languages of the various states in which they are housed.

Historical research on Namibia has mainly been practiced by Europeans. During the last two decades, however, Namibians have been making a growing contribution to the historiography of their country. Namib-

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. T. Eriksen, with R. Moorsom, *The Political Economy of Namibia: an Annotated Critical Bibliography* (enlarged edition, Uddevalla, 1989; first published 1985).

ian research has concentrated on political history from a nationalistic perspective. Its characteristic features have been the criticism of colonialism, and the emphasis of African resistance to colonialism from the beginning of the colonial period to the Namibian peoples' liberation struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Research on pre-World War One Namibian history is marked by a strong emphasis on the period of German colonial control, and on political history. The source materials produced by the German colonial administration have clearly guided the choice of research topics, as has the influence of Europeans in general. Geographically, research has focused on southern and mid-Namibia, where the German hold on the territory it governed was most firm.

The tradition of research on Namibian history is, on the whole, relatively young. Heinrich Vedder's *Das alte Südwestafrika*, published in 1934, can be considered the first historical study of Namibia. Vedder's work emphasizes the role and responsibility of the white race as the carrier of Christian western civilisation. The precolonial African communities are depicted as stereotyped »tribes» engaged in endless wars and battles, and ruled by blood-thirsty despots.

In its approach Vedder's work represents the colonialist research tradition, which includes a manifest ethnical emphasis. Furthermore, it has been characteristic of the colonialist perspective to focus research on the activities of Europeans, with Africans seen as passive objects.<sup>3</sup>

Marxist-oriented research on Namibian history was kindled in the Democratic Republic of Germany, with the opening of the archives of the Imperial German Colonial Office in the mid-1950s. Pioneers in this area were Heinrich Loth and Horst Drechsler. Loth made the first serious attempt to challenge the colonialist interpretation of the same period

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<sup>2</sup> See the following doctoral theses for examples of historical research by Namibians: Z. Ngavirue, *Political Parties and Interest Groups in South West Africa: a Study of Plural Societies*. PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1972; P.H. Katjavivi, *The Rise of Nationalism in Namibia and its International Dimensions*. PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1986, revised and published as *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (Paris, 1988); K. Mbuende, *Namibia — the Broken Shield: Anatomy of Imperialism and Revolution* (Malmö, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> The following works also exemplify the colonialist research tradition: O. Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit* (München, 1955); J.H. Esterhuyse, *South West Africa 1884—1894: the Establishment of German Authority in South West Africa* (Cape Town, 1968); O. von Weber, *Geschichte des Schutzgebietes Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika* (Windhoek, 1985, first published 1973).

advanced by Heinrich Vedder. Where Vedder could see nothing but an endless drama of bloody repression, internecine tribal warfare and the individual despotism of African rulers, Loth's study focuses attention more on what is called »state formation» as one of the main themes of nineteenth century Namibian history. Horst Drechsler's study deals with the history of Namibian political and military resistance to the German conquest and of the shifts in German strategy to overcome it. The main emphasis is on the great uprisings of the Herero and Nama (1904—1907). Characteristic of the Marxist research tradition has been the criticism of colonialism and the emphasis of African resistance.<sup>4</sup>

From the end of the 1960s, the focus of research on Namibian history has been shifting from political history to economic and social history. Such research has concentrated on socioeconomic and political change and the analysis of the causes of them in African communities. The earliest economic and social historical studies focus on the German colonial period.<sup>5</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s interest grew in the era preceding the German colonial period. Among the pioneers of precolonial Namibian social and economic history are Richard Moorsom, Brigitte Lau, Wolfgang Werner and Christian Bochert.<sup>6</sup> Moorsom's study progresses from an outline of the precolonial »subsistence» modes of production and social

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<sup>4</sup> H. Loth, *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika. Zur destruktiven Rolle der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft beim Prozess der Staatsbildung in Südwestafrika, 1842—1893* (Berlin, 1963); H. Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft. Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus, 1884—1915* (Berlin, 1984, first published 1966). See also F. Wege, *Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der Arbeiterklasse in Südwestafrika während der deutschen Kolonialherrschaft*. PhD Thesis, Halle: Martin-Luther-Universität, 1966.

<sup>5</sup> H. Bley, *South West Africa under German Rule 1894—1914* (London, 1971); G.I. Schrank, *German South West Africa: Social and Economic Aspects of its History, 1884—1915*. PhD Thesis, New York University, 1974; R. Gordon, *Mines, Masters and Migrants: Life of a Namibian Mine Compound* (Johannesburg, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> R. Moorsom, *Colonisation and the Proletarianisation of the Working Class in Namibia under German and South African Colonial Rule to 1945*. MA Thesis, University of Sussex, 1973; B. Lau, *The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Namaland, Southern Africa 1800—1870*. MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982, revised and published as *Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time* (Windhoek, 1987); W. Werner, *An Exploratory Investigation into the Mode of Production of the Herero in Pre-Colonial Namibia to ca. 1870*. BA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980; C. Bochert, *The Witboois and the Germans in South West Africa: a Study of their Interaction between 1863 and 1905*. MA Thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1980.

formations to an analysis of incipient class formation and the destructive impact of the »informal colonizers» (traders, missionaries). In analyzing the German and South African period he concentrates on capital formation and labor demand, on the evolution of labor reserves, and on the imposition of the contract labor system in northern Namibia. The main value of Moorsom's study lies in the construction of an analytical framework inspired by underdevelopment theory and historical materialism.

Lau's study concentrates on Namibia's under-researched precolonial history and is based on extensive archival source material. She analyzes early Nama social formation (1800—1820) and the effects of the Oorlam invasion. The main focus is on the rise and fall of the »kommando groups» as a particular pattern of social organization. For his part Werner has applied a marxist analytical framework to precolonial Herero society. His analysis is exploratory for lack of empirical material on the production process, political organization and the dominated classes. Bochert's study focuses on analyzing the interaction between an African »tribe» and the Germans as a colonial power. Geographically all the studies mentioned above concentrate on southern and mid-Namibia.

One indication of the growth of interest in the precolonial era is the collection and publication of the earliest written sources on Namibian history, which has been initiated at the Namibian National Archives. Among these written sources are the diaries and correspondence of missionaries, traders and explorers.<sup>7</sup>

The Namib Desert, running along the Atlantic coast from the Orange River to the Kunene River, isolated the interior areas of Namibia from the coast, keeping them unknown to Europeans until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Due to the lack of written sources, this time has thus far marked the furthest extension of research on the precolonial era in southern and mid-Namibia. In regard to northern Namibia, written sources are available only from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

An examination of the geographical focus of historical writing on Namibia shows that the northern part of the country has remained in the background of research, in spite of the fact that over half of the popu-

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<sup>7</sup> C.H. Hahn, *Tagebücher/Diaries, 1838—1860*, vols. 1—5, ed. by B. Lau (Windhoek, 1984/85); C.J. Andersson, *The Matchless Copper Mine in 1857. The Charles John Andersson Papers*, vol. 1, ed. by B. Lau (Windhoek, 1987a); C.J. Andersson, *Trade and Politics in Central Namibia (1860—1864)*. *The Charles John Andersson Papers*, vol. 2, ed. by B. Lau (Windhoek, 1989).

lation of what is now called Namibia lived during the nineteenth century, and still lives, there.<sup>8</sup> A significant reason for the neglect of research concerning the northern parts of the country is that the pertinent source materials are more dispersed than those on southern and mid-Namibia.

Among the sources produced by the German colonial administration there is very little material available, in contrast to that on southern and mid-Namibia, regarding northern Namibia; this is because the Germans did not succeed during the colonial period in establishing administrative control over the northern parts of Namibia. Moreover, the historical study of African communities has not interested researchers representing the colonialist orientation.

It is largely for these reasons — chiefly because the German interest in the area was minimal — that the northern part of the country is almost entirely excluded from even the most recent studies of the German colonial period in Namibia. Otto von Weber explains this restriction as follows: »[Die Ambo] wohnten ausserhalb der sog. Polizeizone und haben nur selten in der Zeit der deutschen Kolonie eine Rolle gespielt.»<sup>9</sup>

The little historical research which has been done on northern Namibia focuses specifically on the Ovambo communities which settled on the branches of the Cuvelai River, the northernmost of which are situated in southern Angola.<sup>10</sup> Matti Peltola's history (1958) of the Finnish Missionary Society's work in Africa can be described as the first study touching upon the history of the Ovambo communities. He examines questions connected to the progress of missionary work, with reference to economic and social conditions too. In regard to sources the work is rather narrowly grounded, restricted as it is to the material of the Finnish Missionary Society's archives.<sup>11</sup>

The South African E.L.P. Stals, in his doctoral dissertation published in 1969, concentrates on examining the activities of Europeans in Ovamboland before the First World War; his analysis of the relations between Ovambo communities and Europeans remains very superficial. In its research approach the work represents the colonialist tradition. It is main-

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<sup>8</sup> For further details on the development of Namibia's population, see section 2.2.1.

<sup>9</sup> Weber, 1985, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>11</sup> M. Peltola, »Suomen Lähetysseuran Afrikan työn historia», in M. Peltola, T. Saarilahti, P. Wallendorf (eds.), *Sata vuotta suomalaista lähetystyötä 1859—1959*, vol. II (Kuopio, 1958).

ly based upon the source materials produced by German colonial officials.<sup>12</sup>

William Gervase Clarence-Smith's dissertation *Mossamedes and its Hinterland, 1875—1915* (1975) was a significant stride forward for historical research on southern Angola. His study examines the socioeconomic and political effects of Portugal's expanding colonial power on the African peasant communities in southern Angola. Clarence-Smith emphasizes the central political and economic position of the Ovambo among the communities inhabiting southern Angola and northern Namibia. His study is mainly based on the sources produced by Portuguese colonial officials and Roman Catholic missionaries who were active in the area.<sup>13</sup>

Clarence-Smith's and Richard Moorsom's article »Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland, 1845—1915« can be considered the first effort to comprehensively delineate socioeconomic change in Ovambo communities from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War.<sup>14</sup> The article places strong emphasis, like Clarence-Smith's dissertation, on the northernmost Ovambo communities. The article is based on a rather narrow range of sources, and the hypothetical conclusions presented therein cannot be generalized to apply to the whole of Ovamboland.

Christoph Borkowsky and Lothar Berger, both from the Federal Republic of Germany, have applied in their graduate theses the methods and insights of historical materialist analysis to Ovambo society from precolonial period to formal colonial conquest in 1915. The weakness of these theoretically interesting studies is the narrow range of sources.<sup>15</sup>

In René Pélissier's work *Les Guerres Grises: Résistance et révolts en Angola (1845—1941)*, published in 1977, Portuguese colonial policy in

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<sup>12</sup> E.L.P. Stals, »Die Aanraking tussen Blankes en Ovambo's in Suidwes-Afrika 1850—1915«, in *Archives Year Book for South African History*, Year 31, Part II, 1968 (Johannesburg, 1969).

<sup>13</sup> A more analytical version of the doctoral thesis was published under the title *Slaves, Peasants and Capitalists in Southern Angola 1840—1926* (Bristol, 1979).

<sup>14</sup> W.G. Clarence-Smith, R. Moorsom, »Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland, 1845—1915«, *Journal of African History*, XVI, no. 3, 1975, pp. 365—381; a slightly amended version of this article has been published in R. Palmer, M. Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London, 1977), pp. 96—112.

<sup>15</sup> C. Borkowsky, *Zu Einigen Aspekten des Ovambobens*. MA Thesis, Berlin: Freie Universität, 1975; L. Berger, *Der Einfluss der Grenzziehung auf die Ovambo*. MA Thesis, Wiesbaden: Universität Mainz, 1980.



Angola is examined from the time perspective of one century, from the 1840s to the 1940s. This work centers on the African population's resistance to Portugal's colonial control in Angola. It contains considerable factual information on a period in the history of northern Namibia and southern Angola which is poorly covered in the literature.

Finnish research forms a chapter in itself within the tradition of historical research on Ovamboland. It has drawn upon the source materials created as a result of the missionary work of the Finnish Missionary Society in Ovamboland from 1870 onward. This material now forms the most extensive unified body of sources on Ovamboland's history; it has not yet been utilized at all in international historical research on Namibia. Up until 1982 Finnish historical research on Namibia was limited to sporadic graduate theses on Ovamboland. The most important of these is Martti Eirola's thesis which deals with the Ovambo people's resistance to German colonialism up to 1908.<sup>16</sup>

In 1982 a research project was initiated in Finland on »Cultural and Social Change in Ovamboland 1870—1915», which began the systematic collection for research of source materials on Ovamboland history from various archives and private persons.<sup>17</sup> This project resulted in Martti Eirola's and Harri Siiskonen's licentiate dissertations, which were completed in 1987.<sup>18</sup> These studies are clearly based upon a wider range of sources than earlier works concerning Ovamboland; they utilized the source materials produced by colonial officials, missionary societies, ex-

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<sup>16</sup> M. Eirola, *Ambolaisten vastarinta Saksan siirtomaahallintoa vastaan 1885—1908*. MA Thesis, University of Oulu, 1982. The following works also exemplify the Finnish research tradition: R. Huttunen, *Eurooppalaisten siirtomaavaltojen ja suomalaisten lähetyssaarnaajien vaikutus Ambomaan kuninkaanvallan kehitykseen 1900-luvulla toiseen maailmansotaan asti*. MA Thesis, University of Helsinki, 1969; M.L. Kouvalainen, *Ambomaan siirtotyöläisyyden synty*. MA Thesis, University of Helsinki, 1980.

<sup>17</sup> M. Eirola, S. Rytönen, H. Siiskonen, S. Sivonen, *Cultural and Social Change in Ovamboland 1870—1915*. University of Joensuu. Publications of Social and Regional Sciences, no. 39. Joensuu 1983.

<sup>18</sup> M. Eirola, *Ondongan kuningaskunnan vastaus Saksan siirtomaavallan lähestymiseen 1884—1910*. Licentiate Thesis. University of Oulu, 1987; H. Siiskonen, *Kuninkaiden kauppaa eurooppalaisten ehdoilla. Eurooppalaisjohtoinen kaukokauppa ja sen taloudellis-yhteiskunnalliset vaikutukset Ambomaalla, erityisesti Ondongassa, Uukwanyamassa ja Uukwambissa, 1850—1898*. Licentiate Thesis. University of Joensuu, 1987. The most recent university study on Namibian history completed in Finland is the graduate thesis of the Namibian F.N. Williams, *Migration and Settlement in Ovamboland 1600—1900*. MA Thesis, University of Joensuu, 1988.

plorers and traders.

All in all, research on pre-World War One Namibian history has, up until recent times, focused on political history and the German colonial period. Moreover, a primary feature of this research is its geographical focus on southern and mid-Namibia, where Europeans were most active. Only from the 1970s onward has the interest of researchers been shifting from political history to economic and social history, to the precolonial era and to the use of hitherto unutilized groups of sources. Within the small field of research on Ovamboland, interest in the precolonial period has just begun to awaken.

## 1.2. The Aim of this Study

The etymology of the word »Ovambo» has been of interest to the explorers, missionaries and researchers who have written about the Ovambo communities. Agreement has been reached that the word »Ovambo» originated among the Herero, whence it entered general usage.<sup>19</sup> According to Williams' theory, the origin of the word »Ovambo» is rooted in the close ethnic and linguistic kinship of the Ovambo and the Wambu during the period of Bantu expansion. Williams holds that the origin of the word »Ovambo» is in the word »Ovawambu» (people of Wambu), the name by which the Herero began to call the Ovambo, and from which the currently used name was derived.<sup>20</sup>

The term »Ovamboland» can be understood in various ways, in regard to both geography and content. At present the word »Ovambo» (formerly »Ovamboland») signifies an administrative area originating in the German colonial period. The Germans gave the reservation which they created in the northern part of South West Africa at the beginning of this century the name »Amboland».<sup>21</sup> The term »Ovamboland (Amboland») was not a German invention, it became established earlier through use by traders and missionaries.

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<sup>19</sup> E.g. Schinz, 1891, pp. 271—272; Loeb, 1962, pp. 372; Bruwer, 1966, p. 22; Estermann, 1976, p. 55; Eirola, 1987, pp. 38—42.

<sup>20</sup> For the etymology of the word »Ovambo» and Williams' research method, see Williams, 1988, pp. 58—63.

<sup>21</sup> DKB 15 April 1906, pp. 222—223; Erste Beilage zur Deutsch-Südwestafrikanischen Zeitung 14 February 1906.



Under the rule of the Republic of South Africa ethnicity was more noticeably linked to the term »Ovamboland» than before. In particular, ethnicity was strongly emphasized by the Odendaal Commission, appointed by the South African Government in 1962, in its report of 1963. The report proposed that Namibia be divided, following the South African apartheid system, into eleven mini-states, one for whites and ten for blacks, corresponding to the different ethnic divisions within the population.<sup>22</sup> The implementation of the Odendaal Plan began in 1968, when the South African Parliament passed the Development of Self-Government for Native Nations in South West Africa Act. The Act provided for the formation of »native nations» to be called Hereroland, Ovamboland, etc.<sup>23</sup>

In this study the term »Ovamboland» is understood in a different, and geographically broader, sense than in the terminology of the colonial masters. In explaining the points of departure for this study it must first of all be emphasized that the Ovambo communities are not examined as ethnic units, but rather as political and economic units.

Ovamboland, as the subject of this study, is geographically situated between the Etosha Pan and the Kunene and Okavango Rivers. The term »Ovamboland» is used here, in a sense which is becoming increasingly common, to mean the area inhabited by the autonomous Ovambo communities, including the pasture and hunting lands belonging to the Ovambo sphere of interest.

The area inhabited by the Ovambo communities was not confined within the northern border of South West Africa set by Germany; important Ovambo communities were situated on the Angolan side, as in the case of the main part of Uukwanyama, the area's most populous community. The border between Portuguese Angola and German South West Africa had no meaning at all for the Ovambo communities before the mid-1890s. Thus the term »Ovamboland» signifies an area which is considerably broader than today's administrative district of Owambo.<sup>24</sup>

In this study the African peoples of Namibia are referred to by their

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<sup>22</sup> Vilakazi, 1967, pp. 222—241; Appendix 3.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Katjavivi, 1986, pp. 169—174; Mbuende, 1986, pp. 91—94; Tötemeyer, 1978, pp. 49—53.

<sup>24</sup> According to the current grammar of Ndonga, the most widely spoken language of northern Namibia, Ovamboland, should be called Wamboland, and its inhabitants the Wambo; see T. Tirronen, *Ndonga-English Dictionary* (Oniipa, 1986), pp. 472—473.

historical names, such as the «Herero» and the «Nama». The historical use of such terms is not to be confused with the apartheid usage of them. «South West Africa» and «German South West Africa», terms which became common usage during the period under study, are used to designate the area of present-day Namibia in its historical context.

The administrative district of Owambo, situated in northern Namibia, has been the most important area for the recruitment of migrant labor in Namibia ever since the early 1910s.<sup>25</sup> The structure of production which took shape at the beginning of this century still directs the economy of Ovamboland at present. It is based on a household economy combining agriculture and livestock herding, supplemented by migrant laboring and a little trade. One of the central aims of this study is to determine what kinds of economic, political, social and cultural changes formed the basic elements of Ovamboland's present economy.

The latter half of the nineteenth century can be characterized as a period of economic and political transition within the African communities of Namibia and southern Angola. During that time the communities of this region were gradually integrated into the world economy and subordinated to European colonial control. Until mid-century the minimal activity of European traders and hunters in southwestern Africa was restricted to the vicinity of the coastal harbors of Mossamedes and Walvis Bay. The interest of the European colonial powers in the interior regions of Namibia and southern Angola actually awoke only in the 1870s and 1880s.

Because of their remote location in relation to the coastal harbors, the Ovambo communities were effectively isolated from the influence of Europeans longer than their close African neighbors. The mid-nineteenth century visits of explorers and traders were not, however, followed by an immediate onrush of traders into the area. During the whole period under study the amount of Europeans in Ovamboland remained relatively small and consisted chiefly of individual small-scale traders and missionaries.

The Ovambo communities thus succeeded in staying outside of German and Portuguese colonial control longer than their African neighbors living to the south and to the north. The interest of colonial officials in the Ovambo communities increased from the beginning of the 1890s onward; but concrete efforts to subject the Ovambo communities

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<sup>25</sup> Moorsom, 1977, pp. 52—87.

to colonial control were initiated only in the beginning of the twentieth century. The Germans tried to isolate Ovamboland from the rest of South West Africa by turning it into a reservation during the great uprisings of the Herero and Nama (1904—1907). Ovamboland was pacified by forbidding the entrance of Europeans therein without permission. For its part, the aim of the Portuguese colonial government was the forceful subjection of the Ovambo communities situated in Angola. The activation of the colonial powers' domination in the middle of the first decade of the 1900s signified a striking political and socioeconomic turning point in the history of the Ovambo communities.

For the economy of the Ovambo communities the period extending from the middle of the nineteenth century to 1906 signified gradual integration into the world economy.<sup>26</sup> A special feature of this integration process was that integration did not occur under the guidance of colonial government: decision making remained in the hands of the Ovambo communities during the whole period under consideration.

In the present work the study of the integration of the Ovambo communities into the world economy from the perspective of trade is approached by analyzing the relationship of trade to other factors which directed integration, particularly the relationship between expanding trade connections and socioeconomic change in the Ovambo communities. In this regard it is important to emphasize that neither the Ovambo communities, nor African communities in general, were isolated or static before linkage to the world economy. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch emphasizes two features characteristic of precolonial African economy: population mobility and long-distance trade.<sup>27</sup>

The extensive complex of problems confronted in the analysis of trade, in particular long-distance trade, as an element of socioeconomic change in Ovambo communities is approached here from two different levels: the first level concerns how the expansion of trade connections affected the external political and economic status of the Ovambo communities in relation to other African communities; the second level concerns how

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<sup>26</sup> For the involvement of African economies in the world economy, see: I. Wallerstein, «The Three Stages of African Involvement in the World-Economy», in P.C.W. Gutkind, I. Wallerstein (eds.), *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa* (Beverly Hills, 1976); I. Wallerstein, «The Colonial Era in Africa: Changes in the Social Structure», in P. Duignan, L.H. Gann (eds.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870—1960*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1970).

<sup>27</sup> Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1977, pp. 79—81, 88.

expanded trade affected the Ovambo communities' internal economic, political and social structures from the perspective of these communities' elites and households.

The study is divided into three parts. The aim of the first section is to assess how integrated the flood plain of the Cuvelai River — the home of the Ovambo communities — was as an economic region. An economic region is defined as a geographical unit which, on the basis of its economic and social activities and the mutual interaction of the members of its population, forms an integrated whole differing from neighboring regions.

The work begins with an examination of the adaptation of the Ovambo communities to the physical environment; this provides the base for approaching economic structures and the mechanisms of political and economic decision making. Among the questions associated with economy, trade and its role in the Ovambo communities in the middle of the nineteenth century is selected for special examination. On the basis of knowledge of trade relations and the structure of trade, an analysis of, among other things, the relations of economic and political power between the Ovambo communities and their level of technology will be carried out. In turn, the determination of the trade connections established by the Ovambo communities with other African communities makes it possible to analyze their economic and political status in relation to their African neighbors.

The second part of the study examines trade in Ovamboland as organized by Europeans, particularly its extent, range of products and product distribution. The examination from a broad perspective of the factors directing the business transactions and activities of Europeans — such as colonial policy — in Ovamboland is necessary in order to determine the status of the Ovambo communities as an object of European business activity and to analyze the effects of expanding trade on the development of the Ovambo communities' political and economic relations in regard to other surrounding African communities.

The third part of the study analyzes the significance of European commercial activity as an element of socioeconomic change during half a century. This broad problem is approached from two levels. Firstly, the effect of the expansion of trade connections on the internal development of the Ovambo communities is examined. For example, it is asked how expanded trade affected Ovamboland's natural resources, the communities' internal political and social relations, economy and the structure of production as well as the trade and political relations and the balance

of power between communities. The second important question concerning this problem is how the expansion of trade affected the Ovambo communities' economic and political status in relation to their African neighbors.

## 1.3. Source Materials

### 1.3.1. Archive Sources

The sources used in this study are divided, according to their chief features, into three main categories: archive sources, published primary sources and secondary sources. The written source materials from the period under study are characterized by their European origin.

The archive sources used are further divided into three groups: those produced by missionaries, traders and explorers and colonial officials.

The archives of the Finnish Missionary Society and the Rhenish Missionary Society are drawn upon for source materials produced in connection with missionary work. The most comprehensive archive on the pre-World War One history of the Ovambo communities is that of the Finnish Missionary Society. The arrival of Finnish missionaries in Ovamboland in July of 1870 initiated the thereafter uninterrupted production of source materials concerning the subject.

Among the Finnish Missionary Society Archive's most informative collections for the study of the economic and social conditions of Ovamboland are the letters of missionaries to the mission director, the minutes of missionary conferences and the private collections of missionaries. Socioeconomic matters often arose, and even had a dominant position, in the correspondence and conferences of missionaries. At times they all too eagerly and crudely reported the behavior and business activity of European traders in Ovamboland. The missionaries' letters did not concentrate exclusively on current events, but also sometimes gave deeper consideration to the background of events.

In addition to official kinds of material (correspondence, reports and minutes) another important source-group in the Finnish Missionary Society Archive consists of the personal collections of missionaries. They are composed of diaries, correspondence, manuscripts, photographs and other such material. The most fruitful collections for this study are those

of Martti Rautanen, August Pettinen, Kalle Koivu and Albin Savola. The missionaries' diaries are the most valuable part of these collections for historical research.

The most extensive and informative of these diaries is that of Martti Rautanen.<sup>28</sup> Rautanen began keeping a diary immediately upon arrival in South West Africa, but up until 1885 the entries therein remained intermittent. Rautanen's diary became regular and exact, when he was appointed director of the Finnish Missionary Society's South West Africa missionary field. He did not, however, always record events daily, as shown by occasional intervals of several days between his diary entries.

Rautanen's diary, like the other diaries, deals with the background of events in greater detail and depth than the missionaries' letters to the mission director. It contains plentiful information on economic and social matters. Moreover, Rautanen's diary is accessible to those who understand no Finnish, since he wrote it in German from the beginning of the 1870s onward.

The collections of August Pettinen, Albin Savola and Kalle Koivu provide this study with plentiful material on economic and social conditions along with ethnographical observations. August Pettinen's diary is especially valuable for the precise meteorological observations he collected therein for German colonial officials.

The Finnish Missionary Society's source materials on Ondonga support and confirm the materials produced by the missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society working in Uukwanyama since 1891. The most fruitful part of the source materials of this Society's archive, which is located in Wuppertal-Barmen, the Federal Republic of Germany, is, as with the Finnish material, composed of the quarterly reports of the mission stations, letters to the mission director, the minutes of the missionaries' conferences and the missionaries' personal collections.

Like the Finnish missionaries, the missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society actively observed Uukwanyama's economic and political conditions and its relationship to other Ovambo communities and its more distant African neighbors. Although the Rhenish Missionary Society initiated missionary work in Uukwanyama only at the end of the period under study here, the little ethnographical material collected by the missionary Wulfhorst contains information on the history of the Kwanyama.

Of the personal collections of the Rhenish Missionary Society, use is

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<sup>28</sup> Part of Rautanen's diaries are located in the Finnish National Archives, Helsinki.



made here of the diaries of Hugo Hahn, especially from his exploratory journeys to Ovamboland in 1857 and 1866. During his second exploratory journey, while charting the possibilities for opening a mission field, Hahn studied the area's economic and social situation. Hahn's diaries have been published, and they are used for research here primarily in the printed form. There is a copy of Hugo Hahn's diary from his Ovamboland journey of 1866 in the Finnish Missionary Society Archive.

In addition to the Finnish and Rhenish Missionary Societies, the Catholic missionary organization La Congrégation du Saint Esprit carried out missionary work in southern Angola. From the 1890s onward, Catholics planned the establishment of mission stations among the northernmost Ovambo communities. Before the First World War they succeeded in establishing two mission stations in Angolan Ovamboland; actual Catholic missionary work, however, remained minimal during the period under study.<sup>29</sup> In this study the archive sources of Le Congrégation du Saint Esprit are not drawn upon directly; they are utilized through the medium of Clarence-Smith's dissertation.<sup>30</sup>

In evaluating the validity and reliability of the materials produced in connection with missionary work, it can be said that its good sides are: firstly, that the missionaries personally observed events close-up and secondly, that their observations were continuous. For example, the missionary Martti Rautanen, who was among the first missionaries to arrive in 1870, was active in Ovamboland, except during brief vacations, until his death in 1926.<sup>31</sup> The missionaries' long-term observations of events help delineate the structural changes which occurred in the Ovambo communities.

Another positive aspect of the missionaries' long-term residence in the area is that they gradually learned how to better know the economic and political decision-making system of the Ovambo communities and to understand their culture. The reliability of the missionaries' observations was clearly improved by learning the language, and by an increased familiarity with the communities.

Nevertheless, the use of the materials produced by the missionaries is beset by extensive problems. These materials excellently reveal, among other things, the great divergence between the moral worlds of the mis-

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<sup>29</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 251.

<sup>30</sup> See above, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> For the missionary Martti Rautanen's life and work, see e.g. A. Saarisalo, *Etelänristin mies Martti Rautanen* (Porvoo, 1971).

sionaries and the Ovambo, and well show the missionaries' attitudes toward the object of their missionary work. Eurocentricity and the prevalence of the biases linked to missionary work are characteristic features of the source materials produced by the missionaries.

Furthermore, in utilizing the source materials produced by the missionaries, it must be remembered that, from the beginning of the 1870s, their work concentrated on two communities, those of the Kwanyama and the Ndonga. This does not, however, mean that the Finns' observations were restricted solely to Ondonga; on trading trips and visits the missionaries actively procured information concerning the other communities as well. They also obtained second hand knowledge from the Ndonga, and from traders and hunters travelling in the region. At best they were informed concerning events in Uukwambi, Uukwanyama and Ongandjera, which were either situated close to Ondonga or were economically and politically strong. There is less information among the materials produced by both the Finnish and German missionaries on the communities situated nearby the eastern bank of the Kunene River.

In addition to the materials produced in connection with missionary work, another important group of archive sources is formed by the personal collections of explorers and traders. The personal collections of the traders and explorers who were active in South West Africa are for the most part located in the Namibian National Archives at Windhoek. The most important of these in regard to the history of Ovamboland is the collection, in particular the diary and correspondence therein, of the explorer and wholesaler Charles John Andersson.

Andersson became South West Africa's leading trader in the 1860s; his diary contains plentiful information on the economy of African communities, South West African political conditions and especially the business affairs of Europeans. Andersson's collection is of primary importance in the examination of the early links of the Ovambo communities with European traders, and the socioeconomic and political situation of the Ovambo communities in the mid-nineteenth century.

The personal collection of William Chapman offers plentiful information on the economic and political conditions not only of Ovamboland, but also of southern Angola. Chapman, who arrived at Walvis Bay in 1874, traded in South West Africa during the whole period under study, although from the 1890s onward his business activity was centered in southern Angola. When using Chapman's collection as a source it must be remembered that it is composed of memoirs which he wrote on the basis of his notes and experiences.



One more personal collection which should be mentioned because of its fruitfulness for the present study is that, as compiled by J. von Moltke, of W.B. de Witt, who was a trader in South West Africa from the beginning of the 1880s. De Witt's memoirs contain extensive information on the economic and political conditions of South West Africa during the mid-1880s. The personal collections of many other traders, explorers and missionaries who worked in southwestern Africa have been collected in the Namibian National Archives.

In addition to the Namibian National Archives, the manuscript collections of the Stockholm University Library, in Sweden, house materials produced by the early explorers and traders which are of value for the present study. During the whole period under study, the Swedes played an active role in South West Africa as explorers and traders. One of the earliest written sources used for this study is the travel report of Charles John Andersson to the Swedish Royal Academy of Science concerning, among other things, his exploratory expedition to Ovamboland in 1851. Another informative personal collection is the diary of Johan August Wahlberg, a natural scientist who was killed at Lake Ngami in 1856. The third informative personal collection located in Sweden is composed of the trader Gustaf De Vylder's diary and the articles he sent to the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*.

The same methods of source criticism must be applied to the materials produced by traders and explorers as to the sources engendered by missionary work. These materials vary in nature from that produced by the missionaries in that the traders and explorers did not permanently reside in the Ovambo communities, but visited them only occasionally or at regular intervals. The traders' observations are typically cross section views of the political and economic conditions of the Ovambo communities. The comparative and parallel use of the materials produced by traders and explorers and that produced by missionaries improves the possibility for generalization in the examination of economic and social change in Ovambo communities.

The source materials produced by missionaries, traders and explorers clearly differs in character and content from that of the colonial administration. This study utilizes the archive of the German South West African colonial administration in the Namibian National Archives. This archival unit is composed of documents primarily from the central administration (the governor's council), and secondarily from regional government (district councils).

Of the sources produced by colonial officials the most fruitful for this

study are: acts dealing with the smuggling of arms and ammunition, the travel reports of colonial officials concerning their journeys to the northern parts of South West Africa, acts dealing with the political and economic conditions of Portuguese Angola and the annual reports of district commanders.

Furthermore, the Imperial German Colonial Office Archive (Reichskolonialamt) in the Central State Archives at Potsdam, in the German Democratic Republic, has been helpful. The most fruitful collections therein for this study are documents dealing with arms and ammunition smuggling, and with the affairs of companies which were active in South West Africa.

In comparison to the sources produced by missionaries and traders, the source materials produced by colonial officials are superficial and limited in quantity. During the period under study neither the Portuguese, nor the Germans, established the machinery of colonial administration in Ovamboland; the trips of colonial officials to Ovamboland were limited to brief irregular visits. The material produced by colonial officials focuses on the end of the period under study, because the interest of both the Germans and the Portuguese in the Ovambo communities awoke only in the 1890s.

As a historical source the value of the materials produced by colonial officials varies greatly. For this study the travel reports of colonial officials are the most helpful. They contain delineations of the economic and political conditions of the Ovambo communities and the plans of the German colonial officials in regard to the Ovambo communities. In dealing with the Ovambo communities colonial officials were highly dependent on missionaries, because they did not know the local languages and they used mission stations as bases. Indeed, the influence of missionaries is visible in many of the colonial officials' reports. Colonial officials often used missionaries as observers, asking them to provide information for their reports.

As with its German counterpart, the interest of the Portuguese colonial administration in the Ovambo communities situated in Angola increased after the mid-1890s. The source materials of Portuguese officials concerning southern Angola are, according to W.G. Clarence-Smith, scanty and scattered.<sup>32</sup> In examining the status of the northern Ovambo communities in the Portuguese colonial policy on Angola this study

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<sup>32</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 19—21.

depends primarily on Clarence-Smith's dissertation, *Mossamedes and its Hinterland, 1875—1915* (1975), and Pélissier's study of African resistance to the Portuguese colonial administration, *Les Guerres Grises* (1977). A third source on conditions in southern Angola are the reports of German colonial officials on the political and economic situation in Portuguese Angola.

### 1.3.2. Published Primary Sources

Alongside of archive sources, published primary sources — travel literature, missionary literature and biographies — are the second important class of sources. The published travel diaries and reports of explorers, traders, and hunters are classified as travel literature. The importance of travel literature as a source increases particularly in the examination of the socioeconomic and political conditions of the Ovambo communities before the arrival of Finnish missionaries in 1870.

Among the earliest written sources on the Ovambo communities is the travel report of the English explorer Francis Galton from 1853, and the travel report of his Swedish fellow traveler Charles John Andersson published in 1856.<sup>33</sup> Both of these reports, as well as Andersson's travel report on his exploratory expedition to the Okavango River at the end of the 1850s, contain abundant information on the economic and political conditions of Ovamboland.<sup>34</sup>

Although he himself did not travel south of the Kunene River, the Hungarian Ladislaus Magyar mentioned the northern Ovambo communities, in particular Uukwanyama, in his reports on his exploratory expeditions in southern Angola in the 1850s. Magyar's observations on Ovamboland are based on the second hand knowledge he gathered from the African population.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> F. Galton, *The Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (London, 1853); C.J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami: or, Explorations and Discoveries, during Four Years' Wanderings in the Wilds of South-Western Africa*, (Cape Town, 1987, reprint of 1856 edition).

<sup>34</sup> C.J. Andersson, *The Okavango River: a Narrative of Travel, Exploration and Adventure*, (Cape Town, 1968, reprint of 1861 edition).

<sup>35</sup> L. Magyar, »Die Reisen von Ladislaus Magyar in Südafrika«, ed. by A. Petermann, *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* (Gotha, 1857); L. Magyar, *Reisen in Südafrika in den Jahren 1849 bis 1857* (Leipzig, 1859).

In addition to these earlier travel reports, one can cite *Minnen från en flerårig vistelse i Sydvestra Afrika* (1872), the travel report of Captain T.G. Een, who worked for the trader Andersson; because of the language barrier, this work has not been used in international research. Additionally, the following travel reports serve as important sources: the trader James Chapman's broad two-part account of his journeys in South West and southern Africa during the years 1849—1863, and the travel report of the trader Gerald McKiernan, which contains plentiful information on the economic and political conditions of southwestern Africa in the 1870s.

The most thorough treatment of the natural environment and population of Ovamboland, as well as the region's economic and social conditions, is the natural scientist Hans Schinz's account, published in 1891, of his exploratory expedition in German South West Africa in the mid-1880s. Of the accounts of journeys to Ovambo communities from the end of the period under study, mention can be made of those of the Swedes Peter Möller and Eberhard Rosenblad; the latter, entitled *Äventyr i Sydvästafrika* (1924), has not been utilized as a source in historical studies of Namibia or Angola.

This study does not, however, draw solely upon travel literature dealing with the Ovambo communities. An effort has been made to utilize all of the travel literature concerning southwestern Africa. This approach is justified, because for the study of the economic and social conditions of South West Africa in the mid-nineteenth century there are no other literary sources available than travel reports and the materials produced by missionaries.

The image conveyed by individual travel accounts of the economic and social conditions of African communities is highly determined by the time of visit. The greatest problems in the use of travel reports as sources are the short duration of visits, the little or nonexistent knowledge possessed by explorers, traders and hunters on African culture and lack of knowledge of languages. Thus travel reports vary greatly in regard to their quality and their value as sources. By means of comparative source criticism, however, plenty of useful information can be obtained from travel reports.

Alongside of travel reports, another important group of published primary sources is composed of the articles and general presentations written by missionaries on the Ovambo communities with the intention of furthering interest in missionary work in Finland. They usually describe the natural environment and people of Ovamboland, as well as its eco-

conomic and political conditions. The earliest of such descriptions was a four-booklet series, published from 1877 to 1880, by Pietari Kurvinen on his »first seven years as a missionary, or joy and sorrow from Africa«.

The Finnish Missionary Society's most important literary channel for the advancement of missionary work in Finland was the Society's own paper, *Suomen Lähetyssanomia*; it was here that most of the articles written by missionaries were published. *Suomen Lähetyssanomia* is drawn upon in this study very selectively since it was primarily composed of the letters and quarterly reports of missionaries to the mission director, which are utilized in their original form. Likewise, the newspaper *Suomalainen* published a broad series of ethnographic articles on Ondonga by August Pettinen from 1889 to 1895.

During the first two decades of the present century, broad general ethnographical presentations of the Ovambo communities were written. Four of them are mentioned here: Hermann Tönjes' *Ovamboland. Land, Leute, Mission. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seinen grössten Stammes Oukuanjama* (1911); Karl Sckär's unpublished manuscript *Ovamboland. Historisches, Ethnographisches, Animismus*;<sup>36</sup> Albin Savola's *Hamin majoissa* (1916) and; Kalle Koivu's *Amboneekerin jokapäiväinen leipä. Kuvauksia ja mietteitä Ambokansan taloudellisista oloista* (1925). Up until the 1920s general ethnographical presentations of the Ovambo communities were almost exclusively written by missionaries.

In these works the missionaries sought both to advance missionary work and to disseminate information concerning the Ovambo communities. These presentations remain very Eurocentric in character, in spite of the increased knowledge of Ovambo culture they display in relation to the missionaries' earlier descriptions. The general presentations by Germans focus on Uukwanyama, while the Finnish ones concentrate on Ondonga.

In the examination of the materials published by missionaries as a whole, one must take into consideration to whom these writings were directed and the specific purpose of each one of them. For example, in articles written with the intention of encouraging missionary work the cultural, economic and social condition of the Ovambo communities was usually described with a somber tone.

A third group of published primary sources is formed by the biographies of traders and explorers. The most valuable of these as a source

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<sup>36</sup> The manuscript was completed in 1916.

for this study, although it is not of very high quality, is Andrew E. Waerneman's biography of the trader Axel Wilhelm Eriksson entitled *Vite hövdingen* (1955). After the death of Andersson (1867) Eriksson rose to become South West Africa's leading trader, a position which he retained up until the end of the 1880s.

Waerneman's biography is based chiefly on the letters sent by Eriksson to Sweden, in which he related his activities. In addition to Waerneman's biography, which has thus far remained unutilized for research, there are no other known written sources concerning Axel Eriksson.

A comparison of archive sources to published primary sources shows that the most important producers of both categories were identical, i.e. explorers, missionaries and traders. The greatest factor separating these two categories lays in the purpose for which the sources contained therein were created. For example, in their private diaries and correspondence the missionaries often reflected on the negative aspects of missionary work while in their public writings there is a tendency to promote the missionary cause.

The scatteredness of source materials sets many restrictions on the accomplishment of research. For example, it is not possible here to include a statistical analysis in the study of the extent of trade since ready statistics are unavailable; nor is it possible to obtain comparable statistics from the materials used. The written materials strongly focus on three Ovambo communities: Ondonga, Uukwambi and Uukwanyama. This shows that European activity was centered where the source materials were produced.

There is a danger in the use of source materials which are scattered and based on the experience of Europeans during brief visits, in that by generalizing with the support of only one source group the source-base remains narrow. An effort has been made here to eliminate this problem through the parallel and comparative use of materials produced by different groups of observers. The disadvantage of this approach is the cumbersome nature of the source citation apparatus it requires. Generalization is, however, necessary in the effort to analyze the historical structure of the relationship of trade to socioeconomic change in the Ovambo communities.



## 2. The Relation between the Physical Environment and Settlement in the Etosha Flood Plain Region in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

### 2.1. The Physical Environment

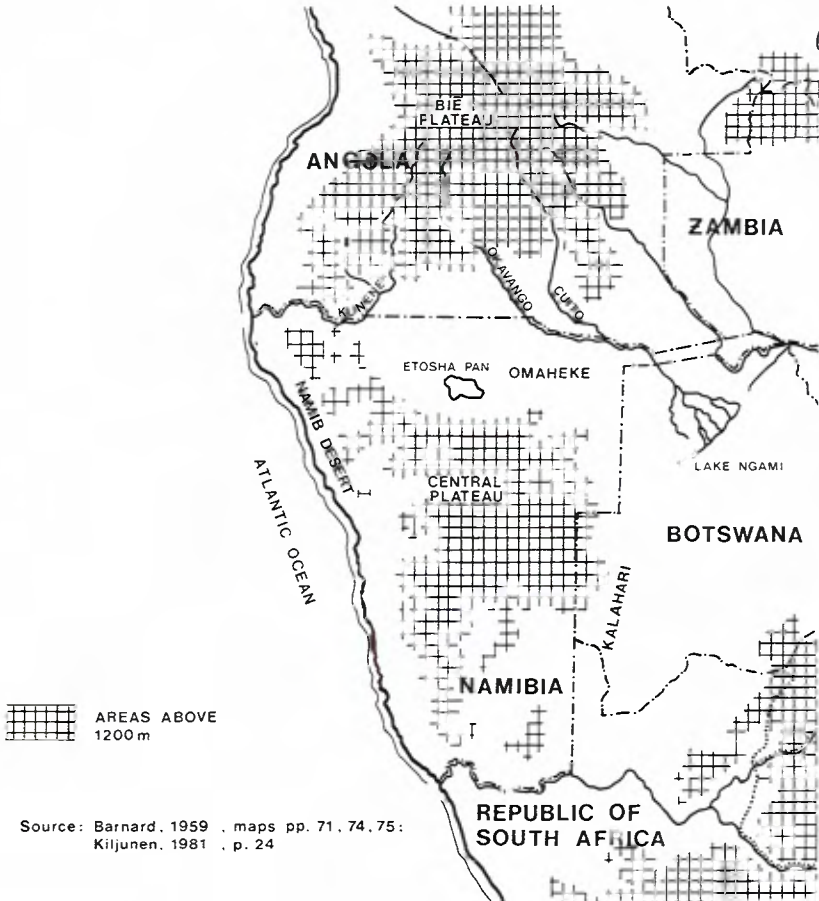
The estimated population of Namibia in 1988 was 1,252,000, 623,000 (49.8%) of which lived in the administrative district of Owambo, a region composing less than one tenth of the country's total surface area (823,144 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>1</sup> The strong concentration of Namibia's population in the northern part of the country is not the result of settlement in recent decades: the earliest explorers to visit Ondonga, Ovamboland's southernmost community, noted how exceptional this region was, in comparison to southern and mid-Namibia, in regard to population density, economic structure, and ecological conditions:

We pushed through thick thorns the whole time, and had begun to disbelieve in Ondonga, when quite of a sudden the bushes ceased: we emerged out of them, and the charming corn country of the Ovambo lay yellow and broad as a sea before us. Fine dense timber-trees, and innumerable palms of all sizes, were scattered over it; part was bare for pasturage, part was thickly covered with high corn stubble; palisadings, each of which enclosed a homestead, were scattered everywhere over the country.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SWA/Namibia today, 1988, p. 15; van der Merwe, 1983, map 40.

<sup>2</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 205.



Map 1. *The topography of southwestern Africa.*

The following delineation of ecological conditions is based primarily on the results of research concerning the present situation. The critical use of such research in combination with historical sources makes it possible to outline the main features of the ecological conditions of South West Africa, and the changes they underwent, during the period under study.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Informative historical sources in considering ecological questions are, for example traders', explorers' and missionaries' travel accounts, diaries, and correspon-



The flood plain of the Etosha Pan clearly differs topographically and geographically from southern and mid-Namibia and southern Angola. The Etosha Pan flood plain, bordered by mountain plateaus, two perennial rivers — the Kunene and the Okavango — and the Omaheke Desert, forms a uniform plateau varying in altitude between approximately 1,100 and 1,200 meters. The earth's surface gradually ascends northwards from the Etosha Pan. The most important waterway of the Etosha Pan flood plain is the periodically flowing Cuvelai River. This river's sources are nearly 1,500 meters above sea level. The differences in height along the east-west axis are minimal.<sup>4</sup>

Next, the environment of the Cuvelai River will be dealt with in particular. The Cuvelai, the most important river of the Etosha Pan flood plain, branches into numerous flood channels, or oshanas, which run from the north-northwest to the south-southeast. Oshanas are composed of sand covered by vegetation and can even be up to three kilometers wide. Periodically they are covered by water, depending on how much it rains.<sup>5</sup>

The oshanas have remained shallow due to minimal erosion. Water flows through them slowly, causing abundant mud formation. During the rainy season they appear as interior bodies of water, while during the dry season their root-works or grey-black spots clearly distinguish them from their surroundings.<sup>6</sup>

The average annual rainfall in the Cuvelai River flood plain ranges from 500 mm in the south to about 650 mm in the north. The northern

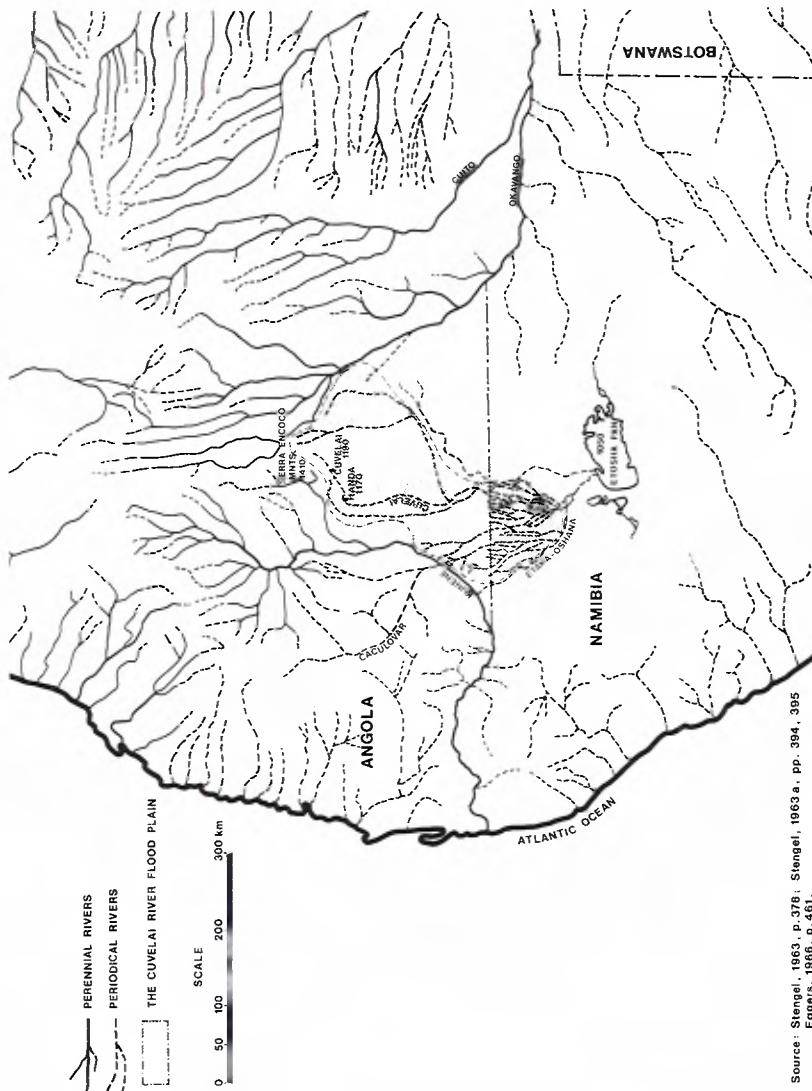
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dence. Other informative sources are colonial authorities' travel reports and meteorological observations. The systematic collection of meteorological observations in Namibia was begun at Rehoboth, a mission station of the Rhenish Missionary Society in mid-Namibia, in 1883. In Ovamboland the collection of meteorological observations was begun in 1885 by Finnish missionaries, see: Stengel, 1966, p. 441; Writings and Notes by August Pettinen, Hp XXIV:2, FMSA.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the topography of southwestern Africa with special reference to northern Namibia and southern Angola: e.g. van der Merwe, 1983, maps 5—6; Leser, 1976, pp. 27—37; Wellington, 1967, pp. 1—27; Kuder, 1971, pp. 1—25, 180—190; Barnard, 1959, pp. 66—86; Stengel, 1963, pp 368—380. Cf. historical sources dealing with the topographical landscape: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 May 1890; Schinz, 1891, pp. 203—270; Björklund, 1891, pp. 248—255; Baum, 1903, pp. 148—149; Marquardsen, 1920, pp. 47—57; Seiner, 1911, pp. 336—341; Seiner, 1913, pp. 227—313.

<sup>5</sup> Stengel, 1963, pp. 373—374; Elonheimo, 1967, pp. 16—17.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Pettinen's description of the hydrology of the Cuvelai River flood plain in the early 1890s: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 14 July 1890.



Source: Stengel, 1963, p. 378; Stengel, 1963 a, pp. 394, 395  
 Eggers, 1966, p. 461.

Map 2. *The Cuvetlai River flood plain*

part of the region receives the most abundant rainfall while the south-west corner gets the least.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest rainfall in present day Namibia is in the areas of Caprivi, Kavango, Otavi and the Cuvelai River flood plain. In these areas the average annual rainfall approaches or exceeds 500 mm, while the mean annual rainfall in Namibia is only 274 mm.<sup>8</sup>

Great annual and regional variations in rainfall are characteristic of the climate. In the Cuvelai River flood plain, as in the rest of Namibia, eighty percent of the average annual rainfall occurs in the four months between December and March. The rainy season normally begins in November and ends in April, after which a nearly rainless dry season begins.<sup>9</sup>

Small differences in the distribution of average annual rainfall can be observed between the various regions of the Cuvelai River flood plain. The north still receives plenty of rain in April, while in the southern areas rain already begins to be scarce. The rainy season also begins earlier in the north.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to rain, the water conditions of the Cuvelai River flood plain are dependent on annual floods.<sup>11</sup> The magnitude of the floods is dependent on the rainfall of the Benguela Highlands. Normally the floods begin in the northern parts of the region in January or February, while in the southern areas the floodwater usually arrives only in February. During a year of good rainfall the floodwater may still be found in the hollows in June; during a year of little rain, however, the floods remain brief, or do not come at all.<sup>12</sup>

The floods most benefit the mid-lowland area and the northern parts of the Cuvelai River flood plain; they are of less value for the region's

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<sup>7</sup> van der Merwe, 1983, map 10; Leser, 1976, pp. 38—43; Kuder, 1971, pp. 180—181, 184—185; Stengel, 1963, p. 369. Cf. the pioneer studies in this field: Heidke, 1919, pp. 35—186; Nitsche, 1913, p. 54. See also: Marquardsen, 1920, p. 51; Almeida, 1912, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> Stengel, 1966, pp. 5—6; Leser, 1976, pp. 38—39; van der Merwe, 1983, map 10.

<sup>9</sup> van der Merwe, 1983, maps 11—14; Leser, 1976, pp. 42—43. Cf. Heidke, 1919, pp. 91—92, 179; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 17 July 1890.

<sup>10</sup> Kuder, 1971, p. 16. Cf. Nitsche, 1913, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> FAO, 1981, pp. 20—21; Stengel, 1963, p. 369. Cf. Pettinen's description of the flood season in Ovamboland: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 14 July 1890.

<sup>12</sup> For the yearly variation in flooding, see: Stengel, 1963, pp. 372—377; Nitsche, 1913a, pp. 216—217; Tönjes, 1911, p. 18; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 104—105; Ickler to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 6 May 1898, B/c II:68, UEMA.

western parts. The significance of the floods for water supply is heightened by the fact that there are only a few springs in the region.<sup>13</sup> According to the trader McKiernan, who visited the region in 1876, the effort was made to secure the availability of water by damming it during flood time into large basin-like wells.<sup>14</sup> During the whole period under study, water supply was based primarily on the use of surface water and secondarily on ground water.

The greatest obstacle to the use of ground water has been its salinity, which increases in proximity to the Etosha Pan.<sup>15</sup> As the floods receded, dammed floodwater and ground water had to be relied upon. Good well locations and wells were, however, scarce; this heightened the importance of existing water places. The securing of water supply required the continual digging of new wells, and the maintenance of old ones by, among other things, cleaning them, since during the rainy season they easily became muddy.<sup>16</sup>

Characteristic of the climate of the Cuvelai River flood plain is the conjunction of the hot summer and the rainy season lasting from November to the beginning of April. The weather is at its hottest in November, when the average temperature is 25°C. During the winter, lasting from May to July, the average temperature drops radically, reaching its low point of 16.4°C in July. At that time, night temperatures can reach zero and frost might even appear. Night frost is, however, more common in mid-Namibia.<sup>17</sup>

Land-wise the whole Etosha Pan flood plain region belongs to the Kalahari system. The humus layer on the surface of the earth is usually thirty to fifty centimeters thick, and is composed mainly of sand. Almost everywhere under the humus layer there is a layer of saline subsoil which is

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<sup>13</sup> Elonheimo, 1967, p. 26; FAO, 1981, pp. 20—21. Cf. Pettinen, 1889—1895, 14 July 1890.

<sup>14</sup> McKiernan, 1954, pp. 104—105. See also: F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland, Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW; Savola, 1924, pp. 8—9; Koivu, 1925, pp. 15—21.

<sup>15</sup> FAO, 1981, p. 20; Stengel, 1963, pp. 374—375; Lehmann, 1954, pp. 20—21.

<sup>16</sup> For water management during the dry season, see: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 14 July 1890; Tönjes, 1911, p. 17—18; MRD 25 August 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>17</sup> van der Merwe, 1983, maps 16—23; Elonheimo, 1967, pp. 34—40; Leser, 1976, pp. 42—43; Barnard, 1959, p. 94. Cf. Pettinen's meteorological observations: *Writings and Notes by August Pettinen*, Hp XXIV:2, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 17 July 1890.

often completely watertight. The best farmlands are located on the moderately sandy banks of the Cuvelai; the soil at the base of the oshanas and on the grassy plains is too acidic and saline for grain farming.<sup>18</sup>

In regard to vegetation, the Etosha Pan flood plain is chiefly categorized as part of the mixed and mopane savanna zone. In the northern and eastern parts of the region there is also woodland savanna.<sup>19</sup> During the period under study the Cuvelai River flood plain in its entirety could probably be classified as mopane and woodland savanna.<sup>20</sup>

In comparison to southern and mid-Namibia, the physical environment of the Cuvelai River in the Etosha Pan flood plain provided the conditions for more multifaceted production in the mid-nineteenth century. The physical environment of the north side of the Kunene River did not, however, noticeably differ from that of the Cuvelai River region.

## 2.2. Population and Sociopolitical Organization in the Etosha Pan Flood Plain

### 2.2.1. Population: Estimates and Distribution

In the mid-nineteenth century the population of the Etosha Pan flood plain was concentrated on the branches of the Cuvelai River's oshana networks. The inhabited areas were composed of uniform population clusters, separated from one another by woodland zones which varied in breadth.<sup>21</sup> The term »Ovamboland» signifies the area inhabited by the Ovambo communities as well as the pasture and hunting lands belonging to their sphere of interest.

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<sup>18</sup> van der Merwe, 1983, map 9; FAO, 1981, pp. 22—25; Soini, 1981, pp. 172—196; Elonheimo, 1967, p. 19. Cf. Pettinen's observations: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 14 July 1890.

<sup>19</sup> van der Merwe, 1983, map 24; FAO, 1981, pp. 23—27; Leser, 1976, pp. 54—55, 70—71, 74; Soini, 1981, p. 174; also see Volk, 1966, pp. 25—58.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Soini, 1981, p. 199.

<sup>21</sup> For more on the distribution of population in the Cuvelai River flood plain: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867», 1867, pp. 291—294; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 August 1889; Björklund, 1891, p. 259; Savola to Tötterman, Olukonda 30 April 1894, Eac:22, FMSA.

No systematic effort was made during the latter half of the nineteenth century to determine the total population of Ovamboland. The estimates which were made were based on the observations of explorers and missionaries. The first estimate of the population of Ovamboland was made by the Swedish Captain Een, in the latter half of the 1860s, on the bases of his observations during trading trips. He estimated the total population of Ovamboland to be approximately 50,000. He considered Uukwanyama and Ondonga, with a population he estimated at 8,000, to comprise the largest of these communities.<sup>22</sup>

Table 1. *Estimates of Ovamboland's total population and its geographical distribution in the latter half of the nineteenth century.*<sup>23</sup>

Community	Population in thousands at given time							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ondonga	8.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	15.0	15.0	30.0	95.6
Uukwambi	?	5.0	15.0	15.0	5.0	10.0	20.0	39.6
Ongandjera	?	10.0	10.0	10.0	5.0	10.0	15.0	24.5
Uukwanyama	8.0	1.5	20.0	30.0	65.0	20.0	80.0	132.4
Uukwaluudhi	?	6.0	8.0	8.0	2.0	—	7.0	16.6
Ombalantu	?	4.0	—	10.0	2.0	—	7.0	24.1
Ombandja	?	15.0	20.0	32.0	1.5	20.0	—	—
Evale	?	2.5	—	8.0	3.0	3.0	—	—
Kafima	?	1.5	—	5.0	2.0	—	—	—
Ehanda	?	?	5.0	5.0	—	4.0	—	—
Uukolonkadhi	?	?	—	—	2.0	10.0	—	} 9.7
Eshinga	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	
Ondombodhola	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—
Onkwankwa	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kwamatwi	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ndongwena	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	50.0	98.0	98.0	143.0	102.5	92.0	159.0	342.5

Clarifications: ? = indeterminate distribution  
 — = no information

<sup>22</sup> Een, 1872, p. 111.

<sup>23</sup> Source and date of the estimate: 1) Captain Een's estimate from the latter half of the 1860s, Een, 1872, pp. 82, 111; 2) the missionary Duparquet's estimate from



The largest population clusters were located where the oshana network is densest. In the naturally harsher west and southwest the communities were smaller, both in population and in surface area. Water conditions thus clearly determined the location of settlements in the Etosha Pan flood plain region.

The population estimates presented, however, clearly show that the precise analysis of the total population, or the development of it, is not possible on the basis of existing written sources. The population of Ovamboland is estimated to have been 100,000, and slightly on the increase, in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The communities with the largest populations were Uukwanyama, Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ombandja and Ongandjera. The reduction of the woodland zones between the communities indicates population growth. On the other hand, the deterioration of farmland, causing the inhabitants to convert woodland into fields, accelerated the reduction of the woodland zones as well.<sup>25</sup>

The population of the Ovambo communities was on the average greater, and their settlements more concentrated, than was the case with the Herero and Nama, who composed the largest communities of southern and mid-Namibia. The populations of the largest Herero communities were almost as extensive as those of the bigger Ovambo communities. In his report from 1877 the Cape government's envoy, Special Commissioner Palgrave, estimated the total population of the Herero communi-

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the year 1879, Duparquet, 1953, p. 99; 3) the natural scientist Schinz's estimate from the year 1885/86, Schinz, 1891, p. 273; 4) the missionary Björklund's estimate from the year 1891, Björklund, 1891, p. 259; 5) the missionary Brincker's estimate is based on the map drawn by Bernsmann in the 1890s, Brincker, 1896, appendix; 6) the explorer Möller's estimate from the mid-1890s is based on information received from the trader Eriksson, Möller, 1974, pp. 121—122; 7) the missionary Tönjes' estimate from the early years of the 20th century, Tönjes, 1911, p. 5; 8) census 1970: the figures are estimates and based on J.J. Kritzinger's unpublished PhD Thesis (Pretoria, 1972). The figures appertain solely to the administrative district of Ovambo, not to the whole of Ovamboland as dealt with in this study, Töttemeyer, 1978, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> The missionary Pettinen estimated the population of the Cuvelai River flood plain to be from 80,000 to 100,000 in the 1890s: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 20 August 1891.

<sup>25</sup> The woodland zone between Ondonga and Uukwanyama was about 60 km wide in the 1860s, according to the missionary Hahn, but in the beginning of 20th century it had narrowed to 40 km, see: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867», 1867, pp. 291—294; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA; Savola, 1924, pp. 31—33; MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF. See also Clarence-Smith, Moorsom, 1977, p. 97.

ties to be 84,000, and that of the Ovambo communities 98,000. His estimate of the population of the largest Herero community, led by Headman Maharero, was 23,000. The Nama communities were considerably smaller than the Ovambo and Herero communities. Brigitte Lau has estimated that the total population of the Nama communities was 10,000 or more in the mid-nineteenth century. Population density was clearly dependent on ecological conditions in the lands of the Ovambo, Nama and Herero.<sup>26</sup>

In the earliest travel accounts the Ovambo were also described as being greater and more powerful than their close neighbors, the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka, who lived on the north side of the Kunene.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2.2. The Social and Political Structure of the Ovambo Communities

Kinship was central to the internal social relations of the Ovambo. Matrilineally segmented clans, of which there were about thirty in Ovamboland, formed the foundation of Ovambo social organization. In matrilineal communities, clan membership was defined according to the mother's clan. Members of the same clan were not allowed to marry one another.<sup>28</sup>

The basic unit of social organization was the family as composed of a man, his wife/wives and their small children. Additionally, the parents' unmarried adult children might belong to the family. In the latter half of the nineteenth century wealthy men had about ten wives, while poor men only had two or three. The basic unit of economic production was the male-led family homestead or egumbo.<sup>29</sup>

The nucleus of the homestead was an economic center surrounded by

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<sup>26</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 48—49, 53; Lau, 1987, p. 8. Cf. Drechsler, 1984, p. 28, whose estimates are based on population data from the end of the nineteenth century. See also explorers', traders' and missionaries' observations: Galton, 1853, p. 209; McKiernan, 1954, p. 9; Möller, 1974, p. 166; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 30 June 1893.

<sup>27</sup> Magyar, 1857, pp. 195—198. Cf. Möller, 1974, pp. 60, 82—84, 90—91, 95.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Williams, 1988, pp. 48—53; Loeb, 1962, pp. 99—108; Estermann, 1976, pp. 108—116; Tuupainen, 1970, pp. 23—40; Aarni, 1982, p. 25. For more on the social organization of African societies, see: Radcliffe-Brown, 1979, pp. 15—89; Mair, 1976, pp. 67—94; Horton, 1971, pp. 78—119; Hoernle, 1925, pp. 1—24.

<sup>29</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 282—283, 311; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890.



palisading. The size and number of huts in this center indicated how wealthy the homestead was. In the economic centers of wealthy homesteads there were ten or more huts, while in poorer ones there were only a few. The economic centers were located in the middle of the homestead's fields. Thus there were no true villages in the Ovambo communities.<sup>30</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century Ovamboland was not a politically unified area: it was divided into autonomous communities which differed considerably from one another in regard to population size and surface area.<sup>31</sup> In comparison to other communities inhabiting South West Africa, the ruler's status within the more populous Ovambo communities was exceptionally strong; this was to a great extent due to Ovamboland's special water conditions. Since water supply was based on surface water, administration and leadership had to be concentrated for the implementation of vital water procurement projects. The communities tried to effectively utilize floodwater by building special reservoirs. The implementation of such projects required abundant labor. For example, in 1883 the missionary Duparquet saw about three hundred men digging a reservoir for the storage of floodwater.<sup>32</sup>

Water conditions, and the physical environment in general, appear also to have affected the degree of political organization within Ovamboland. The political structure of the Ovambo communities was built around the hereditary ruler, called the omukwaniilwa or king, except in the small communities located in the vicinity of the Kunene which were not centrally governed.<sup>33</sup>

In each community kingship was passed on hereditarily through the royal clan. The royal clan does not appear to have been structurally different in any respect from the other clans, and was in many ways only *prima inter pares*. Upon the ruler's death, power was inherited by one of his younger brothers or, in case there were no brothers, by a nephew.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; Björklund, 1891, pp. 262—263; Schinz, 1891, pp. 286—293.

<sup>31</sup> For more on the political structure of African societies, see: Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1987, pp. 1—23; Fortes, 1987, pp. 239—271; Lloyd, 1968, pp. 63—112; Guy, 1979, pp. 21—40.

<sup>32</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1979, pp. 74—75. Cf. F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 104—105; Urquhart, 1963, p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Björklund, 1891, pp. 259—260.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, 1988, pp. 49—51; Loeb, 1962, pp. 41—42. See also: Björklund, 1891,

The Ovambo rulers had the status of divine kings.<sup>35</sup> Numerous tabus were associated with kingship. For example, after coming to power the king was not allowed to leave the territory of the community over which he ruled.<sup>36</sup>

The Ovambo rulers were characterized as despots in the descriptions of explorers and missionaries.<sup>37</sup> In theory the king had unlimited power over his community's members, land and total property. Furthermore, he was high priest and judge.<sup>38</sup> The kings did not, however, rule the communities alone. They negotiated with their counselors (omalenga) concerning both major and minor matters. Kings which did not listen to their counselors were considered exceptional.<sup>39</sup>

In practice kingship was not equal in all the Ovambo communities governed by a hereditary monarch: the king's status as the leader of his community was highly determined by his personal characteristics. In the early observations of European explorers and missionaries the king's position was generally described as too strong. The king's powers, and ways of wielding power, are dealt with further on.

The king governed his community with the aid of his counselors (omalenga). Those he called on as counselors were close relatives, friends, individuals otherwise known to be trustworthy and sometimes even slaves or refugees from other communities. The king chose from among his counselors a chief counselor who lived with him, and was completely dedicated to him. The counselors formed a council which gave the king advice concerning, among other things, political-administrative and judi-

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pp. 259—260; Rautanen, 1903, p. 338; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 19 October 1892; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 108—113.

<sup>35</sup> Loeb, 1962, p. 41; Lehmann, 1956, pp. 301—305; also see Pettinen, 1889—1895, 11 September 1890. For more on the divine kingship, see Siikala, 1982, pp. 119—128; and especially in African societies, see: Lloyd, 1960, pp. 221—237; Vansina, 1962a, pp. 324—335.

<sup>36</sup> Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, Kaukungua, C/k:22, UEMA; Koivu, Memoirs II, Hp XIII:1, FMSA. Cf. tabus connected with the kingship among the Tallensi, in West Africa: Fortes, 1987, pp. 258—261.

<sup>37</sup> Andersson, 1852, p. 18, SUL; Een, 1872, p. 92; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 106—107; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 30 July 1870, Eac:1, FMSA. See also: Schinz, 1891, pp. 319—322; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 11 September 1890.

<sup>38</sup> Skär, pp. 22—37, UEMA. See also: Björklund, 1891, pp. 259—260; Pettinen, 11 September 1890; Tönjes, 1911, p. 111.

<sup>39</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290; also see Clarence-Smith, Moor-  
som, 1975, p. 368.

cial matters; but when making decisions the king was not bound to their opinion. It was, however, politically wise for him to listen to his counselors, in order to prevent their dissatisfaction from causing them to undertake his assassination. At the beginning of the 1890s, the king's council of Ondonga had four or five counselors.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the counselors, the clergy, the healers and the seers worked closely with the king. They were responsible for enacting different ceremonies and rituals. Rainmaking was the clergy's most important function.<sup>41</sup>

The communities were divided into smaller administrative areas or districts, the headmen of which the king appointed from among his counselors, the members of his body guard, and his relatives. The counselors acting as district headmen worked at the same time as regional headmen, making sure that the king's interests were being observed in the surrounding districts. District headman offices were also sold to the highest bidder. The office was not permanent; the king could at any time grant headmanship to another person. The district headmen were responsible for the cultivation of the king's fields, the collection of the so-called grain-tax from the peasants, the maintenance of order and the resolution of small conflicts. It was part of the district headmen's task to make sure that the king's interest was observed in the community.<sup>42</sup> Districts were composed of homesteads; in large districts there were about twenty homesteads.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to administrative officials, the king collected around himself a body guard. It was usually made up of undistinguished young men from the community, refugees from other communities and prisoners of war captured during raids. The most important tasks of the body guard were to maintain the king's security and to carry out his various functions.<sup>44</sup> According to the missionary Hugo Hahn, in the 1860s King Nuujoma w'Eelu of Uukwambi had a body guard of about forty men;

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<sup>40</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890. See also: Lehmann, 1956, pp. 296—297; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 111—112.

<sup>41</sup> Een, 1872, p. 94; Schinz, 1891, pp. 304—306, 310, 313—317; Rautanen, 1903, pp. 331—335; Möller, 1974, p. 125; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890.

<sup>42</sup> Rautanen, 1903, pp. 336, 340; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 May 1890; also see Lehmann, 1956, pp. 296—298. At the beginning of the 1890s Ondonga was divided into 57 districts: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890.

<sup>43</sup> Loeb, 1962, pp. 42—43.

<sup>44</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 215; Rautanen, 1903, p. 338; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 111—112. See also: Loeb, 1962, pp. 29—32; Estermann, 1976, p. 122; Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 78.

Captain Een, who travelled in the area around the same time, put the figure at as much as one hundred.<sup>45</sup>

For offensive and defensive purposes, as well as for raiding, the communities had a working military system based upon the service of all militarily fit men.<sup>46</sup> War commanders specially appointed by the king were responsible for leading the warriors; they were chosen from among the king's counselors or otherwise trusted persons.<sup>47</sup>

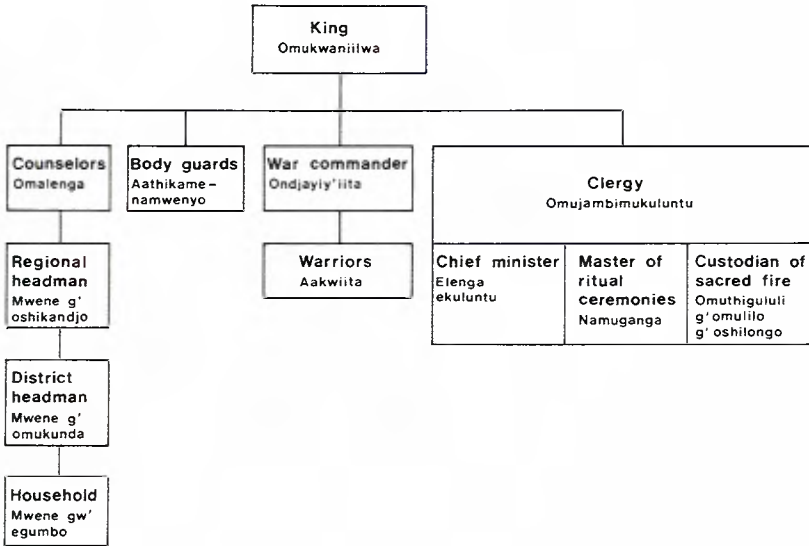


Diagram 1. *The main features of the political organization of the Ovambo communities*

With the exception of kingship, official positions were not hereditary in the Ovambo political system. After the king's death the community's

<sup>45</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867», 1867, pp. 292—293; Een, 1872, p. 105. Cf. CJAD 14 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW. At the beginning of the 1890s King Kamonde of Ondonga had a body guard of only 10 to 15 men: Rautanen, 1903, p. 338.

<sup>46</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 5 November 1891.

<sup>47</sup> Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA; Rautanen, 1903, p. 336; Schinz, 1891, p. 320. See also ELC, pp. 868—878.

internal relations of power often had to be reassessed. The position of officials having personal ties to the former king could be in jeopardy with the new king's rise to power.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the king's death usually led to the weakening of the social and economic status of his close relatives.<sup>49</sup>

Matrilineal inheritance effectively prevented the amassment of wealth within the communities. Within the households a clear distinction was made between the property of the man and his wives. For example, the man's grain was stored separately from that of his wives. Upon the man's death neither his wives nor his children inherited from him since they were not of his clan. The deceased man's heirs were his mother and his maternal siblings. Upon death, a wife's accumulated possessions were divided among her relatives. Within the clan there was no set order of inheritance: in the distribution of the inheritance the will of the strongest prevailed.<sup>50</sup>

This form of inheritance acted as an effective system of social redistribution, obstructing the amassment of wealth. Despite this system's effectiveness, there were indeed differences in wealth between clans. Nor was this system able to prevent the amassment of wealth in the hands of one person during his own life time. On the whole, the institution of inheritance supported the political position of the king within the community.

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<sup>48</sup> Weikkolin, report for May 1885, Omandongo 3 June 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 August 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>49</sup> Rautanen, 1903, pp. 333, 339.

<sup>50</sup> Savola, 1924, pp. 102—103; Närhi, 1930, p. 16. See also: Björklund, 1891, pp. 264—265; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 30 October 1890; Rautanen, 1903, p. 329.

### 3. The Status of Exchange in the Economy of the Ovambo Communities in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

#### 3.1. The Structure of Production

##### 3.1.1. Agriculture and Cattle Raising

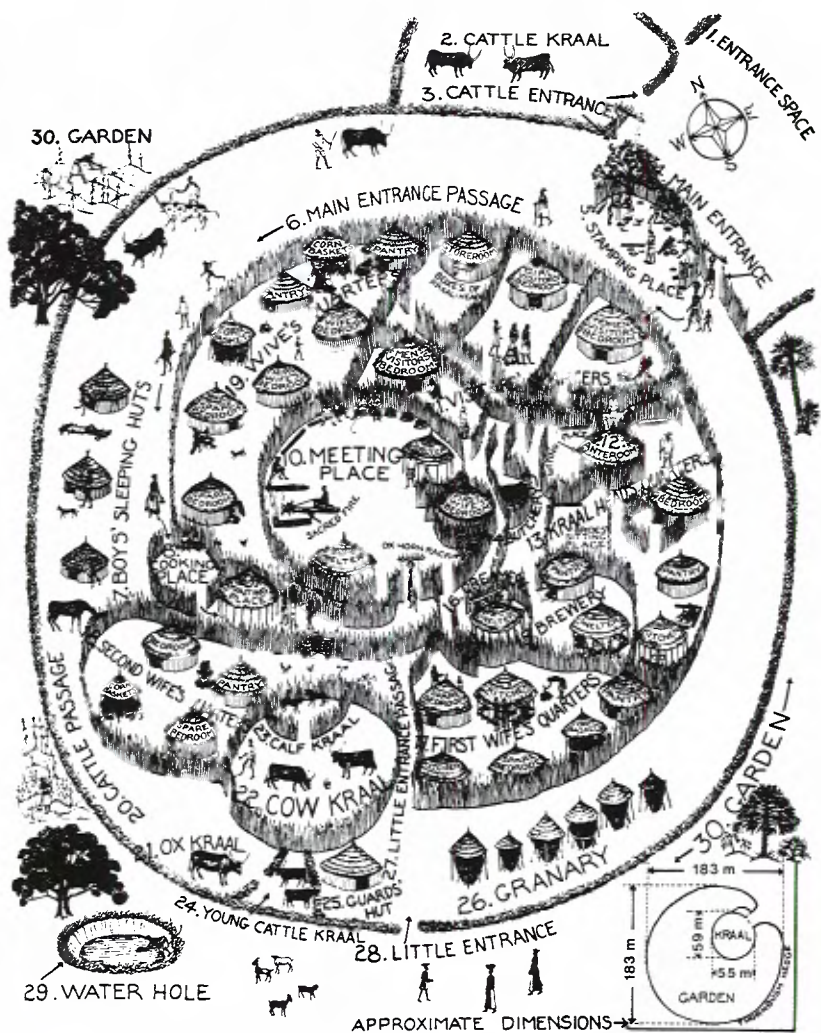
Agriculture was the most important livelihood in the Ovambo communities, and the rest of economic life conformed to its annual rhythm. Preparation for the coming cultivation season began in the latter half of September with the burning of refuse from the fields, which were then fertilized and made ready for planting. Planting took place, depending on when the rainy season began, mainly from November to December. After planting, attention was focused on warding off weeds by hoeing. Harvesttime was from April to June, after which the farmers waited for a new rainy season.<sup>1</sup> In regard to water and soil conditions, the best farmland was in the Uukwanyama and Uukwambi communities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the rhythm of the annual agricultural cycle, see: Koivu, 1925, pp. 43—74; Björklund, 1891, pp. 263—264; Schinz, 1891, pp. 294—297; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890.

<sup>2</sup> For agricultural conditions in Uukwanyama, see: *Tagebuch von C.H. Hahn über die Reise nach Ovamboland im Jahre 1866*, 14 Juli 1866, Hhb:1, FMSA; Een, 1872, p. 110; and in Uukwambi: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 May 1890.





CARTOGRAPH IS BASED ON THE GROUND PLAN OF A HOMESTEAD BUILT BY THE KWANYAMA FOR THE 1935 EXHIBITION AT WINDHOEK.

Source: Loeb, 1951. p. 290.

Figure 1 Cartograph of a Kwanyama homestead

The basic unit of production in the Ovambo communities was the household (egumbo) which included a hectare or two of cultivated land surrounding the house.<sup>3</sup> The household purchased the right to cultivate its land from the king, through his counselors, usually for one to four head of cattle.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this fee, the king's control over agricultural matters extended as far as the decisions of individual households concerning production. It was the king who decided when to till, and when to harvest.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, households, under the direction of the district headmen, were responsible for cultivating the king's fields.<sup>6</sup> The household's position in relation to its cultivated land was insecure: the family was forced to give up its fields if someone else offered higher rent for the right to cultivate them, or if it met with the disfavor of the king or the district headman. Eviction from the fields was, however, rare during the grain growing season.<sup>7</sup>

In the Ovambo communities the women were responsible for the practical cultivation work; the men assisted solely in hoeing the fields. The only technical utensil used for tilling and weeding the land was the wooden or iron hoe.<sup>8</sup>

The land was kept fertile through slashing and burning, and by periodically letting it lie fallow. Depending on their location, fields were cultivated continuously for four to five years after which they were allowed to lie fallow. This process concluded with the transfer of the household's dwelling to the middle of fresh recuperated fields.<sup>9</sup>

Household agriculture consisted primarily of grain farming. The most important types of grain were millet (omahangu) and durra (iilja). In ad-

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<sup>3</sup> Andersson, 1852, pp. 15—18, SUL; McKiernan, 1954, p. 101. See also: Koivu, 1925, p. 44; Eggers, 1966, p. 463; Bruwer, 1961, pp. 66—67.

<sup>4</sup> Dammann, 1972/73, p. 34; Rautanen, 1903, p. 343. The pay for the right to cultivate the most fertile fields could be as much as ten head of cattle: MRD 2 August 1898, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>5</sup> Björklund, 1891, p. 263; Sckär, p. 28, UEMA.

<sup>6</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890; also see Huttunen, 1969, pp. 22—23.

<sup>7</sup> Koivu, 1925, pp. 103—104; also see Weikkolin, report for September, October, November and December 1874, undated, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>8</sup> For more on cultivation methods in Ovamboland, see: Andersson, 1852, pp. 15—16, SUL; Andersson, 1887, pp. 202—203; Een, 1872, p. 82; Schinz, 1891, pp. 295—296; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 101—102; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890; Koivu, 1925, pp. 43—77; Loeb, 1962, pp. 151—156.

<sup>9</sup> Schinz, 1891, p. 292; Björklund, 1891, p. 262; MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF. See also: C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland, Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 16 November 1891.



dition to these staple sources of nutrition, beans, melons and tobacco were grown.<sup>10</sup> Tobacco was a desired item of exchange among the communities; its cultivation was most intense in Ombandja and Evale. For example, in Ondonga the king demanded part of the tobacco harvest for himself.<sup>11</sup>

Farm production insured household subsistence during years of normal weather. In Ondonga, for example, prosperous households harvested about ten hectoliters of grain, while poorer ones harvested only a few hectoliters.<sup>12</sup> Years of famine were not uncommon when rain was scarce or unevenly distributed.<sup>13</sup> Preparations were made for famine and annual harvest fluctuations by amassing grain in security stores. The community's security store was located at the king's residence, to which, in Ondonga for example, each household, depending on its prosperity, delivered a grain-tax of five to twenty liters of their harvest.<sup>14</sup> Households grew and stored somewhat more grain than required for their own consumption; the surplus was at least sufficient for the next farming season's seed grain.<sup>15</sup>

That regions with the best water conditions were also most self-sufficient in grain is indicated by, among other things, the fact that during years of famine grain purchase trips were directed to the Ovambo communities north of Ondonga, such as Uukwanyama. Trips south for grain were rare.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, in the northern parts of Ovamboland the diet was supplemented by a greater variety of fruits.<sup>17</sup> It was characteristic of Ovambo agriculture that grain was not grown intentionally for sale,

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<sup>10</sup> Een, 1872, p. 82; Andersson, 1852, p. 16, SUL; Andersson, 1987, p. 189.

<sup>11</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 294—295, 302; Möller, 1974, p. 124; Nitsche, 1913, p. 89; Galton, 1853, p. 206.

<sup>12</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890.

<sup>13</sup> The Ovambo communities were afflicted by a severe famine in 1877—1878; for the minimal rainfall and its uneven distribution, see: Reijonen, report for January, February and March 1877, Omulonga 31 March 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Rautanen, report for April, May and June 1877, Omandongo 28 October 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Björklund, report for November 1878, Omandongo 30 November 1878, Eac:6, FMSA.

<sup>14</sup> Rautanen, 1903, p. 339; McKiernan, 1954, p. 102. See also »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Estermann, 1976, p. 136; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 101—102; Koivu 1925, pp. 72—73.

<sup>16</sup> Skoglund, report for May 1878, undated, Eac:6, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Oniipa 6 March 1890, Eac:18, FMSA; MRD 23 Juli 1897, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>17</sup> MRD 24 Juli 1897, 602—91, NAF.

because rain, floods and termites were a continual threat to large stores.<sup>18</sup> Grain stealing was rare, because it was considered one of the greatest crimes.<sup>19</sup>

Cattle raising, the second important livelihood of the Ovambo, was firmly bound to the annual rhythm of agriculture. Part of the cattle was kept in enclosures close by the dwelling during the rainy season, and in the grain fields after the harvest. With the exhaustion of nearby household pastures during the dry season, cattle were sent to cattle posts, situated further away, where grass and water were available. Only a few cows were kept in the cattle yard to be fed in order to satisfy the need for fresh milk.<sup>20</sup> Among the Ovambo, the work of farming and cattle raising was divided according to sex. While the women were responsible for agriculture, the men devoted themselves to cattle raising. The men did the herding and caretaking as well as the dairy work.<sup>21</sup> In addition to cattle, the other domestic animals kept were goats, pigs, chickens and dogs.<sup>22</sup>

The primary aim of cattle raising, unlike farming, was not the production of food. Most of the little milk produced was used as calf food.<sup>23</sup> Nor were cattle kept for meat or leather: meat was part of the diet only on great days of celebration.<sup>24</sup> According to the explorer Andersson, in spite of the fact that the Ndonga's had a relatively large amount of cattle and they liked meat, they kept cattle more for show than for food production.<sup>25</sup> The Ovambo satisfied most of their need for meat by hunting. Only goats, chickens and pigs were raised solely for food.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> McKiernan, 1954, pp. 101—102; Koivu, 1925, p. 123. For the objectives of African agriculture in general: see Austen, 1987, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>20</sup> Andersson, 1987, p. 190; Galton, 1853, pp. 207—208; Een, 1872, pp. 84—85; McKiernan, 1954, p. 102; Schinz, 1891, pp. 297—299. According to the explorer Andersson, in the 1850s Ondonga's southernmost cattle post was in the watering place of Omutjamatunda (Namutoni): Andersson, 1987, pp. 183—184; also see Loeb, 1962, pp. 149—150.

<sup>21</sup> Björklund, 1891, p. 264; Koivu, 1925, p. 123; Savola, 1916, p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1852, p. 18, SUL; Andersson, 1875, p. 229; Schinz, 1891, pp. 297—299; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 24 July 1890.

<sup>23</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890; MBC at Omandongo 8—10 and 13 January 1879, annex of the minutes: Reijonen's lecture »Lähetysaarnajan esteitä pakanamailla», Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>24</sup> Loeb, 1962, p. 147. Cf. Borkowsky, 1975, p.

<sup>25</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 199, 204.

<sup>26</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 61; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890.

For households, cattle had greater significance as a measure of wealth and status than foodstuffs.<sup>27</sup> Cattle, unlike land, was the household's private property; it was used for, among other things, purchasing the right to cultivate land.<sup>28</sup> Cattle had an important place in marriage and family foundation in the Ovambo communities.<sup>29</sup> The clan also had the right to recover by cattle payment those of its members taken prisoner in raids and war.<sup>30</sup> A small part of the cattle, such as sacred cattle and »the seeing cows», were of purely ritual and ceremonial significance.<sup>31</sup>

There is no reliable information available on the amount of cattle owned by the Ovambo communities in the mid-1800s. Missionary Pettinen's observations from the beginning of the 1890s are of aid in estimating the size of cattle herds owned by households in Ondonga. Prosperous households had between ten and twenty head of cattle, while poorer ones had only a few. In contrast, the size of kings' cattle herds varied greatly. It is said that in the mid-nineteenth century King Nangolo dhaAmutenya of Ondonga had about 2,000 head of cattle.<sup>32</sup>

It is very difficult on the basis of written sources to compare the cattle-wealth of the Ovambo to that of their closest neighbors, because only rare and isolated observations are available. Captain Een estimated that the Herero Headman Maharero possessed about 10,000 head of cattle at the end of the 1860s; but he did not compare the cattle-wealth of the Herero and the Ovambo. According to the explorer Magyar, in the middle of the nineteenth century the Ovambo clearly had more cattle than

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<sup>27</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890. See also: Een, 1872, p. 85; Andersson, 1852, p. 18, SUL.

<sup>28</sup> Rautanen, 1903, p. 343; Dammann, 1972/73, p. 46.

<sup>29</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 311—312; Rautanen, 1903, pp. 329—331; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; also see Andersson, 1987, p. 199.

<sup>30</sup> MBC at Olukonda 13 February 1895, annex of the minutes: Rautanen's reply to Governor Leutwein's questionnaire concerning slavery in German South West Africa, Rautanen to Leutwein, Olukonda 19 March 1895, Hha:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for April, May and June 1879, Omulonga 30 June 1879, Eac:7, FMSA. See also Tönjes, 1911, p. 124.

<sup>31</sup> Loeb, 1962, pp. 46—47; Estermann, 1976, pp. 140—141. Cf. the status of sacred cattle in Herero communities: Werner, 1980, p. 27; Irle, 1906, p. 168; and in Ugandan bantu communities: Roscoe, 1966, pp. 10—13.

<sup>32</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890. Pettinen's estimate is very low compared to the explorer Andersson's observations from 1851. Andersson saw the Ndonga grazing a cattle herd of 3,000 to 4,000 head at the watering place of Omutamunda (Namutoni) and this was not the only cattle post of the Ndonga: Andersson, 1987, p. 184. Cf. Paul, 1933, p. 84.

their neighbors living to the north of the Kunene.<sup>33</sup>

The functions of cattle raising clearly demonstrate that cattle was not kept for reasons of trade. The aim of agriculture was primarily the securement of food production, while the most important function of cattle was to demonstrate wealth and status. Among the Ovambo, as within African communities in general, agriculture and cattle raising were, in spite of their proximity, poorly integrated with one another. For example, cattle were not utilized in agriculture as beasts of burden; their use in agriculture was confined to the production of manure. After the harvest the fields were utilized again for cattle grazing.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the division of labor according to sex hindered the optimal utilization of labor during periods of abundant work: during the busy harvest time men were usually either herding, hunting or on trading trips.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.1.2. Gathering and Fishing

The great abundance of woods and wild fruit trees attracted the attention of the earliest explorers and traders who entered Ovamboland from the south.<sup>36</sup> Proceeding from the south to the north of Ovamboland, the amount and variety of fruit trees, like the use of fruit for food, increased. For example in Uukwanyama the population consumed the fruit of about twenty different trees.<sup>37</sup>

The value of fruit trees is demonstrated by the fact that when new fields were cleared they were left standing. With the exception of the fruit of the marula tree, fruit belonged to the household which had purchased the right to cultivate the field within which it grew. The marula had a special place among fruit trees, because an alcoholic beverage was prepared from its fruit. Trees were the property of the king, and the juice

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<sup>33</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 173—174; Magyar, 1857, p. 198.

<sup>34</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 207; Schinz, 1891, pp. 295, 297; Estermann, 1976, pp. 133—134. See also Austen, 1987, p. 18; Parsons, Palmer, 1977, pp. 7—8.

<sup>35</sup> Andersson, 1852, p. 16, SUL.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, p. 110; Galton, 1853, pp. 206—207; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290.

<sup>37</sup> Pössinger, 1968, p. 123. According to the missionary Martti Rautanen, the diet of the Kwanyama contained more fruit than the diet of the Ndonga did: MRD 24 July 1897, 602—91, NAF.

pressed from their fruit had to be delivered to his stores.<sup>38</sup> As a source of nutrition the most important tree was the fan palm, which is the only successful variety of palm in Ovamboland. In addition to its fruit, its soft core was used for food during years of famine.<sup>39</sup>

Roots, honey, ostrich eggs, bees' wax, caterpillars and various medicinal and poisonous plants were gathered in addition to fruit.<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of the rainy season plenty of frogs were collected too. They were not considered royal food, and there were no restrictions on catching them. Frogs improved household food conditions at times when grain stores were at their lowest and the fishing season had yet to begin. Frogs were caught by men, and in particular by young boys.<sup>41</sup>

Locusts were likewise used for food. Moving in great swarms, they totally destroyed all greenery in their path. Among the ways of trying to prevent the travelling locust swarms from entering the fields was to dig ditches and channels into which they were driven and killed with hot water or fire.<sup>42</sup>

Annual floods created the conditions for Ovambo fishing. The fishing season began soon after the rainy season ended when the men could begin catching the fish remaining in the floodwater reservoirs and ditches. Traps and spears were the means used.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> E.g. Rautanen, 1903, p. 344; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 17 July 1890, 21 July 1890, 3 November 1890; J. von Moltke, *A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland*, p. 4, A. 100, NAW. For more on land rights in African societies, see Lloyd, 1968, pp. 88—89.

<sup>39</sup> Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 26 February 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland, Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW; McKiernan, 1954, p. 102. See also: Savola, 1924, pp. 12—14; Koivu, 1925, pp. 24—42.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Pettinen, 1889—1895, 4 August 1890, 25 September 1890, 30 October 1890; C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland, Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW. See also: Elonheimo, 1967, p. 129; Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 62; Borkowsky, 1975, p. 24; Bruwer, 1961, p. 79.

<sup>41</sup> ASD vol. 1, 20 February 1895, PC; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 28 July 1890. See also: Loeb, 1962, pp. 162—163; Elonheimo, 1967, pp. 128—129.

<sup>42</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 7 May 1893, Eac:21, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 4 August 1890. Locust swarms usually arrived in Ovamboland from the south or southwest. During the latter half of the 19th century they caused bad damage at twenty-year intervals (at the beginning of the 1850s, 1870s and 1890s), see: Vedder, 1942, p. 65; Wallis, 1938, p. 88; MRD 25 January 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; MBC at Oniipa 21 January 1902, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:4, FMSA.

<sup>43</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 116—117; Björklund, 1891, pp. 257—258; Kurvinen, report for April, May and June 1875, Cape Colony, June 1875, Eac:4, FMSA. See also: Savola, 1924, pp. 141—143; Koivu, 1925, pp. 160—162; Lebzelter, 1934, p. 215;

In contrast to gathering, fishing was strictly under the king's control: households could not begin fishing without the king's permission. On the opening day of the fishing season, fishing rituals were carried out at the floodwater reservoirs.<sup>44</sup>

The significance of fishing as a means of living was chiefly dependent on the annual floods. During years of normal rain the fishing season was limited to several weeks following the rainy season, when the floodwater channels began to dry. The best conditions for fishing were in the northern areas of Ovamboland where the floodwater arrived first and most surely.<sup>45</sup> The missionary Tolonen, who visited Uukwanyama from Ondonga in 1871, noted the area's abundant population of fish.<sup>46</sup> Fishing was not always a sure way to supplement bread even in the north, as shown by the year 1898, when the floods were meager and no fish were caught at all.<sup>47</sup>

Gathering and fishing were not activities bound to sex. For example, both sexes participated in fishing, although men and women did have distinct tasks in the catching process itself.<sup>48</sup> Through gathering and fishing the Ovambo brought variety to their diet, and supplemented it when it was at its worst, at the end of the rainy season before the ripening of the new harvest.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.1.3. Hunting

As with fishing and gathering, hunting was seasonal for the Ovambo. The hunting season began at the end of April or the beginning of May with a ceremony called *Osipepa*, after which the king went on a ceremonial hunting trip for a week or two. The hunting season reached its height during the period after the harvest, from August to the beginning of the rainy season.<sup>50</sup>

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Bruwer, 1961, pp. 78—79.

<sup>44</sup> Loeb, 1962, pp. 165—167. For more on control of fishing: see Pettinen, 1889—1895, 28 July 1890.

<sup>45</sup> Koivu, 1925, p. 160; Savola, 1924, pp. 141—143.

<sup>46</sup> Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 11 July 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>47</sup> Ickler to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 6 May 1898, B/c II:68, UEMA.

<sup>48</sup> Estermann, 1976, pp. 142—143.

<sup>49</sup> Paul, 1933, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> Loeb, 1962, pp. 158—159; Borkowsky, 1975, pp. 46—49. See also *Memoirs* by



The strict control of hunting and the restriction of the extensive hunting season are doubtlessly to be explained as either conscious or unconscious game protection.<sup>51</sup> Hunting reached its peak during the driest time of the year because conditions for it were most suitable then. As the floodwater evaporated, game was forced to go to water places to drink; hunting was therefore chiefly carried out in the vicinity of water places and the paths leading to them.<sup>52</sup>

Hunting was carried out in groups, the size of which varied according to game type and hunting location.<sup>53</sup> Hunting trips were made to nearby woods and grassy plains, but extended trips far away from home were not uncommon.<sup>54</sup> For example, the Swedish trader and explorer Gustaf De Vylder met a hunting group from Ondonga south of the Etosha Pan in August of 1873.<sup>55</sup>

Hunting weapons used in the mid-nineteenth century were the bow and poisoned arrows, spears, hatchets, knives and clubs. Additionally, traps, such as ditches or spears sprung from trees, were built along animal paths. Firearms were still unknown to the Ovambo at the beginning of the 1850s.<sup>56</sup>

The Ovambo did two types of hunting, one for fulfilling household needs, and the other for status. The antelope and gazelle, along with other common types of animal, were the object of the former, and were used chiefly for meat and skins.<sup>57</sup> During the rainy season the aquatic birds which arrived in the area were also hunted.<sup>58</sup> Game was more important

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William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 50, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>51</sup> Loeb, 1962, p. 158.

<sup>52</sup> Een, 1872, p. 78; Andersson, 1873, p. 368; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 59, A. 233, NAW; De Vylder's letter to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873, PC. Cf. e.g. the technique of hunting among the Nyamwezi and Nama: Roberts, 1970, p. 68; Moritz, 1915, p. 203.

<sup>53</sup> Borkowsky, 1975, pp. 46—49.

<sup>54</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 67, A. 233, NAW; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 24 July 1890.

<sup>55</sup> De Vylder's letters to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873 and Omaruru 7 July 1874, PC.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1873, pp. 172—173, 194, 203—205; Andersson, 1873, pp. 368—369; Galton, 1853, pp. 217—219; Een, 1872, p. 80; Sckär, Kurze Geschichte der Ovakuanjama, C/k:7, UEMA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Haschipala», C/k:22, UEMA; Schinz, 1891, pp. 285—286; Savola, 1924, pp. 156—158.

<sup>57</sup> Björklund, 1891, pp. 256—257; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 24 July 1890. See also: Loeb, 1962, pp. 158—159; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 80—81.

<sup>58</sup> Kurvinen, report for April, May and June 1875, Cape Colony, June 1875, Eac:4,

than cattle for fulfilling Ovambo meat needs during the nineteenth century.

In addition to animals for consumption, big game was hunted, such as elephants, giraffes, lions, leopards, rhinoceroses and ostriches, which were clearly more highly valued than other wild animals. The hunting of big game was status hunting primarily because big game was designated as the king's property, and only the king had the right to its products, such as ivory. Big game was not of much practical use in Ovambo society; instead, its function was to promote the king's status.<sup>59</sup> The strict regulations regarding the hunting of big game are not explicable by the scarcity of game: for example, in the Ondonga area elephants were a great disturbance to agriculture during the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century Ovambo hunting had two clearly distinct functions: Households utilized game for their own consumption, i.e. mainly for food and as raw material for necessary commonplace objects; big game hunting was linked to the king's status.

### 3.1.4. Handicraft Production

During years of normal rain household self-sufficiency in food production was high. Contrastingly, complete self-sufficiency with respect to necessary handicraft products was not even considered a goal to be seriously striven for. Households produced handicrafts mostly for their own use. Among the things they produced themselves were buildings and most of the tools, weapons, baskets, dishes and other such items which they used. The main raw materials used for these products were wood, fruit,

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FMSA; Björklund, 1891, p. 257. See also: Loeb, 1962, p. 167; Savola, 1924, p. 140; Elonheimo, 1967, p. 129.

<sup>59</sup> Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 25 August 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Rautanen, 1903, p. 343; Loeb, 1962, pp. 158–159; Bruwer 1961, p. 100. Until it was integrated into the long-distance trade, ivory trading had no commercial value, for instance, for the Nyamwezi living in East Africa or for their neighbors. Ivory was used only as a symbol of chieftainship: chiefs wore ivory bracelets and were sometimes buried between elephant tusks: see Roberts, 1970, p. 47; also see Sutherland-Harris, 1970, p. 252.

<sup>60</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 221. Cf. the hunter Green's observations from the year 1865: »Der Cunene-Strom von Fr. Green erreicht«, 1867, p. 10. For more on stocks of big game before the advent of firearms and thereafter: see Koivu, 1925, p. 166.



roots, palm leaves, leather, bone and clay. Nevertheless, handicrafts were deliberately produced in quantities beyond domestic needs, for sale.<sup>61</sup>

The men did simple wood work during the dry season primarily for household use. The products of more gifted wood-workers were in demand outside of the household as well.<sup>62</sup> For example, the more talented wood-workers of Ombandja and Uukwambi made wooden bowls and goblets for sale.<sup>63</sup>

As with wooden objects, simple clay dishes, and other objects of clay, were made within the household for domestic use. They varied greatly in quality, depending on the time and technique of production, and on the raw materials used. The finest clay pots were made in Uukwambi, Uukwanyama and Ombalantu, where the best sources of clay were located.<sup>64</sup>

Women monopolized the production of pottery in Ovamboland. Pottery making began at the end of the rainy season when the best clay became available from the bottom of the drying floodwater channels. The best known potters were the women of Uukwambi, the most talented of whom intentionally produced pottery for sale.<sup>65</sup> According to Sckär, following iron production, pottery making was, in regard to trade, the second most important craft occupation in Uukwanyama.<sup>66</sup>

Metal smelting was the most specialized craft among the Ovambo. In Ondonga only a small group of smiths were familiar with copper-work; the same is true of iron-work in Uukwanyama.<sup>67</sup> Only men could be chosen, through complicated initiation procedures, as smiths in this field. For example, in Uukwanyama, which monopolized iron production, there

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<sup>61</sup> For the handicraft production in general: see e.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 172—174; Galton, 1853, pp. 222—223; Een, 1872, pp. 87—88; Schinz, 1891, pp. 292—294; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890; Koivu, 1925, pp. 154—159; Närhi 1929, pp. 43—46; also see Loeb, 1962, pp. 191—204.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. Sckär, p. 111, UEMA; Schinz, 1891, p. 293; Tönjes, 1911, p. 67; Koivu, 1925, p. 156; Savola, 1916, p. 147.

<sup>63</sup> For more on the wood work in Ombandja: McKiernan, 1954, p. 103; and in Uukwambi: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890. See also Bruwer, 1961, pp. 95—97.

<sup>64</sup> Sckär, pp. 110—111, UEMA; Loeb, 1962, pp. 194—195; Hahn, 1928, p. 35. See also: Schinz, 1891, p. 293; Koivu, 1925, p. 156; Een, 1872, p. 87.

<sup>65</sup> Sckär, pp. 110—111, UEMA; McKiernan, 1954, p. 103. See also: Loeb, 1962, pp. 194—195; Bruwer, 1961, pp. 97—99.

<sup>66</sup> Sckär, p. 110, UEMA.

<sup>67</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 293—294. See also: McKiernan, 1954, p. 103; Een, 1872, pp. 87—88.

were two kinds of smiths: the common type (omuleva) and the master (osivanda), who possessed not only the craftsman's arts, but also supernatural abilities.<sup>68</sup>

Known copper and iron ore deposits were not located in the region inhabited by the Ovambo, but they were easily accessible from Ondonga and Uukwanyama.<sup>69</sup> Ondonga purchased copper from the close by deposits in the Otavi region.<sup>70</sup> The Ondonga smiths' copper monopoly was further strengthened by the fact that the San, who inhabited Otavi and were in charge of mining the copper there, acknowledged the predominance of the king of Ondonga over Otavi.<sup>71</sup>

The iron smelting specialists of Uukwanyama procured their ore from Cassinga, situated to the north. The Uukwanyama smiths mined their own ore, smelting part of it into pig iron on the spot and taking the rest home for refinement. The Cassinga iron ore deposit was situated in an uninhabited woodland zone and, as told by tradition, it belonged to the master smiths of Uukwanyama. For his part, King Mweshipandeka shaNingika claimed, to the trader Andersson in 1867, that the Cassinga iron deposit was part of his dominion.<sup>72</sup>

Iron production was strictly regulated from the procurement of raw material on. The departure for Cassinga of a group under the leadership of master smiths to mine and smelt iron ore took place after a ceremony called the Epena. The designated season for procuring iron lasted from July to August, and each expedition was allowed to make only one trip

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<sup>68</sup> To become an osivanda, a candidate had first to serve a long apprenticeship. After completing this service, he was required to perform an act of magical significance: Sckär, pp. 107—109, UEMA. Cf. the status of smiths in the Ovimbundu communities: Hambly, 1934, p. 160.

<sup>69</sup> In later geological surveys no rich mineral deposits have been found in the Cuvelai River flood plain: see Leser, 1976, p. 94; Hangala, 1985, p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 204—205; Hahn, 1984/1985, p. 1027; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 286; Een, 1872, pp. 87—88.

<sup>71</sup> CJAD 19 December 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; Schinz, 1891, p. 293. See also: Hartmann, Historical Retrospect of the Development of the Northern Part of the Protectorate with Particular Reference to the Concession Territory of the SWAC Limited, Grootfontein 8 August 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1588, pp. 71/1—74/4, ZStA; Rogers to the South West Africa Company Limited, Otavi Mines 30 August 1893, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1482, p. 1/94, ZStA.

<sup>72</sup> CJAD 31 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW. See also: Sckär, pp. 107—109, UEMA; Duparquet, 1953, pp. 180—181; Loeb, 1962, p. 192; Estermann, 1976, pp. 145—146.

to the mine a year.<sup>73</sup>

The procurement and smelting of copper ore was likewise limited to the dry time of the year. Natural conditions placed restrictions on the year around mining of copper ore: during the rainy season the mine shafts of the Otavi copper deposit were filled with water.<sup>74</sup>

The metal products, both tools and jewelry, produced by the smiths were important for all the Ovambo communities. From iron the smiths of Uukwanyama made, among other things, hoes, hatchets, knives, arrow and spear heads, iron beads and pipe stems.<sup>75</sup> The copper objects produced by the smiths of Ondonga were used for functional purposes and jewelry; of most importance were copper bracelets and anklets and other such jewelry.<sup>76</sup>

The smelting of metals was a seasonal occupation. Some smiths, however, worked at their craft year around, travelling among the Ovambo and Herero communities.<sup>77</sup> Neither in Ondonga nor in Uukwanyama was the smelting of metals oriented solely to the fulfillment of domestic requirements; the smiths there also deliberately produced metal goods for sale.

Salt production is classified as a handicraft, because salt intended for sale was shaped before being sold. Interest in the salt fields in the Etosha Pan was limited in practice to the communities dwelling to the north of that area. The Herero, who lived on cattle raising, did not take salt from the Etosha area.<sup>78</sup> The production of salt was not, however, allowed in all the Ovambo communities, but only in Ondonga, Ongandjera and Uukwambi. Each of these communities had their own salt field from which salt was fetched.<sup>79</sup> For example, Ondonga's salt field was located about

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<sup>73</sup> Sckär, pp. 107—108, UEMA; Loeb, 1962, p. 191—192; Estermann, 1976, pp. 145—149. For manufacturing in metals among the Tlhaping in southern Africa: see Okihiro, 1984, p. 68.

<sup>74</sup> Rogers to the South West Africa Company Limited, Otavi Mines 27 December 1892, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1480, pp. 61/28—61/30, ZStA.

<sup>75</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 293—294; Een, 1872, pp. 87—88; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890. See also: Angebauer, 1927, p. 111; Loeb, 1962, p. 193; Bruwer, 1961, p. 102.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, p. 173; Andersson, 1852, p. 16, SUL; Schinz, 1891, pp. 293—294; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 102—103; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890; also see Lebzelter, 1934, p. 220.

<sup>77</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 74; Büttner, 1884, p. 235; Schinz, 1891, p. 293.

<sup>78</sup> Andersson, 1987, p. 172; Galton, 1853, pp. 182—183.

<sup>79</sup> MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF.

sixty-five kilometers from its settlement. After a good term of rain, when the water thoroughly soaked into the salty ground of the salt valleys, a layer of salt remained at the bottom of the valleys when the water evaporated.<sup>80</sup> Ondonga, Ongandjera and Uukwambi were most favorably located in relation to the salt fields.

The fetching of salt too was strictly controlled by the king. Salt could be fetched from the salt fields only during a designated time. At other times the fetching of salt was a tabu, the violation of which resulted in loss of property and life.<sup>81</sup> Salt was fetched and refined solely during the dry season. Depending on the length of the rainy season, the salt fields were opened in April or May and were closed a little before the first rains and the beginning of agricultural work in September or October.<sup>82</sup>

The salt-fetching trip was considered a trial of manhood. The road to the salt field was without water, and salt was heavy to carry. Therefore only men in good condition could carry out this burdensome task.<sup>83</sup> Salt-fetching set the rhythm for the annual agricultural circuit. The salt fields were opened when the grain harvest was ready; their closure marked the end of the cold rainless season, and the beginning of the warm sowing season.

The production of salt can be described as a handicraft because it was refined before sale. The raw salt was first cleaned after which it was cast into blocks weighing from two to three kilos.<sup>84</sup> Thus for Ondonga, Ongandjera and Uukwambi salt played a double role: it was procured for domestic consumption and was an important item of trade.

Handicraft specialization was determined almost without exception by the physical environment. For example, an examination of the production of pottery, iron and copper objects and salt shows that the communities which best made these products were situated most favorably in relation to the sources of raw materials. However, as with other livelihoods, handicraft production was bound to numerous restrictions, controls and magical elements.

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<sup>80</sup> Pettinen, 1926/27, p. 216; Koivu, 1925, pp. 146—147.

<sup>81</sup> ELC, p. 486; APeD 1 June 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Pettinen 1926/1927, pp. 216—217. Cf. salt-working, for instance, among the Nyamwezi: Roberts, 1970, pp. 46—47.

<sup>82</sup> MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF. Cf. Roberts, 1970, pp. 46—47.

<sup>83</sup> MRD 14 July 1910, 602—91, NAF; Koivu, 1925, pp. 146—147.

<sup>84</sup> MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF; McKiernan, 1954, p. 103. See also: Schinz, 1891, pp. 299—300; Möller, 1974, p. 126. Cf. processing of salt in south central Africa: see e.g. Fagan, 1970, p. 29.

Much research has been done on the smelting of iron in African communities. The literature emphasizes the interrelation between technical know-how and magic in the smelting of iron and other metals. But these factors are emphasized in different ways, depending on the researcher.<sup>85</sup>

Research has shown that the smith had to firstly be technically proficient and secondly able to obtain the favor of supranatural powers through ceremonies and rituals. Technical and magical components were most strongly associated with the master smiths' status, which was generally high in African communities. Sexual symbolism and tabus were likewise linked to the metal production process.<sup>86</sup>

Disagreement, however, has arisen among researchers concerning the function of the magic associated with the smith's craft. Kjekshus has emphasized that the know-how monopolized by the smith's profession was protected with the aid of magic. He thinks that the so-called ritualistic school overemphasizes the religious aspect of the magic associated with the smelting of iron, thus making the production of iron itself a secondary matter.<sup>87</sup> Okihiro, who has studied the Tlhaping community now situated in the Republic of South Africa, examines the magic linked to iron production exclusively from an economic point of view. According to him, restrictions on production were meant to keep the price level of iron products stable.<sup>88</sup> There is not yet any research material available concerning the magic associated with iron smelting and the other craft professions in the Ovambo communities. Nevertheless, the magic linked, for example, to the smith's profession can be seen as directing the transfer of know-how.

Examining Ovambo handicraft production on the whole, the degree of specialization varied greatly depending on the branch of production. Specialization was most advanced in the production of handicrafts whose raw materials were most scarcely available. Trade was another factor closely associated with specialization in handicraft production. Households made most handicraft products for their own consumption. But special products (such as those of iron, copper and clay) were intentionally produced for sale.

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<sup>85</sup> van der Merwe, Avery, 1987, pp. 143—144.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Kjekshus, 1977, p. 91.

<sup>88</sup> Okihiro, 1984, p. 69.

## 3.2. Ovambo Trade Relations

### 3.2.1. Criteria for the Classification of Trade

To call precolonial African economies self-sufficient is, according to J.E. Flint, absurd since the very power structure of African communities required surplus production and exchange.<sup>89</sup> A.G. Hopkins, for his part, points out that trade in Africa, like elsewhere, is as old as man himself.<sup>90</sup> Different approaches to the categorization of trade have been developed, just as they have for studying the relation of trade to the economic and social structures of African communities. In the following a look is taken at the best known approaches to studying trade in precolonial African communities, and the criteria for the classification of trade used in this study will be presented.

The first approach to the classification of trade presented here, that of Jan Vansina, is based on geographical criteria. He divides nineteenth century African trade into three categories according to the transport route of the goods to be exchanged: local trade, regional trade and long-distance trade.<sup>91</sup>

By local trade Vansina mainly means the inter-village exchange of handicrafts and foodstuffs within a given population. Local trade was chiefly symbiotic and based on locally produced goods. Vansina classifies regional trade as inter-community exchange. Regional trade was more regular than local trade, with exchange often concentrated in established market places, which increased rulers' capacity to control trade. Structurally, the emphasis of regional trade was on specialized products whose production techniques were unknown in the location where they were exchanged.<sup>92</sup>

Vansina characterizes long-distance trade mainly as interaction between two different cultural spheres. Long-distance trade is best represented by the exchange between European and African communities. In structure long-distance trade was based on the exchange of European manufactured goods for special African products such as ivory and slaves. Goods procured through long-distance trade were not usually of vital importance to community subsistence.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Flint, 1978, p. 381; also see Rodney, 1974, p. 43.

<sup>90</sup> Hopkins, 1980, pp. 4—5, 51. Cf. e.g. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1977, p. 77.

<sup>91</sup> Vansina, 1962, pp. 375—390.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375—376.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.



Vansina's criteria for the categorization of trade have been criticized by, among others, Richard Gray and David Birmingham in their article »Some Economic and Political Consequences of Trade in Central and Eastern Africa in the Pre-Colonial Period« (1970). They object to the classification of trade solely according to geographical criteria. For example, the differentiation of local and regional trade on the basis of written sources is difficult. Nor is Vansina able to show that local trade was based exclusively on locally produced goods.<sup>94</sup>

Gray and Birmingham consider Claude Meillassoux's approach to the relationship of the structure of communities and the trade practiced by them superior to geographical criteria for the categorization of trade. Meillassoux classifies trade as either subsistence oriented or market oriented. Within a subsistence economy, according to Meillassoux, social and economic change is impeded by, among other things, restrictions on trade such as the control of the production and trade of iron objects through restrictions and prohibitions.<sup>95</sup> Subsistence oriented trade is closely linked to agricultural production, and it did not have any noticeable effect on the system of production.<sup>96</sup>

A noteworthy change took place in the nature of trade when it was freed from the chains of subsistence and kinship through economic and social changes. Market oriented trade was characteristic of the spread of new innovations to the communities, and of the increasing dependence of trade on economic factors. Market oriented trade gave birth to entirely new forms of wealth, such as ivory and slaves, which acquired an economic significance which they did not possess in the subsistence economy.<sup>97</sup>

In the beginning of the 1960s, a group of anthropologists led by Paul Bohanan and George Dalton approached the economy of African communities from the perspective of market economy. Among the characteristic features of a market economy, according to Bohanan's and Dalton's model, is a price system controlled by supply and demand regardless of location.<sup>98</sup>

They distinguish three stages of community integration into the world

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<sup>94</sup> Gray and Birmingham, 1970, pp. 2—4.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Flint's and Rodney's criticism of the concept of subsistence economy: Flint, 1978, p. 381; Rodney, 1974, p. 43.

<sup>96</sup> Gray and Birmingham, 1970, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Bohanan and Dalton, 1962, pp. 1—26.

economy. Firstly, there were communities with no local market places and whose exchange was not based on market principles. On the second level were »peripheral market economies» which had market places. The commercial activity of these communities was, nevertheless, governed more by local customs and beliefs than by economic laws. The third and highest level consisted of communities integrated into the market economy. The first two categories of this classification represent African economies, while the third level was characteristic of industrialized economies.<sup>99</sup>

Historians have criticized Bohanan's and Dalton's approach for being inapplicable in practice. For example, on the basis of empirical data it has irrefutably been shown that the market place and market principle were considerably more important exchange-governing factors in African communities than as presented in Bohanan's and Dalton's model.<sup>100</sup>

In the present study the classification of trade is not based exclusively on any of the approaches presented above: each one will be tested against empirical data regarding the Ovambo communities. In this study trade will be divided into three categories: local, regional and long-distance trade. Local trade signifies trade within the Ovambo communities. The concept of regional trade covers trade between the Ovambo communities. Long-distance trade consists of Ovambo trade carried out with other African communities, and with Europeans; these two types of long-distance trade will be examined separately.

In light of the terminology used in this study the classification criteria appear to be based on geographical factors. An examination of these terms reveals that important criteria for the classification of trade are the organization and relationship to economic and political structures of exchange, the content of trade and the aims of commerce. On the other hand, the length of the period under study makes it possible to outline and analyze the changes which took place in economic structures, the system of exchange and the social status of trade.

### 3.2.2. Local Trade

The examination of the structure of Ovambo production clearly showed the absurdity of applying the concept of subsistence economy to them.

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1—26.

<sup>100</sup> E.g. Hopkins, 1980, p. 52; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976, pp. 93—94.



How then was exchange linked to community economic structures, and how dependent were these structures on trade? The examination of the status of exchange within the economy of the Ovambo communities is hindered by the lack of written sources, because explorers and missionaries recorded only a few observations concerning local trade.<sup>101</sup> In examining local trade in precolonial Africa, the lack of written sources does not exclusively trouble the investigator of the Ovambo communities; students of the internal economic relations of east and mid-African communities have met with the same problem.<sup>102</sup>

Local trade can be described in the light of the sources produced by explorers and missionaries as almost »invisible trade«. The observation of local exchange was hindered firstly by the fact that trade was bound by neither time nor place, and it had no organization. Trade was governed by household needs, the variations in which caused it to be irregular.<sup>103</sup> In light of the observations of missionaries and explorers, local trade was not strictly controlled.<sup>104</sup>

Active trade was, however, carried out on the local level with, among other things, handicrafts and foodstuffs. For example, in Ondonga the handling of copper was known only to a small profession of smiths, but the bracelets, anklets and other such jewelry they produced were inextricably linked to women's dress.<sup>105</sup> Nor did all households fetch salt themselves, but instead procured it through exchange.<sup>106</sup>

A third group of exchange goods was formed by foodstuffs such as grain, small livestock, dried meat and fish.<sup>107</sup> Even within communities,

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<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 192—205; Galton, 1853, pp. 206—224; Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1026—1065. For example, the missionary Pettinen does not discuss local trade at all in his description of the Ovambo trade: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. e.g. John, 1970, p. 210; Roberts, 1970, p. 43.

<sup>103</sup> See e.g. Koivu, 1925, p. 146; Savola, 1924, p. 145.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. the controlling of regional trade: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290. Local trade was irregular and uncontrolled, for example, among the Rozwi as well as among the Kazembe communities: Sutherland—Harris, 1970, p. 247; John, 1970, p. 211.

<sup>105</sup> Andersson, 1852, pp. 16—17 SUL; Schinz, 1891, pp. 282—283; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 20 October 1890. See also: Bruwer, 1961, p. 101; Haakana, 1960, pp. 14—15.

<sup>106</sup> MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF; McKiernan, 1954, p. 103.

<sup>107</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 86—88; Galton, 1853, pp. 206—207; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 84—85. See also Clarence-Smith, 1979, pp. 61—62.

variations in harvest could be extensive since destruction by locusts, for example, was often confined to limited areas.<sup>108</sup> Tobacco was a popular and easily exchangeable good in all trading.<sup>109</sup>

How great a part of trade within the communities was played by goods produced by households themselves, and to what extent households functioned as resalers, cannot be precisely determined. Gray and Birmingham, who have studied the internal trade of east and mid-Africa, warn the investigator wrestling with source problems against directly adopting the supposition that inner-community trade was limited exclusively to locally produced goods.<sup>110</sup> The selection of goods in internal Ovambo trade demonstrates, however, that this trade was primarily confined to household produced goods; the resale of goods was practiced only occasionally.

### 3.2.3. Regional Trade

It was clearly easier for the explorers, traders and missionaries who sojourned among the Ovambo to make observations concerning inter-community economic relations than concerning local trade. This is demonstrated by the abundance of accounts of regional trade. Like the Europeans, the Ovambo kings were clearly more interested in regional trade.

The kings controlled the established transportation routes leading to the communities, requiring outsiders to obtain permission to enter and move around therein.<sup>111</sup> For example, in Uukwambi it was customary in the outlying districts along routes leading to the community for the sons of the district headman to inform the king concerning strangers seeking to enter the region. A gift to the king, as a natural show of gratitude, was required for permission to enter. The kings also controlled trade directed outward from the community by requiring part of the proceeds as a present to themselves.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> E.g. Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 24 February 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 7 May 1893, Eac:21, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 8 June 1894, Eac:22, FMSA.

<sup>109</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 206; Een, 1872, pp. 86—87.

<sup>110</sup> Gray and Birmingham, 1970, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 204; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 100—101.

<sup>112</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 7 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; APeD

Regional trading trips, as they increased in length, required greater preparations on the part of households than those needed for local trade. Trading trips outside of the communities were not usually possible to complete in one day; the communities of Ondonga and Uukwanyama were, for example, separated in mid-nineteenth century by an approximately sixty kilometer wide uninhabited woodland zone.<sup>113</sup>

Increase in the duration of trading trips was not, however, reflected in the organization of trade, since households traded with goods which they themselves produced. They carried out their trading trips either alone, or in small parties.<sup>114</sup> Like local trade, regional trade was not concentrated in market places; instead, exchange was practiced by going from house to house and offering one's own goods as a medium of exchange for goods wanted.<sup>115</sup>

Regional trade was more regular than local trade, because it took place during the dry season, between the harvest and the beginning of the rainy season, at the busiest time for making handicrafts, and when travel was easiest.<sup>116</sup> During times of famine, trading also took place during the rainy season in order to ward off hunger.<sup>117</sup>

That regional trade was necessary for the Ovambo communities is demonstrated by the fact that inter-community disputes only rarely broke off trade between them.<sup>118</sup> Solely the death of the community's king interrupted incoming traffic and trade for four to six weeks.<sup>119</sup> The pri-

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18—21 February 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; also see McKiernan, 1954, p. 74.

<sup>113</sup> For more on the distances between Ovambo communities, see: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867», 1867, p. 291; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 August 1889.

<sup>114</sup> E.g. Alen to Tötterman, Olukonda 12 January 1889, Eac:17, FMSA; Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 1 October 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 23 July 1897, 602—91, NAF; MBC at Omandongo 15—16 May 1876, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulffhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA.

<sup>115</sup> Koivu, 1925, p. 147; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 85—87; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890.

<sup>116</sup> Andersson, 1852, p. 16, SUL; MBC at Omandongo 15—16 June 1876, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 1 October 1891, Eac:19, FMSA.

<sup>117</sup> For more on trading during the years of famine: MRD 19—20 January 1889, 8 February 1889, 17 May 1889, 20 April 1893, 24 April 1893, 25 April 1893, 1 May 1893, 5 May 1893, 9 May 1893, 25 May 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>118</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 103; APeD 4 March 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>119</sup> Vorträge von Missionar Wulffhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 87—88. See also: Sckär, pp. 38—41, UEMA; Huttunen, 1969, p. 20.

mary function of regional trade was to obtain special products which one could not produce oneself, or which were unobtainable within one's own community area. Salt and iron and copper products were the most exchanged goods.<sup>120</sup>

Regional trade was not, however, limited exclusively to the exchange of these types of commodities, which were produced in a regulated manner. Pottery produced in Uukwambi and Uukwanyama, like the wood work of Ombandja and Uukwambi, were demanded items in regional trade.<sup>121</sup> Ondonga exported to the other communities a type of red wood — African teak known as omuva — which, when finely ground, was used for cosmetic and coloring purposes. Poison for arrows, roots and herbs for use as medicines, spices and scents were in demand as items of trade.<sup>122</sup>

Another class of products in regional trade consisted of foodstuffs and luxuries. Trade in foodstuffs primarily involved grain. The extent of the grain trade depended chiefly on the year's harvest. With the help of the grain trade the effort was made to counteract the disturbance of community nutritional balance caused by catastrophes such as drought and locusts. Grain buying trips were directed, for example, from Ondonga to the northern Ovambo communities, where self-sufficiency in grain was clearly greater. Grain was not, however, grown methodically for sale, and widespread famine was impossible to overcome through the grain trade.<sup>123</sup>

Because of the undifferentiatedness of the structure of production, the encounter of supply and demand at times caused problems, since trading took place not at established market places, but rather households

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<sup>120</sup> For more on the selection of products in regional trade, see: Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890; MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah«, C/k:22, UEMA; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 102—103; Schinz, 1891, pp. 293—294, 299—300; Andersson, 1852, pp. 16—17, SUL; Een, 1872, p. 87.

<sup>121</sup> Sckär, pp. 110—111, UEMA; McKiernan, 1954, p. 103; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890; F.T. Valdez, From Six Years of Traveller's Life in Western Africa, C/i:13, UEMA; C.H.L. Hahn, Ovamboland, Customs, History, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW; also see Bruwer, 1961, p. 102.

<sup>123</sup> E.g. C.H.L. Hahn, Ovambo, Customs, History, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW; Skoglund, report for May 1878, undated, Eac:6, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Oniipa 6 March 1890, Eac:18, FMSA; MRD 23 July 1897, 29 July 1897, 2 August 1897, 602—91, NAF.

sought buyers for their goods by going from house to house. The easiest good to exchange in regional trade was tobacco.<sup>124</sup> The highest quality and largest amount of tobacco was grown in the northern communities of Ombandja and Evale, for which tobacco was an important item of trade.<sup>125</sup>

Besides being a luxury good tobacco had another function, namely, as an elementary medium of exchange. This was very evident later, during years of famine for example. When households no longer had items of exchange for purchasing grain from neighboring communities, tobacco was requested from the missionaries; it was the most acceptable form of payment for the desired grain.<sup>126</sup>

The most extraordinary product for sale among the Ovambo was rain, which was sold in Evale. When the beginning of the rainy season was overdue, and the communities' own rain makers had failed to bring rain, the kings would send parties to Evale to fetch rain or rain makers.<sup>127</sup>

A noteworthy feature of the selection of goods in regional trade was that cattle was not used at all, except for buying rain, which was itself an exceptional form of trading. Thus an interesting question concerns the formation of the exchange ratio of products. This problem can be approached through written sources only on a relatively general level.

Metal goods and salt were exchanged according to an established, almost fixed, price ratio. For example, in Ovamboland a two to three kilo block of salt was exchanged for a hoe at an almost fixed price ratio of 1:1. The stability of the price ratio between these special goods was based on the strict control of production, which stabilized both supply and demand.<sup>128</sup>

In the exchange of special products with other handicraft products,

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<sup>124</sup> For more on consumption of tobacco among the Ovambo: see Haakana, 1960, pp. 22—24.

<sup>125</sup> Nitsche, 1913, p. 89; Schinz, 1891, pp. 294—295, 302; Möller, 1974, p. 124; Andersson, 1987, p. 189.

<sup>126</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 206; MBC at Ondangwa 5 January 1898, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:2, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 8 November 1901, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 26 November 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Piirainen to Sirelius, Omandongo 7 January 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; MRD 13 January 1879, 602—91, NAF; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah«, C/k:22, UEMA; ELC, p. 59.

<sup>128</sup> MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF. Cf. exchange rates of different products among the Tlhaping: Okihiro, 1984, p. 69.

and particularly with grain, supply and demand were clearly reflected in the formation of the ratio of exchange.<sup>129</sup> This is most evident in regard to foodstuffs. Household need for grain varied with annual income, which caused an unstable demand for foodstuffs, and a great fluctuation in prices. During years of bad harvest, the price of grain was many times higher than that of normal years.<sup>130</sup>

Examining the division of regional trade, it is plain that Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ongandjera, which controlled the sources of scarce raw materials, held leading positions. Most exchanged goods were used for consumption (e.g. grain), tools (e.g. iron hoes, spearheads) or jewelry (e.g. iron beads, copper bracelets). All trade between Ovambo communities did not, however, consist of direct encounters between producer and consumer; wealthier households and kings procured handicrafts in amounts exceeding their own needs, using them as mediums of exchange in local, regional and, above all, in long-distance trade.<sup>131</sup> Thus, to some extent regional trade included the resale of products.

For the Ovambo communities local and regional trade had two distinct functions: firstly, the procurement of necessary commodities and handicraft products; secondly, to counteract the occasional disturbances in nutritional conditions provoked by the weather, destructive insects and other causes.

### 3.2.4. The Long-distance Trade Relations of the Ovambo

#### 3.2.4.1. Trade Connections to the South

It was typical of the long-distance trade of African communities during the precolonial period, according to Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, not to be based on the exchange of agricultural products.<sup>132</sup> Samir Amin, for his part, emphasizes the role of long-distance trade in promoting con-

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<sup>129</sup> MRD 23 July 1897, 602—91, NAF; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 25 September 1890.

<sup>130</sup> MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, annexes 1 and 2 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Björklund, report for October and November 1879, Omandongo 11 December 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

<sup>131</sup> E.g. Schinz, 1891, p. 294; F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; Möller, 1974, p. 124.

<sup>132</sup> Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976, p. 104.



tact between independent communities. Trading took place chiefly with products characterized as luxury commodities. The buyer did not usually know what the production costs of such commodities were; this made possible a type of commercial activity which was more profitable than local trade.<sup>133</sup> As Paul Bohanan sees it, the practice of the most profitable forms of commercial activity were most difficult with relatives. In long-distance trade this hindrance was excluded.<sup>134</sup> The aims of long-distance trade differed distinctly from those of local and regional trade.

What factors then advanced the expansion of trade connections? Ralph Austen and Philip D. Curtin emphasize the uniqueness of the physical environment and the deviation and differentiatedness of the communities' structures of production in stimulating long-distance trade. The best conditions for the establishment of trade relations existed between communities situated in ecological frontier zones.<sup>135</sup>

Considering the physical environment, the structure of production and community political organization, Ovamboland formed a unified economic area composed of semi-centers, and having an internal network of established trade connections. The Ovambo also had active economic relations outside of their own economic region. Long-distance trade was carried out with communities having three different type of production structure: in the south and west trade took place with pastoral and hunting and gathering communities, while the trading partners in the north and east were farming and cattle herding communities.

On the basis of their structure of production the Ovambo communities clearly differed from the communities to the south. For the Nama and Herero extensive agriculture was impossible, due to harsh natural conditions. Nama and Herero economy was based on cattle raising; therefore their lives were more mobile, and their communities smaller than those of the Ovambo.<sup>136</sup> The closest neighbors to the south, however, were small groups of San, who lived chiefly by hunting and gathering,

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<sup>133</sup> Amin, 1976, p. 17; see also Wallerstein, 1976, p. 31. According to Piero Sraffa's definition, luxury products are those which are not used in the production of other products: Sraffa, 1972, pp. 6—7.

<sup>134</sup> Bohanan, 1955, p. 60.

<sup>135</sup> Austen, 1987, pp. 20—24; Curtin, 1984, pp. 16—17.

<sup>136</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 7—10, 33—40. See also: Irlé, 1906, pp. 32—34, 134—136; Werner, 1980, pp. 17—24. For more on the economic structure of Herero and Nama communities, see explorers' and missionaries' observations: Andersson, 1852, pp. 8—9, SUL; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 9, 40—41; Möller, 1974, p. 166; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 30 June 1893.



and inhabited the harsh area between the Ovambo and Herero communities.<sup>137</sup>

It was a characteristic of the Ovambo's long-distance trade to the south for them to take the initiative in exchange. For example, four trips were regularly made each year from Ondonga to Hereroland: two to Okamabuti and two to the Omaruru region. Reversely, Herero trading ventures to Ovamboland were very rare.<sup>138</sup>

The considerable extension of trading trips beyond the regional level required careful planning. Consequently, caravans were organized, but they were actually very small in comparison, for example, to the trading caravans of the Ovimbundu of the Benguela Highlands in mid-Angola, or of the Nyamwezi, the famous east African trading people.<sup>139</sup>

Trading trips were made in parties of twenty to thirty members. The party leader best understood the language and customs of the visited area. This helped prevent fatal misunderstandings from arising.<sup>140</sup> Ovambo trading caravans tried as best as possible to blend in to the local culture by, among other things, imitating Herero dress.<sup>141</sup>

The explorer Galton described in detail the behavior of a twenty-four member Ovambo trading caravan in Hereroland: Upon arrival the caravan members dispersed, each to exchange their items of trade for the commodities they sought. That the caravan members each went his own separate way shows that there were no established market places at that time in the northern parts of Hereroland. Of the party's members solely the leader did not engage in trade; he took care of maintaining good relations with the local headman. It was through the caravan leaders that king's controlled the practice of long-distance trade.<sup>142</sup>

Ovambo kings supervised long-distance trade much more strictly than regional trade. They determined the destination, time and number of trad-

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<sup>137</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 164—166; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 May 1890. See also: Fourie, 1928, pp. 98—103; Francois, 1899, maps 3 and 4; Seiner, 1913, pp. 281—296; Seiner, 1977, pp. 31—34; Heintze, 1971/72, pp. 45—55.

<sup>138</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 171—175, 203—204; Galton, 1853, pp. 171—173, 198—199.

<sup>139</sup> About 3,000 carriers were involved in the biggest Ovimbundu trading caravans and they were led by professional leaders: Magyar, 1859, p. 27; Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, p. 182; Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, p. 152. For more on the Nyamwezi trading caravans, see e.g. Smith, 1963, pp. 252—296.

<sup>140</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 172, 179—180; *Diary of Frederick Green 1857 April-Sept.*, 16 July 1857, 18 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW; Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1027—1029.

<sup>141</sup> Möller, 1974, p. 144.

<sup>142</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 179, 184—185. Cf. e.g. Werner, 1980, pp. 76—84.

ing trips, and required part of the proceeds for themselves.<sup>143</sup> The trader McKiernan observed that Ovambo smiths who operated in Hereroland had to turn over most of the goods they took in trade to the king.<sup>144</sup>

Long-distance trade was not practiced year round, but only during the dry season. Normal households functioned as merchants, and either they themselves were the producers of their goods, or they procured the products they were selling through local and regional trade.<sup>145</sup> As with households, kings carried out long-distance trade through the mediation of their servants.<sup>146</sup>

The basic conditions for the brisk Ovambo-Herero trade were created by differences in their production structures and handicraft specialization. Above all, trading was not done for foodstuffs: the selection of products consisted of scarce, valuable and easily transportable special goods. Ondonga exported to Hereroland iron spearheads, knives, rings, iron and copper beads and so forth, because the Herero did not know how to refine metal or fashion metal objects. The Herero were, however, accustomed to using metal products as tools and jewelry.<sup>147</sup> That there was a long tradition of trade in metal products is indicated by the fact that iron beads were an inextricable part of Herero women's apparel.<sup>148</sup> The selection of trading products also reveals that the Ovambo did not themselves make all of the goods with which they traded. For example, when trading in iron goods the Ndonga were no longer producers, but retailers.

The Ovambo exchanged their goods for, among other things, ostrich egg shells, from which they made beads, and, above all, for cattle.<sup>149</sup> Ondonga by itself annually imported about eight hundred head of cattle

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<sup>143</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, p. 1034; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen von Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 290; MRD 9 April 1895, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>144</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 74.

<sup>145</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 171—174; Galton, 1853, pp. 179, 184.

<sup>146</sup> E.g. Diary of Frederick Green 1857 April-Sept., 16 July 1857, 18 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW; Andersson, 1987, pp. 203—204; Andersson, 1852 p. 16, SUL.

<sup>147</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 179, 203—204; Baines, 1864, p. 40; Büttner, 1884, pp. 234—235.

<sup>148</sup> Gibson, 1968, pp. 620—621; Büttner, 1884, pp. 234—235. Even in the 1880s European traders tried to find as exchange items beads that resembled as much as possible those produced by the Ovambo smiths: Büttner, 1884, p. 286.

<sup>149</sup> E.g. Galton, 1853, p. 199; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 20 October 1890; Bruwer, 1961, p. 115.

from Hereroland. The cattle obtained from the Herero was used for breeding purposes, since it was larger in size than the cattle stock of Ovamboland. For example, of the 206 head of cattle obtained by an Ondonga caravan in 1851 three fourths were cows or heifers.<sup>150</sup>

The ratio of exchange was, according to the explorer Andersson, favorable to the Ndonga. For example, semi-finished spearheads and beads made of iron were regularly exchanged for oxen; Andersson considered this use of beads a plain swindle.<sup>151</sup> The primary aim of trading trips from Ovamboland to Hereroland was the procure cattle and ostrich eggshells.

The most active Ovambo community in trading with Hereroland was, according to the earliest explorers' observations, Ondonga.<sup>152</sup> It had the most favorable geographical location for trade with Hereroland, because the only route from the south to Ovamboland known at that time led straight to Ondonga.<sup>153</sup> The production of special goods and active regional trading created the practical base for long-distance trade.

There is no certain information concerning whether Ovambo trading trips extended onward to Namaland. According to Heinrich Loth, smiths from Ovamboland worked in the Nama communities.<sup>154</sup> For his part, Lau asserts that the Nama bought the iron and copper products they needed from the Tswana and from the Boer who lived south of the Orange River.<sup>155</sup> That smiths from Ovamboland worked at least among the northern Nama communities does not thus seem impossible.

In addition to their trade with the Herero, the Ndonga also carried on active trade with the San community living in the Otavi area to the southeast of the Etosha Pan. This community was specialized in the mining of copper ore from the area's rich copper deposit. Later geological

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<sup>150</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 199; McKiernan, 1954, p. 102; Urquhart, 1963, p. 116. For instance, in 1882 the missionary Reijonen purchased cattle from Hereroland for breeding purposes: Reijonen, report for January, February and March 1882, Omulonga 31 March 1882, Eac:10, FMSA.

<sup>151</sup> Andersson, 1987, p. 173.

<sup>152</sup> See e.g. Galton, 1853, p. 199. Trading trips to Hereroland were also made from the other Ovambo communities, see: Baines, 1864, pp. 40, 164; Schinz, 1891, p. 293; Möller, 1974, pp. 143—144; Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 3 May 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Otjimbingwe 3 October 1882, Eac:10, FMSA; Irle, 1906, pp. 160—161; ASD vol. 1, 9 December 1895, PC.

<sup>153</sup> Galton, 1853, annex map; Andersson, 1987, annex map; Gustaf De Vylder's letter to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873, PC.

<sup>154</sup> Loth, 1963, p. 15.

<sup>155</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 11—12. See also: Kinahan, 1980, pp. 17—22; Galton, 1853, p. 199.

research has showed this to be the closest copper deposit to Ovamboland.<sup>156</sup>

Ondonga was the only Ovambo community to carry on copper trade with the San of Otavi. The missionary Hahn estimated that the San mined fifty to sixty tons of copper ore a year; they kept the location of their mine a secret from the Ndonga. They exchanged the copper ore they mined at a designated place for the copper and iron beads, tobacco, pipes, pottery, hatchets and knives offered by the Ondongan trading caravans.<sup>157</sup> This trade took place during the dry season since during the rainy season the mine shafts were flooded.<sup>158</sup>

The copper ore trade was confined exclusively to exchange between the Ndonga and the San of Otavi, because only the San knew of the copper deposit and, among the Ovambo, Herero and San, only the smiths of Ondonga knew how to refine copper ore. Accordingly, the Otavi area was considered to belong to Ondonga's sphere of economic interest. Some trade was also carried out with other San communities in the vicinity of Ovamboland, who primarily supplied ostrich eggshells.<sup>159</sup>

Ovambo motives for long-distance trade in the south are well explained by the selection of products of which that trade consisted. Long trading trips were not undertaken for everyday consumer commodities, but rather in the hope of the improved business profitability and increment of wealth which cattle ownership signified for households and the king. Among the Ovambo communities Ondonga dominated long-distance trade in the south in the mid-nineteenth century.

### 3.2.4.2. Trade Connections to the North

The Nkhumbi and Nyaneka communities, located on the north side of the Kunene River, were another important target area for Ovambo long-

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<sup>156</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 286—287. For more on the mineral resources of northern Namibia, see: Leser, 1976, p. 94; Hangala, 1985, p. 15.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 286—287; Een, 1872, pp. 87—88; Diary of Frederick Green 1857 April-Sept., 18 July 1857, August 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW; Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1027—1029; Schinz, 1891, pp. 293—284.

<sup>158</sup> Rogers to the South West Africa Company Limited, Otavi Mines 27 December 1892, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1480, pp. 61/28—61/29, ZStA.

<sup>159</sup> Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

distance trade. The structure of production in these communities was based, as with the Ovambo, on agriculture and cattle raising.<sup>160</sup> Proceeding toward mid-Angola, both the economic and ritual significance of cattle raising and cattle diminished while the importance of agriculture increased.<sup>161</sup>

The Kunene River made a natural border for the Ovambo economic region in the north. Good crossing places were few and usable only during the dry season when the water level was low.<sup>162</sup> Because it was so deep and infested with crocodiles, the river was usually crossed by raft.<sup>163</sup>

Among the economically and politically strongest communities in the Kunene region were the Humbe kingdom north of the river and the Uukwanyama kingdom south of the river.<sup>164</sup> Ovambo-Nkhumbi political relations were strained by the cattle thefts, mainly carried out from Uukwanyama, on the north side of the river. Cattle raiding did not, however, prevent trade between these communities.<sup>165</sup>

The selection of products with which the Ovambo traded north of the Kunene differed significantly from that with which they traded, for example, with the Herero. While salt was not exported at all to Hereroland, it was an important export product in long-distance trade to the north, because it was unobtainable in the lands of the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka. In the mid-nineteenth century the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka procured most of the salt they needed from Ovambo trading caravans.<sup>166</sup>

The salt trading trips of the Ovambo were not limited solely to the north shore of the Kunene; they extended in the north to Huilla and from the

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<sup>160</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 37—38, 44—45; Berger, 1980, p. 11; Estermann, 1976, pp. 132—138; Estermann, 1979, pp. 144—152. See also the following travel accounts: F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; Galton, 1853, pp. 205—207; Andersson, 1987, pp. 188—191; Andersson, 1852, pp. 15—16, SUL; Magyar, 1857, p. 198; Möller, 1974, p. 82.

<sup>161</sup> Schachtzabel, 1923, pp. 82—83. See also: Hambly, 1934, pp. 152—153; Soremekun, 1977, p. 83.

<sup>162</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 246—248; Mayo, 1882, pp. 28, 35. See also: CJAD 15 June 1867, 17 June 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW; F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA.

<sup>163</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 217—218.

<sup>164</sup> Magyar, 1857, pp. 195—198; F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA. See also Loeb, 1962, pp. 49—50.

<sup>165</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 295. Cf. Möller, 1974, pp. 84—85.

<sup>166</sup> F.T. Valdez, *Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA.

Ovimbundu communities at least to the southernmost part of Caconda.<sup>167</sup> In spite of their central role as salt traders it cannot be surmised, however, that the Ovambo monopolized the salt trade with the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka communities; salt trading trips were probably made to these communities from the shores of the Atlantic as well.<sup>168</sup>

In addition to salt, metal products also formed an important class of goods in long-distance trade to the north. According to Estermann, the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka were unable to separate iron from iron ore, although they lived closer than the smiths of Uukwanyama to the Cassinga iron ore deposit, from which the latter procured all the ore they needed.<sup>169</sup> The smiths of Nkhumbi and Nyaneka only knew how to fashion objects from pig iron, and even then they did not match the quality of the Uukwanyama smiths.<sup>170</sup>

Estermann's assertion is supported by Francisco Valdez's report from his exploratory journey to southern Angola in the mid-nineteenth century. According to him, in the middle region of the course of the Kunene only the Kwanyama mastered the art of iron smelting.<sup>171</sup> Among the Ovimbundu, however, the art of iron preparation was commonly known.<sup>172</sup>

The Ovambo sold their metal products to the Nyaneka and, in particular, to the Nkhumbi. They sold them pig iron and iron products, the most important of which were spear and arrow heads and knives. In addition to iron products, copper products were also in demand as goods for exchange. The Ovambo exchanged their goods primarily for cattle

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<sup>167</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 299—300; Möller, 1974, pp. 91, 126. In the nineteenth century the Ovimbundu of the Benguela Highlands were popularly known as 'Mambari' in West Central Africa. Numbering perhaps a million people, the Ovimbundu were grouped into twenty-two communities, of which two, the kingdoms of Bailundu and Bié, were much larger than the others: Soremekun, 1977, pp. 82—90; Childs, 1949, pp. 190—199; McCulloch, 1952, pp. 8—9.

<sup>168</sup> Magyar, 1859, p. 296; Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, p. 89.

<sup>169</sup> Estermann, 1979, pp. 161—163. See also: Duparquet, 1953, pp. 180—181; Sckär, pp. 107—108, UEMA.

<sup>170</sup> Estermann, 1979, pp. 161—162. Cf. Urquhart, 1963, p. 127.

<sup>171</sup> F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA.

<sup>172</sup> For more on the art of iron smelting in the Ovimbundu communities, see: Hamblly, 1934, pp. 158—161; McCulloch, 1952, pp. 14—15; Soremekun, 1977, p. 83; Miller, 1969, p. 23; Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, pp. 88, 117—120; Capello and Ivens, 1882, vol. 1, pp. 94—97.



and tobacco.<sup>173</sup>

The volume of Ovambo trade to the north is impossible to estimate on the basis of travel literature. Considering Uukwanyama's iron production and geographical location it can be supposed that it was the most active of the Ovambo communities in long-distance trade to the north. Trading trips to the north of the Kunene were also undertaken from Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ongandjera and probably other communities as well.

Through the salt trade the Ovambo made contact with, in addition to the Nkumbi and Nyaneka, the southernmost Ovimbundu communities. The flowering of the Ovimbundu economy began in the 1840s, when the Portuguese government somewhat liberalized its mercantilist economic policy. In 1836 the slave export trade was banned; this led to stricter control of the slave trade, and to a decrease in the significance slaves as an export item. The dissolution of the government monopoly of the ivory trade in 1834 made ivory a competitive substitute for slaves.<sup>174</sup>

Ovimbundu's trading reputation grew with the liberalization of trade and changes in product selection. In the mid-nineteenth century their trading caravans journeyed to the east near the coast of the Indian Ocean. In the southeast their trading trips extended to the lower course of the Okavango River, near Lake Ngami. In the west they regularly visited Benguela Harbor, and to the north the regions of Katanga and Kazembe.<sup>175</sup>

Of Ovimbundu trading trips to Ovamboland there is, however, no mention at all in the travel literature. Only the explorer Serpa Pinto tells of Ovimbundu trading trips to Uukwanyama.<sup>176</sup> In contrast, the visits of Ovimbundu trading caravans to the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka were more common.<sup>177</sup>

The exchange organized by the Ovimbundu in the environs of the Okavango and the Kunene Rivers was tripartite in form. For the goods

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<sup>173</sup> E.g. F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; Möller, 1974, pp. 90—91; Schinz, 1891, pp. 299—300, 302. See also: Estermann, 1979, pp. 161—163; Urquhart, 1963, pp. 127—128.

<sup>174</sup> For more on the economic policy of the Portuguese government in general and especially in Angola, see Clarence-Smith, 1985, pp. 22—60, 30—38. See also: Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971, pp. 52—54; Duffy, 1967, p. 7; Miller, 1969, p. 24.

<sup>175</sup> For more on Ovimbundu trading, see: Magyar, 1859, pp. 296—299; McCulloch, 1952, pp. 8—9; Childs, 1949, p. 191; Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, pp. 116, 150—152; Capello and Ivens, 1882, vol. 1, p. 103; Andersson, 1987, pp. 505—506; AWD 15 August 1855, SUL.

<sup>176</sup> Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, p. 116.

<sup>177</sup> Magyar, 1859, pp. 297—299; also see Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 63—64.



they procured from the coast, or the slaves they procured from the interior, they obtained cattle from as far east of the Okavango as Barotse-land. They then traded cattle for ivory with the communities, such as Uukwanyama, located on the middle and upper courses of the Okavango and Kunene Rivers.<sup>178</sup>

Ovambo trade with the Ovimbundu differed fundamentally, except with regard to salt, from the rest of its long-distance trade. The main livelihood of the Ovimbundu, as with the Ovambo, was agriculture and cattle raising. Likewise, they knew how to prepare iron, and they traded the iron products and other handicrafts which they themselves made. Thus the traditional Ovambo long-distance trade products were not in demand among the Ovimbundu.<sup>179</sup>

From Ovamboland the Ovimbundu probably obtained ivory in exchange for cattle and glass beads.<sup>180</sup> It is probable that Ovambo-Ovimbundu trade became truly active only from the 1840s onward, when the Portuguese government dissolved the ivory trade monopoly, since the Ovimbundu, who earlier concentrated on the slave trade, do not appear to have made slave procurement trips to Ovamboland. On the basis of the interviews and observations made by the explorer Galton on the island of St. Helena, the Portuguese did not procure slaves from the region south of Benguela Harbor, since the slaves therefrom were more susceptible to disease and death than the inhabitants to the north.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, the Ovambo did not even desire to sell either their own people or their prisoners of war as slaves.<sup>182</sup>

Through trading with the Ovimbundu the Ovambo made their first indirect contacts with European long-distance trade. Connections to wider markets were created by the demand for, and the commercial value of, new goods. For the Ovambo such connections occurred through the expanding ivory trade. For example, ivory was of no significance in Ovambo-Herero trade.

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<sup>178</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 63—64. See also: Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, p. 116; Magyar, 1859, pp. 298—299.

<sup>179</sup> For more on the structure of production among the Ovimbundu: Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, pp. 117—120; Capello and Ivens, 1882, vol. 1, pp. 94, 102—103, 115; Magyar, 1859, pp. 294—297; Hambly, 1934, pp. 133—178; McCulloch, 1952, pp. 11—16.

<sup>180</sup> Magyar, 1859, pp. 298—299; Andersson, 1987, pp. 203—204. See also Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 64.

<sup>181</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 227—228.

<sup>182</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1030, 1051; Sundry Mema, copied from Mr Green's Journals, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW.

The volume of Ovambo-Ovimbundu trade in the mid-nineteenth century was small. This assertion is supported by the 1,200 objects collected by the ethnologist Wilfrid D. Hambly from 1929—1930 in the area inhabited by the Ovimbundu which show that the interaction between the Ovimbundu and the Kwanyama had been brief and limited.<sup>183</sup> This assertion is further supported by the fact that the Ovambo came into contact with firearms only in the 1850s even though the Ovimbundu had been using them ever since the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>184</sup>

### 3.2.4.3. Trade Connections to the East and West

The Ovambo long-distance trade network was not limited exclusively to the above mentioned communities. Trading trips were also made to the eastern banks of the Okavango in the east, and to the Kaokoveld area in the west. Eastwardly directed trade was hindered by the Omaheke Desert, which prevented direct transaction with Ovambo settlements on the southern and middle parts of the Okavango.<sup>185</sup>

Among the Ovambo's most important trading partners on the Okavango were the Kwangari. The Kwangari economy was based on agriculture and cattle raising. In addition, they knew the techniques for processing copper and iron and traded the products made therefrom in the Okavango River environs.<sup>186</sup>

Despite the similarity of Ovambo and Kwangari livelihoods, the high quality iron products, especially iron beads, of Uukwanyama were in demand among the Kwangari. Salt, however, was a more important item of trade than iron products. The most active of the Ovambo communities in the Okavango River trade, and having geographically the most favorable location for it, was Uukwanyama.<sup>187</sup>

The trading trips of the Kwanyama extended to the lower course of

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<sup>183</sup> Hambly, 1934, p. 304.

<sup>184</sup> For the spreading of firearms among the Ovambo, see: Andersson, 1987, p. 194; Galton, 1853, pp. 217—218; Andersson, 1968, p. 140; Een, 1870, p. 100; and among the Ovimbundu, see: Childs, 1949, pp. 195—199; Pinto, 1881, vol. 1, p. 194; Sckär, *Kurze Geschichte der Ovakuanjama, C/k:7, UEMA*; *Vorträge von Missionar Wulffhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA.*

<sup>185</sup> See Appendixes 1 and 4.

<sup>186</sup> Andersson, 1968, pp. 185, 198—199; also see McGurk and Gordon, 1981, pp. 44—45, 48—49.

<sup>187</sup> Volkmann, 1901, pp. 866—868.

the Okavango. The journeys of trading parties from Uukwanyama extended as far as the community of Mpukushu, whose headman's residence was called, after himself, Libebe; it was an important trading center on the lower course of the Okavango.<sup>188</sup> In comparison with the Ovimbundu, Ovambo trade on the Okavango was meager.<sup>189</sup>

The Ovambo also had economic interaction with the Ovatjimba communities of the Kaokoveld region, whose economy was based on cattle raising. They mainly traded spear and arrow heads and copper and iron beads in exchange for ostrich eggshells. Uukwaluudhi, having geographically the most favorable location, dominated Ovambo trade with the Ovatjimba.<sup>190</sup>

An examination of the Ovambo communities' long-distance trade relations shows that they had a broad established network of trading connections outside of their own economic region. Their most important trading partners were the Herero, Nkhumbi and Nyaneka communities, as well as the San community of the Otavi region. Of the Ovambo communities the most active practitioners of long-distance trade were Uukwanyama, Ondonga, Uukwambi and Ongandjera.

### 3.2.5. The Aims of Ovambo Exchange

What did households seek through trade? Paul Bohanan, who has studied the principles and motives of the trade of the Tiv in the Benue Valley in northern Nigeria, emphasizes that households did not exchange products for any products whatsoever. Exchange was guided by the value assigned to goods; accordingly trade can be hierarchically divided into

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<sup>188</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 505—506; Andersson, 1855, p. 90; Petermann, 1855, pp. 43—44; AWD, vol. 3, 7—15 August 1855, SUL. Cf. also: Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, pp. 101, 250; Baumann, 1975, p. 474. Headman Libebe was of great renown as a rainmaker, and chiefs of many communities paid him well to keep the Okavango River flowing to them from the north: Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, p. 250.

<sup>189</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 505—506; Andersson, 1855, p. 90; Andersson, 1968, pp. 196—197; Magyar, 1859, pp. 289—299; AWD vol. 3, 14—15 August 1855, SUL.

<sup>190</sup> Vedder to von Zastrow, Gaub 1 September 1914, ZBU Nr. 1011, J.XIII.b.5.Bd.2., pp. 123—125, NAW; Schultze to Governor's Council, Outjo 8 November 1912, ZBU Nr. 1011, J.XIII.b.5.Bd.2, pp. 100—101, NAW. For the economic structure of the Kaokoveld region, see: Malan and Owen-Smith, 1974, pp. 142—144; von Koenen, 1963, pp. 164—168; Heck, 1961, pp. 41—43.

three categories.

The first level of exchange is represented in Bohanan's classification by the category of subsistence, which in Tiv society was based on trade in foodstuffs and simple handicraft products. The second level is the category of prestige, which included highly valued status commodities such as cattle, slaves, a white type of cloth called *tugundu* and bronze bars. The third level is the category of dependent persons involving the purchased power of command over other human beings, particularly over wives, but not over slaves.<sup>191</sup>

The hierarchical categorization of exchange is well demonstrated by the following story:

When I was a very small child, my kinsman gave me a baby chicken. I tended it carefully and when it grew up it laid eggs and hatched out more chickens; I exchanged these chickens for a young nanny goat, who bore kids, which I put out with various kinsmen until I could exchange them for a cow. The cow bore more calves, and eventually I was able to sell the calves and procure a wife.<sup>192</sup>

By examining valuation in the exchange system of the Ovambo it can be observed that the value of trade differed greatly from level to level. On the local level trade was carried out for foodstuffs and simple objects of necessity, and it can be characterized as primarily trade for necessary commodities. Regional trade was composed of both necessary and status commodities. Luxury and status commodities included beads made of iron, copper and especially ostrich eggshells, as well as other metal jewelry.<sup>193</sup>

Cattle was likewise highly valued. Cattle herd size was a sign of the individual's wealth, and indicated his status within the community.<sup>194</sup> The high value of cattle is displayed by the fact that the Ovambo never traded for it among themselves. Cattle herds were augmented mainly through natural reproduction, raiding and long-distance trade.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Bohanan and Bohanan, 1968, pp. 227—233; Bohanan, 1955, pp. 60—70. See also Firth, 1964, pp. 18—29.

<sup>192</sup> Bohanan, 1955, p. 65.

<sup>193</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, p. 204; Schinz, 1891, pp. 281—285; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 22 September 1890, 25 September 1890; Bruwer, 1961, pp. 100—101.

<sup>194</sup> Een, 1872, p. 85; Andersson, 1987, p. 204; Andersson, 1852, p. 18, SUL. Cf. the valuation of cattle among the Nkhumbi: Möller, 1974, pp. 82, 84—85; among the Herero: Irle, 1906, p. 160, Andersson, 1852, pp. 8—9, SUL, Een, 1872, pp. 173—176; and among the Tlhaping: Okihiro, 1984, p. 65.

<sup>195</sup> For more on cattle raiding, see section 5.2.2.1.

Cattle was of great significance for young men in particular. For them a cattle herd was the prerequisite for founding their own household.<sup>196</sup> Cattle herd size indicated a man's status, and improved his possibilities for marriage. Perhaps the number of wives most clearly revealed men's status in Ovambo society. For example, in Ondonga in the mid-nineteenth century wealthy men had around ten wives; the community's king, Nangolo dhaAmutenya, even had 106. Poorer men had only two or three wives.<sup>197</sup>

Marriage among the Ovambo cannot be characterized as exchange, as it can in Bohanan's example of the category of dependent persons in Tiv society.<sup>198</sup> Ovambo men reserved girls in their early childhood to be wives. Marriage took place, if the girl approved of the man's courtship, at the earliest after the declaration of maturity following the Ohango celebration. For example, in Ondonga the groom brought his reserved bride-to-be iron beads; on the basis of the amount and quality of the beads, and of other factors, the betrothed either approved or rejected courtship. Cattle was associated with marriage only in that upon having his courtship approved the groom sent an ox to the parents of the betrothed, which was slaughtered and eaten at the wedding.<sup>199</sup>

Why the Ovambo did not purchase wives, as did the Tiv and Zulu, is due, according to Gluckman, to the matrilineal system of descent. Gluckman emphasizes firstly, that a woman's own children belonged neither to her man nor her family and secondly, that marriages in matrilineal societies were looser. Because of the ease of divorce it was not the custom to pay for wives, since it was not easy in case of divorce for the man to get due restitution of the fee. Gluckman offers the Lozi, Herero and Ovambo as examples of matrilineal communities.<sup>200</sup>

By categorizing Ovambo trade according to assigned product value, local trade can be seen as composed mainly of necessary products. Regional trade was carried out with both necessary and status commodities. The

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<sup>196</sup> Rautanen, 1903, p. 343; Danmann, 1972/1973, p. 34; C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland, Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/35, NAW.

<sup>197</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; Schinz, 1891, p. 311; Andersson, 1987, p. 199; Galton, 1853, p. 184.

<sup>198</sup> Bohanan, 1955, pp. 62—65.

<sup>199</sup> For more on marriage among the Ovambo, see: Rautanen, 1903, pp. 330—331; C.H.L. Hahn, *Ovamboland Customs, History*, A. 450, ST.U. No. 9, 2/38, NAW; Hahn, 1928, pp. 32—33; Närhi, 1929, pp. 25—28, 34—42.

<sup>200</sup> Gibson, 1968, pp. 624—625. For more on marriage among the Zulu, see Guy, 1979, p. 23.

function of long-distance trade was primarily the procurement of status commodities. Only the salt and tobacco trade was an exception to this. These products were desired items of exchange on all levels of trade, and they can be characterized as elementary mediums of exchange.

## 4. The Ovambo Communities and European-Led Long-Distance Trade 1850—1906

### 4.1. Early Contacts with European Traders

#### 4.1.1. Connections in the North

The exaggeration of the influence of non-Africans as agents of change derives from the conception of African communities as static. To the discredit of this conception, the Ovambo communities were dynamic, as is clearly demonstrated by the foregoing examination of their economic and political structures and trade relations.

The earliest contacts in South West Africa with non continental foreign cultures were at the end of the fifteenth century, when Portuguese explorers visited the coast in search of an ocean route to India. The coast of Angola, and later its interior as well, was of more interest to the Portuguese than the rest of South West Africa.<sup>1</sup> By the early seventeenth century two harbors had been founded on the Angolan coast, at Luanda in 1576 and Benguela in 1617.<sup>2</sup>

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century European activity in Angola was restricted to the coastal harbors. The liberalization of the Por-

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<sup>1</sup> For more on early Portuguese activities in southwestern Africa, see: Duffy, 1959, pp. 49—78; Bender, 1978, pp. 12—18, 60; Birmingham, 1966, pp. 21—41; Birmingham, 1970, pp. 163—173; Moritz, 1918, pp. 18—25.

<sup>2</sup> Soremekun, 1977, p. 83; Childs, 1949, p. 195.



tuguese government's mercantilist economic policy activated trade; the most prominent consequences of this in Angola were the abolition of the government's monopoly on the ivory trade in 1834, the prohibition of the export of slaves in 1836, the foundation of the city of Mossamedes in 1840 and the opening of Angolan ports to foreign trade in 1844.<sup>3</sup> The Ovimbundu, with whom the Portuguese had traded at the coastal harbors for almost two hundred years, retained their position as the main party in trade. From the 1840s on traders began to establish stations in the interior among the Ovimbundu where they were amiably received, because it was believed that the arrival of Europeans would further stimulate trade.<sup>4</sup>

The foundation of the city of Mossamedes directed Portuguese attention to the southern coast and interior of Angola. Bernardino Brochado is mentioned as the first European trader to visit the Nyaneka and Nkhumbi communities. On his first trip in 1844 he founded a small trading post in Ngambwe.<sup>5</sup> Traders' business activities gradually expanded deeper into the interior, and by the mid-nineteenth century a fixed trading post had been established at Humbe. Traders' visits did not yet, however, at that time extend to the south of the Kunene River.<sup>6</sup>

Non-African traders operating in Angola consisted of two groups: penal prisoners banished from Portugal and immigrants from Portugal and Brazil. The convicts, called *degredados*, formed the largest group. The thieves and other criminals banished from Portugal often married African women, and were assimilated into the local culture. This improved their chances for surviving in the climate which was unhealthy for Europeans. Portuguese immigrants usually feared African diseases, and therefore directed their business affairs from the coastal harbors.<sup>7</sup> Among Europeans Angola was mainly characterized as a penal colony, and as a graveyard for white men. In 1851, for example, 145 members of the 830 member European colony of Luanda died.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 62; Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971, pp. 52—54; Childs, 1949, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> Childs, 1949, pp. 199—200.

<sup>5</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 59, 62. See also: Pélissier, 1977, pp. 60—61; Estermann, 1979, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Estermann, 1979, p. 22. Cf. Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> Bender, 1978, pp. 60—70; Clarence-Smith, 1985, p. 38. For information on Portuguese trading, see also travel accounts: Magyar, 1859, p. 8; McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Sayaux, 1879, vol. 2, pp. 109—111.

<sup>8</sup> Bender, 1978, p. 68.

Business was carried out in the interior mainly by convicts and their African middlemen, who were called the »Bangela» among the Nkhumbi. According to observations made by the explorer Ladislaus Magyar in 1852, the Bangela obtained ivory for the Portuguese from the Nkhumbi in exchange for glass beads and spirits.<sup>9</sup>

Missionaries among the Ovambo called the Portuguese traders' African middlemen the »Ovapangari». The terms »Bangela», »Mbangala» and »Ovapangari» apparently all referred to the same group of African middlemen. Hereafter the term »Mbangala» will be used. According to Estermann, the Mbangala settled near the north bank of the Kunene River at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The later observations of missionaries confirm that the Mbangala lived near Humbe and worked as middlemen for the Portuguese.<sup>11</sup> Mbangala intermediary work is classified in this study as part of Portuguese-led trade.

Portuguese traders were still rare in the Kunene River area in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The trader Bernardino Brochado was among the first Europeans to visit south of the Kunene. He crossed the river around the year 1850, and on later trading trips he travelled as far as the Okavango River. Brochado's example inspired certain traders to move from Mosamedes into the interior, but there was no rush into Ovamboland.<sup>13</sup>

Alongside travel accounts, Ovambo tradition as recorded in Uukwanyama also supports the assertion that Europeans had not travelled in Ovamboland before the mid-nineteenth century. According to tradition the first Portuguese traders visited Uukwanyama during the time of King Mweshipandeka shaNingika (1852—1883).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Magyar, 1857, p. 197. Estermann calls this group by the name Mbangala: Estermann, 1979, pp. 2—3.

<sup>10</sup> Estermann, 1979, pp. 2—3.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867», 1867, pp. 289, 293; Piirainen to Sirelius, Ondonga 31 December 1870, Eac:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for October, November and December 1873, Oniipa 2 January 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; MRD 26 June 1889, 16 December 1889, 8 September 1893, Hp XXVIII:2—3, FMSA.

<sup>12</sup> Magyar, 1857, p. 195. Cf. Galton, 1853, pp. 218—219; Andersson, 1987, pp. 183, 194.

<sup>13</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 62—63; Pélissier, 1977, pp. 61—62. In the 1850s Portuguese traders did business with the Ovambo communities mainly through their middlemen, see: »Der Cunene-Strom von Fr. Green erreicht», 1867, p. 9. Still in 1866 the missionary Hugo Hahn insisted that he was the first white man met by the King Mweshipandeka shaNingika of Uukwanyama, see: Tagebuch von C.H. Hahn über die Reise nach Ovamboland im Jahre 1866, 17 July 1866, Hhb:1, FMSA.

<sup>14</sup> Vorträge von Missionar Wulffhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA.

The Ovambo established their first direct contacts with non-African economies through the intermediacy of the Mbangala in the mid nineteenth century. At that time Portuguese activity was confined to the vicinity of the Kunene River, but their Mbangala middlemen made trading trips in small groups throughout Ovamboland. For example, the explorers Francis Galton and Charles John Andersson met a four member Mbangala trading party in Ondonga in 1851.<sup>15</sup>

The Mbangala traded chiefly glass beads and spirits with the Ovambo in exchange for ivory; this increased the value of ivory as an item of trade.<sup>16</sup> There was no demand for firearms, which were apparently not even made available, among the Ovambo in the 1850s.<sup>17</sup> The fact that firearms remained unknown in Ovamboland until the end of the 1850s indicates the limitedness of Portuguese-led trade there.<sup>18</sup>

Portuguese traders' interest in the cattle and ivory resources of the regions inhabited by the Nyaneka, Nkhumbi and Ovambo communities was clearly on the increase in the mid-nineteenth century. The Portuguese were well aware of Ovamboland's natural resources, but they did not yet need to undertake the extensive exploitation of them, because corresponding goods were still procurable closer to Mossamedes Harbor.

#### 4.1.2. The Interest of Walvis Bay Traders in Ovamboland

In search for an ocean route to India Portuguese explorers visited the coast of South West Africa at the end of the fifteenth century. Until the end of the eighteenth century Europeans' knowledge of South West Africa was restricted almost exclusively to the coast. This is because the Namib Desert, running parallel to the coast, effectively isolated the interior from the coast.<sup>19</sup> The most important bridgehead on the South West African coast was the natural harbor of Walvis Bay. It had been used as a base

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<sup>15</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 209—210, 217—218; Andersson, 1987, pp. 183, 194, 207.

<sup>16</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 203, 207; Galton, 1853, p. 218.

<sup>17</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 217—218; also see *Diary of Frederick Green*, April-Sept. 1857, 28 July 1857, A. 83. vol. 17, NAW.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Rautanen, 1904, p. 11; *Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA; Sckär, Kurze Geschichte der Ovakuanjama, C/k:7, UEMA; Een, 1872, p. 100.*

<sup>19</sup> Jacob, 1961, pp. 85—96; also see Vedder, 1985, pp. 1—39.

by European and North American whalers since the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The interior was of no interest at all to the whalers, so Walvis Bay remained just a sheltered anchor and supply place for whalers until the 1840s.<sup>21</sup>

The earliest exploratory journeys to South West Africa were undertaken from the Cape Colony at the end of the seventeenth century, but greater interest in the region arose only in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Hunters based at the Cape were pioneers in mapping the regions north of the Orange River. They were after big game, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, lions, ostriches and giraffes.<sup>22</sup> Interest in the interior parts of South West Africa increased with explorers' reports of the region's copper resources.<sup>23</sup> Copper deposits were actually discovered in Namaland, but their exploitation was not worthwhile due to high transportation costs.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to traders and hunters, missionaries were interested in South West Africa. The first missionary work there was begun by the London Missionary Society among the southern Nama communities in 1805.<sup>25</sup> Until the latter half of the 1830s, however, Europeans' knowledge of South West Africa was restricted almost exclusively to the Nama communities and the environs of the coastal harbors of Angra Pequena (Lüderitz) and Walvis Bay.<sup>26</sup> For example from 1825 to 1834 Europeans did not have a single permanent base in Namaland. Nor are there any written sources remaining from this period.<sup>27</sup>

The Oorlam migration from the Cape, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, had greater impact on the political and economic conditions of the southern and middle parts of South West Africa at the be-

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<sup>20</sup> Cooper, 1982, pp. 1—3; also see Moorsom, 1984, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> For more on life in the vicinity of Walvis Bay in the mid-19th century, see: Alexander, 1967, vol. 2, pp. 79—104; Andersson, 1987, pp. 13—19; Galton, 1853, pp. 14—23; Moritz, 1915, pp. 224—225; Moritz, 1916, pp. 228—229; Moritz, 1918, pp. 136—143; Werner, 1980, p. 76. The status of Walvis Bay changed from an anchoring place to an export/import harbor in the 1840s, when the traders Dixon and Morris settled at Walvis Bay and began to export cattle to St. Helena for slaughter: Moritz, 1916, pp. 237—238; Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Moritz, 1918, pp. 60—92. For the earliest exploratory journeys to the regions north of the Orange River: Moritz, 1915, pp. 163—202.

<sup>23</sup> Kinahan, 1980, pp. 17—22.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Moritz, 1915, pp. 183—184; Vedder, 1985, pp. 30—39.

<sup>25</sup> Driessler, 1932, pp. 15—16.

<sup>26</sup> Moritz, 1915, pp. 202—205.

<sup>27</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 23.

ginning of the nineteenth century than the Europeans. Although the origin of the word »Oorlam» is unknown, the historian Legassick asserts that it refers to a Nama people who had been in the service of Dutch farmers and who, for the most part, understood and spoke Dutch.<sup>28</sup>

From the end of the eighteenth century on the Oorlam, in small groups, crossed the Orange River into Namaland. The Afrikaners organized around the family of Jager Afrikaner became the most famous of these groups. They arrived in the southern part of South West Africa in the 1790s.<sup>29</sup> The Oorlam organized into small communities, usually with less than one thousand members. An exception to this was the residence of Jonker Afrikaner in Windhoek which, by the beginning of the 1840s, had grown into a community of about two thousand members. The Oorlam communities were named according to either the place where they settled, or the family around which they were established.<sup>30</sup>

The Oorlam economy was not founded on cattle raising. Instead, the units of production were composed of small commando groups of ten to fifty men moving on horseback who made a living by hunting, raiding and trading. Thanks to firearms and horses, the Oorlam were militarily superior to the larger pastoral Nama people.<sup>31</sup> By the beginning of the 1830s, utilizing their military and technological superiority, the Oorlam subjected the Nama by controlling the use of pasture lands and water places. After that they changed their policy and sought to ally themselves with local Nama headmen by, among other things, promising to prevent Herero expansion into the pasture lands south of the Swakop River.<sup>32</sup> Through their policy of alliance, the Afrikaners also gained control over most of the Herero headmen during the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>33</sup>

The Afrikaners endeavored to further expand their political influence to the north.<sup>34</sup> Their journeys to the north were usually a combination

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<sup>28</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 19—20. See also: Kienetz, 1977, pp. 553—558; Frey, 1927, pp. 17—20.

<sup>29</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 20—21.

<sup>30</sup> For more on the Oorlam migration into South West Africa, see: Lau, 1987, pp. 21—23, 33—40; Lau, 1982, pp. 48—60, 92—95; Loth, 1963, pp. 15—19.

<sup>31</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 23—28, 41—42.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28—33.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107—111. See also: Werner, 1980, pp. 7—9, 55—57, 77—78; Irle, 1906, pp. 172—176; Galton, Report to the Colonial Office, 29 February 1851, pp. 1—4, A. 451, NAW.

<sup>34</sup> Vedder, 1985, pp. 214, 221, 227, 231; Galton, 1853, pp. 60, 116; Galton, Report to the Colonial Office, 29 February 1851, p. 1, A. 451, NAW.

of exploration and raiding. The target of Jonker Afrikaner's first raiding trip was a shipwreck near Cape Cross.<sup>35</sup> The destination of his second trip north, in 1846, was Ovamboland, but severe drought forced him to turn back at Omanbonde, located to the south of Grootfontein. Failure did not daunt Jonker Afrikaner, and by the end of 1848 he had already planned a new journey to Ovamboland. Presumably the trip did not get past the planning stage, since the sources make no mention of its realization.<sup>36</sup>

Jonker Afrikaner sought control over not only the Herero and the Nama, but over the missionaries working in the region too. This served his interest, because ever since the beginning of the 1840s missionaries were among the most important arms dealers in the southern and middle parts of South West Africa. Likewise, he controlled the operations of traders and explorers, and sought to prevent their interaction. Above all, Jonker Afrikaner wanted to prevent European explorers, traders and missionaries from selling arms to the Herero.<sup>37</sup> The Afrikaner policy of control was successful up to mid-nineteenth century. European economic activity was concentrated in Namaland, whence 8,000—10,000 head of cattle, ivory and ostrich feathers were annually taken to the markets of the Cape Colony in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

The first show of interest in South West Africa by European colonial powers was Sir James Edward Alexander's broad exploration of Namaland in 1836 and 1837. He undertook the venture at the behest of the Royal Geographical Society, which was associated with the government of Great Britain. His main task was to chart the region located between the twenty-first and twenty-fourth parallels.<sup>39</sup>

The plan was not, however, fully realized, since Headman Aramap refused to guide Alexander north of the Swakop River. Aramap claimed that »wild» Herero lived to the north of the river, who would kill all outsiders entering therein. Alexander took Aramap's advice, and confined his exploration to the region between the Swakop and Orange Rivers.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Andersson, 1987, p. 134; Galton, 1953, p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> Siiskonen, 1986, p. 46.

<sup>37</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 78—79, 101—104, 107—110. See also: Lau, 1982, pp. 277—284; Quellen, Bd. 30a, pp. 3—5, NAW

<sup>38</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 87—91, 101—102; Irle, 1906, p. 160; Galton, 1853, p. 68—70.

<sup>39</sup> Alexander, 1967, vol. 1, pp. v, x-xi.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander, 1967, vol. 1, annex map; Alexander, 1967, vol. 2, pp. 157—159. See also Lang, 1962, pp. 95—103.



According to Lau, Headman Aramap was Jonker Afrikaner; this is proof that Jonker Afrikaner controlled the movement of Europeans among the Herero.<sup>41</sup>

Afrikaner political and military dominance over the Nama, Herero and Oorlam showed signs of decay in mid-century.<sup>42</sup> Their control over trade also began to fail as is demonstrated most clearly by the spread of arms, alcohol and European manufactured goods among the Herero.<sup>43</sup> For example, in 1849 the traders James Cherman and Stewardson sold rifles and spears in northern Hereroland without Jonker's permission, which was not to his liking.<sup>44</sup>

Ovamboland, however, remained unknown both to the Oorlam and to the Europeans entering from the south until the beginning of the 1850s, when the Englishman Francis Galton and the Swede Charles John Andersson prepared for a journey to the Kunene River and Lake Ngami. In negotiating about the planned journey with Jonker Afrikaner, Galton let it be understood that he had close relations with the Cape government, and on this basis he demanded that the Afrikaners cease robbing the Herero and missionaries.<sup>45</sup>

Galton and Andersson departed for the exploration of Ovamboland in March 1851. They arrived in Ondonga at the beginning of June, guided by a Ndonga trading caravan returning from Hereroland.<sup>46</sup> Their stay in Ovamboland was restricted to two weeks in Ondonga because King Nangolo dhaAmutenya did not grant their party the right to travel to the Kunene River, or to other communities.<sup>47</sup>

Galton characterized the inhabitants of Ondonga as friendly, happy and peaceful. Actual poverty did not appear in the area; everyone appeared to be making a good living and the few old people seen were treated with respect and care. Andersson, like Galton, emphasized Ndongan wealth and hospitality.<sup>48</sup>

The enticing picture of Ondonga painted by Galton and Andersson

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<sup>41</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114—118.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Lau, 1987, pp. 88—93; Irle, 1906, p. 161; Vedder, 1985, pp. 333—335.

<sup>44</sup> Vedder, 1985, p. 260.

<sup>45</sup> Galton, F., Report to the Colonial Office, 29 February 1851, A. 451, NAW. See also: Galton, 1853, pp. 74, 84—85, 114—117; Andersson, 1987, pp. 118, 133—134; Andersson, 1852, p. 14, SUL.

<sup>46</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 187—193; Galton, 1853, pp. 210—212.

<sup>47</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 226—227; Andersson, 1987, pp. 207—208.

<sup>48</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 228—229; Andersson, 1987, pp. 192—207.



did not, however, lead to an immediate flood of traders or hunters into the area. These groups felt a considerably greater attraction at that time for the Lake Ngami region, located in the western part of present day Botswana. The lake was discovered by David Livingstone, William Cotton Oswell and Mungo Murray, whose journey began from the Cape in 1849. They described Ngami as a fish-inhabited fresh water lake, whose environs contained an incomparable population of wild animals, particularly elephants.<sup>49</sup> The discovery of Lake Ngami provoked an unusually great amount of interest.

Galton's and Andersson's aim after visiting Ondonga was to continue their exploration to Lake Ngami from the west side. They were forced, however, to turn back near Rietfontein without achieving their goal.<sup>50</sup> In the first half of the 1850s the explorer Andersson's interest was primarily focused on Lake Ngami. In 1853 he succeeded in reaching the lake, and was thus among the first Europeans to reach it from Walvis Bay.<sup>51</sup> Andersson's image of Lake Ngami, derived from the accounts of earlier explorations, did not correspond to his experience of it. The lake did not contain as much water as he expected, which was partly due to his having visited it at the driest time of the year. Nevertheless, according to Andersson there was abundant game in the area.<sup>52</sup>

Lake Ngami was the most attractive destination for traders and hunters in the beginning of the 1850s. Numerous trading trips were undertaken annually from the Transvaal to the lake region. According to Livingstone, in only one and a half years following the discovery of Lake Ngami about 1,100 elephants had been felled in the region.<sup>53</sup> Traders procured ivory, ostrich feathers, rhinoceros horns and a variety of skins in exchange mainly for beads, weapons and ammunition.<sup>54</sup>

The environment of Lake Ngami also excited scientists. Among them was the Swede Johan August Wahlberg who, guided by the hunter Frederick Green, departed for the lake from Walvis Bay in the beginning of

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<sup>49</sup> Livingstone, 1857, pp. 65—69.

<sup>50</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 288; Andersson, 1987, pp. 238—239.

<sup>51</sup> Andersson mentions that before him only the hunter Green had visited Lake Ngami from the west: Andersson, 1987, p. 441.

<sup>52</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 433, 440—445, 448—452; Andersson, 1855, p. 83—88. Cf. Quellen 30b, p. 94, NAW.

<sup>53</sup> Andersson, 1873, p. 273.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, p. 473; Andersson, 1855, pp. 86, 93; Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, p. 128; Petermann, 1855, p. 50; AWD vol. 3, 30 May 1855, 5 June 1855, 16 November 1855, 23 November 1855, SUL.

1855. His trip ended in misfortune, when an elephant crushed him to death near Lake Ngami.<sup>55</sup>

The almost incomparable array of game in the environment of Lake Ngami also attracted the attention of the traders and hunters operating in Namaland and Hereroland. In the latter half of the 1850s, hunting and trading trips were regularly carried out from Walvis Bay Harbor to the Lake Ngami region.<sup>56</sup>

Because the interest of Walvis Bay-based traders and hunters was focused on the Ngami region, Ovamboland had no significance as a market region during the 1850s. Nor did the Walvis Bay traders at that time make any serious inquiries into developing trade relations with the Ovambo. The region was, indeed, known then for its dense population and its exceptional population of big game; but because of transportation difficulties, traders first concentrated on exploiting the natural riches located closer to Walvis Bay.

## 4.2. The Ovambo Communities under the Pressure of expanding Markets

### 4.2.1. External Pressure for the Expansion of Trade Connections

In comparison to southern and mid-South West Africa and southern Angola, Ovamboland clearly remained more isolated from European influences until the end of the 1850s. For their part, until that time the Ovambo did not have any particular need to seek interaction with Europeans.

As a result of the activation of European trade in Namaland, Hereroland and the interior of Mossamedes Province the Ovambo were

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<sup>55</sup> Winquist, 1976, pp. 151—155. See also Wahlberg's diary from his exploration journey to the environs of Lake Ngami: *Anteckningsbok från resorna i Sydafrika*, vol. 3, 1855—1856, SUL.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. WLD vol. 2, 26—27 February 1859, A. 485, NAW; AWD vol. 3, 12 November 1855, 23 November 1855, SUL; Baldwin, 1894, p. 315; Baines, 1864, pp. 176—179.

left technologically behind their closest neighbors. For example, King Nangolo of Ondonga did not own, and was not even familiar with, firearms before the visit of the explorers Galton and Andersson in 1851.<sup>57</sup> There was still a manifest lack of knowledge of firearms in 1857, when the missionaries Hugo Hahn and Johannes Rath arrived in Ondonga. Their guide, the hunter Green, wanted to present King Nangolo a rifle; but Nangolo did not care for it, and took beads instead.<sup>58</sup>

It was during that very same visit of the Rhenish Missionary Society that the Ndonga learned the hard way about the effectiveness of firearms. The aim of the missionaries arriving under Green's guidance was to explore the possibilities for beginning missionary work in Ovamboland.<sup>59</sup>

But when Hahn and Rath arrived in Ondonga in 1857, the conditions were not favorable for their visit. The Ndonga were fearfully expecting an attack by the Afrikaners, whose earlier raids on the Kaokoveld region and close cooperation with European missionaries had become known to them.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the political situation within Ondonga was unstable, because there was a power struggle between King Nangolo's followers over who would inherit power, and a war with Ongandjera had just broken out.<sup>61</sup>

Doubts about the intentions of Hahn's party further increased, when its members refused to take part in both the cleansing ceremony for visitors to the community and the war and raiding trip planned by King Nangolo against the Kafima.<sup>62</sup> To crown it all, the travelers had set up camp under a holy fig tree and unharnessed their ox there.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Andersson, 1987, p. 194; Galton, 1853, p. 217; also see Een, 1872, p. 100.

<sup>58</sup> Diary of Frederick Green, April-Sept. 1857, 28 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW.

<sup>59</sup> Driessler, 1932, pp. 64—66. For more on Hahn's and Rath's exploration journey to Ondonga in 1857, see: Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 975—1081. As early as 1855 the Rhenish Missionary Society made the decision to open a mission field in Ovamboland: Generalversammlung der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, 18 April 1855, A/a:5, UEMA; BRMG 1855, pp. 97—105; also see Rohden, 1856, pp. 168—169.

<sup>60</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 992, 1037; Hugo Hahn Aufzeichnungen (1845—1871), 7 January 1858, p. 262, C/i:13, UEMA; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, NAW.

<sup>61</sup> Diary of Frederick Green, April-Sept. 1857, 9 July 1857, 21 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, p. 3, NAW.

<sup>62</sup> Galton, 1853, p. 216; Hahn, 1984/85, p. 1046; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, p. 4, NAW.

<sup>63</sup> Rautanen, 1904, p. 10; Peltola, 1958, pp. 27—28.

Due to the prevailing suspicion, King Nangolo received his guests only after the fifth day of their arrival, and forbid them to continue their journey to the Kunene River.<sup>64</sup> When, after its two-week stay, the party set out on the return trip to Hereroland, it came under an attack led by Nangolo's son. In defense the party resorted to firearms.<sup>65</sup>

According to Vedder, King Nangolo attacked the missionaries in order to get their four ox-wagons, which he wanted to use for transporting iron and copper ore from Cassinga and Otavi.<sup>66</sup> Vedder thus blames King Nangolo's greed for the confrontation. The missionary Hugo Hahn offers a more plausible explanation for the event: King Nangolo had seen the party primarily as an agent sent by Jonker Afrikaner.<sup>67</sup> Nor does tradition regarding this confrontation refer to King Nangolo's greed, but rather to the Hahn party's violation of numerous tabus which made the king suspicious of the travelers' intentions. The aim of Nangolo's attack was not to rob the party, but rather to kill its members. He believed that Hahn's group was preparing for an attack by Jonker Afrikaner.<sup>68</sup>

As a consequence of the effectiveness of firearms, the king's son was killed during the attack he led on the Hahn party. Shocked by this loss, Nangolo died of a stroke on the day after the confrontation.<sup>69</sup> The power struggle following the king's death did not remain an internal affair of Ondonga. Jonker Afrikaner effectively exploited the situation by allying himself with Shikongo shaKalulu, the brother of the new king, Shipanga shaAmukwiita. In 1858 Jonker Afrikaner sent an expedition, reinforced by the Herero headman Tjamuaha's troops, to help Shikongo take power from his brother. Shipanga was forced to flee to Uukwanyama. He formed a war party and tried to recapture power, but fell in battle.

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<sup>64</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1036, 1047, 1056; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, p. 5, NAW. See also Peltola, 1958, pp. 27—28.

<sup>65</sup> For more on the confrontation between the Ndonga and the Hugo Hahn party in 1857, see: Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1059—1064; *Reise der Herren Hugo Hahn und Rath im südwestlichen Afrika, Mai bis September 1857, 1859*, pp. 302—303; *Diary of Frederick Green, April—Sept. 1857, dated July*, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, pp. 6—8, NAW.

<sup>66</sup> Vedder, 1985, p. 375.

<sup>67</sup> Hugo Hahn *Aufzeichnungen (1845—1871)*, 7 January 1858, p. 262, C/i:13, UEMA; H. Hahn to the S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 7 October 1857, A. 450, 3/1, p. 6, NAW.

<sup>68</sup> Rautanen, 1904, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> Peltola, 1958, p. 28; Rautanen, 1904, p. 11; also see Namuhuja, 1983, p. 99.

In addition to aiding the coup, the Afrikaners and their allies robbed altogether eighteen cattle posts and took prisoners.<sup>70</sup>

In the latter part of 1860 the Afrikaners, led by Jonker Afrikaner, set out, with forty wagons, on a new raiding expedition to Ovamboland. On this expedition the Afrikaners visited at least Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ongandjera and Uukwanyama. It was then that the Kwanyama were introduced for the first time to firearms and horses upon capturing them from the attacker in battle. Overall, the Afrikaners' second expedition to Ovamboland was a success. An estimated 20,000 head of cattle were taken in the raiding while losses, aside from material expenses, were confined to two battle casualties.<sup>71</sup>

The visit of Hahn and Rath along with the Afrikaner raids harshly revealed to the Ovambo their own defenselessness before an attacker equipped with firearms and horses. They believed that the strength of firearms was based on witchcraft and ashes. They therefore filled a piece of dry hide with ash and sand and struck it from below with a club so that the ash flew into the air.<sup>72</sup> This operation did not, however, yield the same result as the whites' firearms.

Because the level of local technology was not sufficient for manufacturing firearms, an effort was made to procure them through trade. Dependence on Africans, especially on the Afrikaners, in the arms trade would have posed a direct threat to community political autonomy. The Ovambo endeavored to adapt to the political and economic change occurring around them by establishing direct contacts with European arms dealers.

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<sup>70</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 11 September 1890; Vedder, 1985, pp. 308—309. Cf. Namuhuja, 1983, p. 99.

<sup>71</sup> Vedder's estimate of the number of cattle taken in the raid is probably exaggerated: Vedder, 1985, p. 310. See also: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 294; Sckär, Kurze Geschichte der Ovakuanjama, C/k:7, UEMA; Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 44—45.

<sup>72</sup> Rautanen, 1904, pp. 11—12.

## 4.2.2. The Increasing Demand for Trade with Ovamboland in the 1860s

### 4.2.2.1. The Activation of Portuguese-Led Trade

During the time of the Afrikaner raids, European commercial interest in Ovamboland was growing. It was the Portuguese, who had traded with the Ovambo through their Mbangala intermediaries from mid-century on, whose interest was greatest.

The Kunene River region attracted the Portuguese mainly as a source of cattle and ivory. Commercial hunting in particular had strongly increased in Angola after the Portuguese government revoked the ivory trade monopoly in 1834. For example, 1,350 kg of ivory was officially exported from Luanda Harbor in 1832, while by 1844 the amount had climbed to 47,000 kg. Almost immediately after the revocation of the ivory trade monopoly, the hitherto artificially restricted price paid for ivory in the harbors of Angola tripled.<sup>73</sup>

By the 1860s, with the intense increase in hunting, big game populations were depleted in the environs of the harbors of Luanda, Benguela and Mossamedes and along the trade routes leading to them.<sup>74</sup> Henceforth hunting expeditions and trading trips were directed further into the interior.<sup>75</sup>

With the depletion of the elephant population in the coastal region, commercial hunting was replaced by agriculture and fishing as the most important economic activities in the Mossamedes Harbor area.<sup>76</sup> In the interior the conditions for commercial hunting were still good.<sup>77</sup> The escalation of trading operations by Portuguese traders and their intermediaries among the Ovambo in the early 1860s is clearly expressed in travel accounts and diaries from the time.

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<sup>73</sup> Miller, 1970, p. 178.

<sup>74</sup> Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, p. 214; Sayaux, 1879, vol. 1, p. 329; Mayo, 1882, pp. 13, 32.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Miller, 1969, pp. 26–27.

<sup>76</sup> For the economic change in the vicinity of the Mossamedes Harbor, see Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 70–79.

<sup>77</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 70. For the big game stocks in the Kunene River region: Magyar, 1859, p. 198; F.T. Valdez, *From Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa*, C/i:13, UEMA; »Der Cunene-Strom von Fr. Green erreicht«, 1867, p. 10.



The hunter Green was surprised by the extent of Portuguese-led trade in the Kunene River region, when he arrived there from the south in 1865.<sup>78</sup> According to Green, the Portuguese monopolized trade in the Ovambo communities.<sup>79</sup> Captain Een directly experienced the intensity of Portuguese trade on his ivory trading trip among the Ovambo kings in 1866. For example, when Een arrived in Uukwanyama he was told that a Portuguese trading party had just been there, and bought all the ivory available from King Mweshipandeka shaNingika.<sup>80</sup> As with the traders from Walvis Bay, the initial observations of the Finnish missionaries affirmed that the Portuguese controlled trade within the Ovambo communities.<sup>81</sup>

Portuguese traders obtained ivory and cattle from the Ovambo in exchange for glass beads, jewelry and other cheap decorative trinkets, tobacco and alcohol. Trade in slaves and arms appears to have become common only at the end of the 1860s.<sup>82</sup> An interesting special feature of the slave trade was that at first the Portuguese traded arms and ammunition only for slaves.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, prisoners of war and persons accused of witchcraft began to be sold as slaves.<sup>84</sup> According to the missionary

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<sup>78</sup> »Der Cunene-Strom von Fr. Green erreicht«, 1867, p. 10. During his previous visit to Ondonga in 1857, the hunter Green made observations on trade between the Ndonga and the middlemen of the Portuguese traders. The Ndonga exchanged primarily ivory for beads, but not for firearms or ammunition: *Diary of Frederick Green*, April-Sept. 1857, 28 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW.

<sup>79</sup> S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail 20 October 1866, A. 83, vol. 16, NAW; CJAD 21 June 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW.

<sup>80</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 108–111. Cf. Andersson to his wife, Otjimbingwe 15 December 1866, A. 83, vol. 18, NAW; CJAD 31 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>81</sup> See e.g. letters sent by the Finnish missionaries to the Mission Director Sirelius during 1870 and 1871, Eac:1–2, FMSA. See also MBC at Ondonga 13–14 June 1872, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 50–52; Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27.

<sup>82</sup> For more on the items of trade; see e.g. CJAD 22 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW; Andersson, 1875, p. 230; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 107–108; Een, 1872, pp. 109–111; Piirainen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 30 July 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Sirelius, Ondonga 29 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 27 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for October, November and December 1873, Oniipa 2 January 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>83</sup> Sundry Mema, copied from Mr. Green's Journals, A. 83, vol. 3, pp. 277–283, NAW. Cf. CJAD 27 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, pp. 109–110; Schinz, 1891, p. 253; SLSa 1871, pp. 103–105; Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 25 October 1878, Eac:6, FMSA; MRD 16 December 1889, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.



Hahn, at the end of the 1850s the Ovambo did not yet desire to sell even prisoners of war as slaves to the Portuguese.<sup>85</sup> This helps explain why firearms remained rare among the Ovambo until the latter part of the 1860s, even though they had been in contact with Portuguese-led long-distance trade already for almost two decades.

Uukwambi, Uukwanyama and Ondonga were the Ovambo communities most actively involved in trade with the Portuguese. The residence of the king of Uukwambi, Nuujoma w'Eelu, became the most popular meeting place for traders in the 1860s. Nuujoma sought to concentrate trade in Uukwambi by constructing special guest huts for the traders in order to increase their comfort.<sup>86</sup>

Portuguese-Ovambo trade lacked, however, the traditions associated with, for example, the trade relations between the Portuguese and the Ovimbundu established in the seventeenth century. In spite of its dominating position, and even though it had clearly escalated, Portuguese trade with Ovamboland was not broad in scale even at the end of the 1860s.

The greatest restraint on the growth of trade was deficient planning, and the lack of capital among traders operating in the interior. This is well demonstrated by the fact that traders transported their goods by carrying them.<sup>87</sup> In the interior, trade was not carried out by commercial houses, but by small traders, who were usually poor and in debt, and worked solely as agents of Mossamedes traders. The Mbangala acted as intermediaries for the Portuguese among the Ovambo.<sup>88</sup>

#### 4.2.2.2. Walvis Bay Traders enter the Ovambo Market

The 1860s marked an economic and political turning point for Namaland and Hereroland. First of all, the Nama economy was strained at the be-

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<sup>85</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1030, 1051. Cf. *Diary of Frederick Green, April-Sept. 1857*, 28 July 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 292—293; Een, 1872, pp. 104—105; Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 50—52; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 18—23, 48—49; Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27.

<sup>87</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Skoglund, report for November 1877, Olukonda 1 December 1877, Eac:5, FMSA.

<sup>88</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 63. See also: »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 289, 293; *Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst*, »Kaukungua, Noah», C/k:22, UEMA; Piirainen to Sirelius, Ondonga 31 December

ginning of the decade by diseases: lungsickness struck the cattle while people were lost to smallpox. Furthermore, the swift decline of big game weakened the profitability of commercial hunting in Namaland.

When lungsickness broke out among cattle, Jonker Afrikaner tried to contain the epidemic through inoculations and restricting the cattle trade. Consequently, the trade in cattle going through Namaland to the Cape was cut off in the early part of the 1860s.<sup>89</sup> At the end of the 1860s, in fear of the spread of lungsickness, traffic along the trade route leading to Lake Ngami was also severed.<sup>90</sup>

Cattle trade restrictions interfered with European business operations in Namaland and Hereroland, based as they were on the export of cattle, ivory and ostrich feathers to the Cape. For example, in 1860 the trader Andersson obtained permission to take a herd of cattle to the Cape Colony market, but one year later permission was no longer granted due to the spread of lungsickness. When Andersson's party tried to illicitly transport a herd of 1,400 cattle into the Cape market, it was thwarted by Afrikaners.<sup>91</sup>

Afrikaner hegemony over the Oorlam, Nama and Herero showed signs of disintegration from the turn of the 1860s onward. The trader Andersson wrote in his diary at the beginning of 1862, that he indeed hoped that the conflicts among the Oorlam communities would lead to a war between them in which they would destroy one another. Only the fall of the Afrikaners, according to Andersson, created conditions for the freeing of trade.<sup>92</sup>

An irreparable conflict arose between Andersson and the Afrikaners, because the trading post he founded at Otjimbingwe in 1860 threatened to break Jonker Afrikaner's trade control system. Nevertheless, Jonker

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1870, Eac:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for October, November and December 1873, Oniipa 2 January 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>89</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 122—128. For the spreading of lungsickness into Namaland, see: CJAD 12 March 1860, 2 April 1860, 6 April 1860, 10 April 1860, 22 April 1860, 16 May 1860, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW.

<sup>90</sup> Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, p. 214. Afrikaners accused the traders James Chapman and Charles Thomas of introducing cattle lungsickness into Namaland from the environs of Lake Ngami in the beginning of 1860. James Chapman defended himself by arguing that lungsickness had spread into Namaland from the Cape, see: CJAD 10 February 1860, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW; Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, pp. 209—211; Büttner, 1884, p. 251.

<sup>91</sup> Andersson, 1875, pp. 5—13; Lau, 1982, pp. 309—311.

<sup>92</sup> CJAD 15 March 1862, A. 83, vol. 4, NAW.

Afrikaner did not want to violently suppress Andersson's business operations at Otjimbingwe, and choose instead to cut off his trade connection to the Cape using cattle lung sickness as a pretext.<sup>93</sup>

After the death of Jonker Afrikaner (18 August 1861) Andersson began to directly defy Afrikaner trade control by sending unauthorized trading expeditions to Hereroland. The increasingly strained relation between Andersson and the Afrikaners led to armed confrontation at Otjimbingwe on 15 June 1863. Andersson's position in the struggle against the Afrikaners was strengthened when the Herero headmen came to his support under the leadership of Maherero from 1864 onward. Military confrontation likewise broke out among the Oorlam communities. The armed confrontations, which continued until 1867, led to the break down of Afrikaner domination in Namaland and Hereroland.<sup>94</sup>

The overthrow of Afrikaner hegemony first of all strengthened the political and economic status of Europeans in Namaland and Hereroland. In the peace agreement between the Herero and Nama headmen and Jan Jonker Afrikaner in Okahandja in 1870, the headmen promised not to set restrictions on the settlement and movement of Europeans.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to Vedder, who called this seven year war (1863—1870) the »Herero war of liberation«, Brigitte Lau calls it the »traders' and missionaries' war of liberation«.<sup>96</sup> The traders' and missionaries' goal of breaking Afrikaner control over their work was attained at the Okahandja peace conference.

Cattle lung sickness and the overthrow of Oorlam hegemony transformed the market conditions throughout all of South West Africa. With lung sickness having brought the cattle trade to a near standstill, Europeans increasingly shifted the focus of their business operations to commercial hunting. The breakdown of Afrikaner trade control made it possible to undertake trading and hunting trips to Hereroland and further to Ovamboland and Kaokoveld where big game was still plentiful.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Andersson, 1875, pp. 2—3; Lau, 1982, pp. 308—309.

<sup>94</sup> For more on the armed confrontation, see: CJAD 10 June 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; Green, »The Battle between the Damaras and the Namaquas Fought on the 22 June 1864«, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; Andersson, 1875, pp. 64—79. See also: Loth, 1963, pp. 56—85; Lau, 1987, pp. 128—141.

<sup>95</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. i-iv; Lau, 1982, pp. 344—345. See the trader Een's judgement of the significance of the peace of Okahandja for trade: Een, 1872, pp. 216—217.

<sup>96</sup> Vedder, 1985, pp. 398—442; Lau, 1982, pp. 292—293.

<sup>97</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 88—91, 127.

The severance of the land route through Namaland to the Cape at the beginning of the 1860s did not limit the growth of commercial hunting. This was because it was cheaper to transport ivory and ostrich feathers by water from Walvis Bay to the Cape than to haul them over land in ox-wagons.<sup>98</sup> Ivory export from Walvis Bay grew steadily throughout the 1860s. The trader James Chapman estimated that in the mid-1860s, 6,800—9,000 kg of ivory were annually exported through Walvis Bay. There was likewise a strong increase in ostrich feather exports as the northern regions were opened up to traders and hunters.<sup>99</sup>

Commercial hunting and European trading in South West Africa was chiefly confined during the 1860s to Hereroland. Interest in the northern regions was, nevertheless, continually increasing. The earliest trading and hunting trips from Walvis Bay to Ovamboland took place in the beginning of the 1860s, but their yield was meager.<sup>100</sup>

The war in Hereroland clearly increased the Walvis Bay traders' interest in Ovamboland as a market region. In 1863 the trader Andersson sent a large trading party to the north on a trading and hunting expedition.<sup>101</sup>

The traders' and hunters' initial experiences were not, however, positive. Hunting yielded little, and the position of the Portuguese relative to the Ovambo market was considered too strong.<sup>102</sup> According to the hunter Green, who completed a broad tour of Ovamboland in 1865, penetration of the Portuguese monopolized market would be difficult, because of the high price they paid for ivory.<sup>103</sup>

Most of the Walvis Bay traders obtained their exchangeable goods from

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<sup>98</sup> Lau, 1982, p. 312. For instance, in 1862 the trader Andersson used water transport to send about 2,300 kg of ivory from Otjimbingwe to the Cape market: CJAD 23 December 1861, A. 83, vol. 4, NAW.

<sup>99</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 91.

<sup>100</sup> The trader Adam Kraai returned in March 1860 from a trading journey to Ovamboland: CJAD 12 March 1860, A. 83, vol. 4, NAW. The first well known trading and hunting journey to Ovamboland from the south was made by Henry Samuel Chapman, Daniel Montague Kisch and Rackham in 1860—1861: Tabler, 1973, pp. 19—20, 62, 90; Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, p. 226. See also the hunter Green's trading journey to Ovamboland at the beginning of the 1860s: Tabler, 1973, pp. 45—49; McKiernan, 1954, p. 107.

<sup>101</sup> Tabler, 1973, pp. 44, 54, 57, 68—70, 83—86, 48, 111—112.

<sup>102</sup> CJAD 25 October 1864, 11—13 December 1864, 19 December 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; Smuts to Andersson, Omapue 12 December 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW.

<sup>103</sup> S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail 20 October 1866, A. 83, vol. 16, NAW; CJAD 21 June 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW.

the Cape Colony. Therefore, in order to improve their competitive status they, under Andersson's leadership, demanded that the Cape government decrease its customs duties.<sup>104</sup> For example, in the 1860s the wholesale price of rifles sold by the Portuguese was only one fourth of what the Walvis Bay traders were forced to pay in the Cape for rifles manufactured in England. To be sure, the rifles sold by the Portuguese were of poorer quality.<sup>105</sup>

Another means for improving competitive ability, was to import trade goods in large amounts directly from Europe to Walvis Bay. Thus the Rhenish Missionary Society imported rifles for trading from Germany, so avoiding Cape Town customs duties.<sup>106</sup>

The wholesaler Andersson was forced to transfer his business operations northward by the movement of the hunters and traders he supplied into Ovamboland. In the beginning of 1865 he hired the hunter Joe Grendon to begin trading operations for him in Ovamboland.<sup>107</sup> Andersson established a fixed trading post in Ondonga, which then supplied the traders and hunters operating in Ovamboland.<sup>108</sup> Fed up with the unstable political conditions in Hereroland, Andersson even planned to open an ox-wagon route to Mossamedes Harbor to compete with the trade route leading to Walvis Bay.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to their trading post in Ondonga the Walvis Bay traders had a fixed base in Uukwambi in the mid-1860s.<sup>110</sup> The establishment of fixed bases displays the traders' increased optimism concerning the Ovamboland market. Ondonga served as a bridgehead for traders coming from the south, because until the latter part of the 1860s the only transport route from the south to Ovamboland known by Europeans led the traveler straight to Ondonga.<sup>111</sup>

The only gathering places for traders were the trading posts of Ondonga and Uukwambi, whence trading trips were undertaken to the various parts of Ovamboland. The social and national backgrounds of the

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<sup>104</sup> S.A.C. Advertiser and Cape Town Mail 20 October 1866, A. 83, vol. 16, NAW.

<sup>105</sup> Een, 1872, p. 109.

<sup>106</sup> Een, 1872, p. 29; Büttner, 1884, p. 283.

<sup>107</sup> CJAD 20—21 February 1865, 6 March 1865, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW.

<sup>108</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 67—68; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 288.

<sup>109</sup> Andersson, 1875, p. 336; Een, 1872, p. 120.

<sup>110</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 292.

<sup>111</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 56—60, 67, 121—126.

hunters and traders were diverse. Because the economic resources of Ovamboland did not attract trading companies, commerce was carried on by individual traders.

Of all the Walvis Bay traders it was the explorer-gone-wholesaler Andersson who carried on the most organized and extensive commercial activity.<sup>112</sup> At the beginning of 1867 Andersson himself travelled to Ovamboland, during which he fell ill and died.<sup>113</sup> With Andersson's death there was a reverse in the commercial activity of Walvis Bay traders in Ovamboland: most of the traders which he had supplied were forced to turn back to Hereroland, due to lack of capital. In Hereroland at the end of the 1860s there were no wholesalers of Andersson's standing with the capacity to continue funding the trading trips of poor small traders and hunters.<sup>114</sup>

After Andersson's death in 1867 trade with Ovamboland was concentrated in the hands of his young Swedish assistant Axel Eriksson. In 1869 he founded a trading company with the Swede Anders Ohlsson in Omaruru, whence it was possible to carry on commercial activity in Hereroland and Ovamboland, while at the same time being close to Walvis Bay.<sup>115</sup>

In the 1860s the Walvis Bay traders particularly sought ivory and ostrich feathers from Ovamboland. In exchange they offered beads, clothes and other small objects as well as arms and ammunition. After their initial inquiry trips, the Walvis Bay traders were very successful in the ivory trade among the southern Ovambo communities.<sup>116</sup> In the latter part of the 1860s, the Etosha Pan flood plain emerged as the most important site for commercial hunting in South West Africa. Of the ivory exported from Walvis Bay (6,800—9,000 kg per year) in the mid-1860s, about two thirds was from the Etosha Pan flood plain.<sup>117</sup> In examining the total

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<sup>112</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 51, 67—68, 118—119, 122; Waerneman, 1955, pp. 13—14.

<sup>113</sup> CJAD 29 January 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW. C.J. Andersson's last letter to his wife was sent from Uukwanyama on 27 June 1867, A. 83, vol. 18, NAW.

<sup>114</sup> For more on Andersson's role as traders' supplier, see CJAD 12—13 December 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW.

<sup>115</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 14—17; Tabler, 1973, pp. 37—40. See also: Een, 1872, pp. 197—198, 210—223; Esterhuyse, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>116</sup> E.g. Palgrave to Andersson, Ondonga 12 May 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; Green to Andersson, Ondonga 7 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; Pereira to Andersson, Ondonga 26 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW.

<sup>117</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 91. According to the missionary Hahn in the mid-1860s the trader Andersson procured 4,500 to 5,000 kg of ivory from Ovamboland yearly: Tagebuch



amount of ivory exported from Walvis Bay, it is important to note that it also included ivory procured from the Lake Ngami and Okavango River areas; this makes the significance of Ovamboland as a source of ivory stand out even more.<sup>118</sup>

In the 1860s the position of the Walvis Bay traders in the Portuguese-controlled Ovambo market was strongest in Ondonga. For example, in 1867 King Shikongo possessed at least twenty firearms, many of which were purchased from the Walvis Bay traders. Shikongo remarked to the trader Andersson that after the coming of the Walvis Bay traders only the weapons sold by them, being technically superior to those sold by the Portuguese, were acceptable to him.<sup>119</sup>

Another important bridgehead for traders coming from the south was Uukwambi, where a fixed trading post was also built. Uukwambi's leading position in European-led long-distance trade was based on King Nuu-joma's desire and ability to trade with Europeans and their intermediaries.<sup>120</sup> According to the missionary Kurvinen, around 1870 more than ten white-led trading expeditions visited Uukwambi yearly.<sup>121</sup>

The strengthening of the Walvis Bay traders' position on the Uukwambi market is also indicated by the fact that, in reference to his clothing, King Nuu-joma called himself a black Englishman.<sup>122</sup> King Nuu-joma and King Shikongo of Ondonga already owned ox-wagons and horses in the mid-1860s; at that time these items were obtainable only from the Walvis Bay traders.<sup>123</sup> In addition to these communities, trading trips were

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von C.H. Hahn über die Reise nach Ovamboland im Jahre 1866, 19 July 1866, Hhb:1, FMSA. Cf. CJAD 24 March 1865, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; CJAD 21 June 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; CJAD 7 February 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW. The trader James Chapman classified elephant tusks according to their weight as follows: A pair of male elephant tusks, weight 45—65 kg = fair, 72—82 kg = very fair, and over 90 kg = extraordinary; a pair of cow elephant tusks, weight 14—16 kg = fair, and over 32 kg = extraordinary: Chapman, 1971, vol. 1, p. 180. See also: Een, 1872, p. 72; Lindblom, 1925, pp. 79—113.

<sup>118</sup> CJAD 23 December 1861, 25 January 1862, A. 83, vol. 4, NAW; Lau, 1987, p. 91.

<sup>119</sup> CJAD 16 April 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>120</sup> E.g. Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 50—51; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 18—23; Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27.

<sup>121</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>122</sup> Een, 1872, p. 104.

<sup>123</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 289, 292; CJAD 24 September 1866, 18 December 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; Een, 1872, p. 122.

made at least to Ongandjera and Uukwanyama.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1860s the Walvis Bay traders did not succeed in establishing as strong a foothold in other Ovambo communities as they did in Ondonga or Uukwambi. The worst situation was in Ombandja, where the king refused to allow them to enter his community.<sup>125</sup>

Comparing the business activities of the Mossamedes and Walvis Bay traders, it can be observed that in Ovamboland both were interested primarily in ivory. Unlike the Walvis Bay traders, the Mossamedes traders were not at all concerned with ostrich feathers.<sup>126</sup> In addition to ivory, the Mossamedes traders procured cattle and, from the latter half of the nineteenth century onward, slaves. In contrast, Ovambo cattle did not lure the Walvis Bay traders; there was plenty of cattle in Hereroland which was, moreover, bigger and meatier than that to be had in Ovamboland. Furthermore, during the 1860s, when the Cape land route was closed due to war and cattle lung sickness, the cattle trade was at a standstill.<sup>127</sup>

The greatest issue dividing traders arriving in Ovamboland from the north and south was the slave trade. The selling of slaves to Hereroland, or for export through Walvis Bay was illegal and smuggling was not practiced.<sup>128</sup> In Portuguese Angola the slave export trade was forbidden by law in 1836, but the slave trade within Angola continued uninterrupted. Uukwambi became the center of the slave trade in Ovamboland. There King Nuujoma traded prisoners for spirits.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> For more on trading trips to Ongandjera and Uukwambi, see: Green to Andersson, Ondonga 7 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; Pereira to Andersson, Ondonga 26 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; CJAD 14—18 May 1867, 22 May-6 June 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW; Een, 1872, pp. 110—111; Tabler, 1973, pp. 37—40; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>125</sup> E.g. Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; McKiernan, 1954, p. 107.

<sup>126</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 134—135.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, p. 122; CJAD 19 December 1864, 24 March 1865, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW. The trader Andersson mentions that only the trader Adam Kraai had purchased a small herd of cattle from Ovamboland in 1860: CJAD 12 March 1860, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW.

<sup>128</sup> Moorsom, 1973, p. 17. See also: Fr. Green, »Ovamboland and the Hunting Veld«, *The Cape Argus* 24 February 1872; Irle, 1906, p. 137.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, pp. 104, 109—110; SLSa 1871, pp. 103—105; Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 50—52; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 18—23, 48—49; McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

In light of the business operations of the Walvis Bay traders, the trader Andersson, and his source of information the hunter Green, exaggerated the strength of the Mossamedes traders on the Ovambo market in the 1860s. Andersson's article for the S.A.C. Advertiser and the Cape Town Mail had a clear commercial-political motive: the lowering of duties on imports from the Cape Colony to South West Africa.

#### 4.2.3. Ovambo Capacity for controlling European-Led Long-distance Trade

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch has emphasized how important it was for African rulers to control long-distance trade, in particular trade with Europeans. Her example from the Congo kingdom shows that when the king lost control of long-distance trade his position was weakened.<sup>130</sup> In South West Africa slackening control over trade carried out by Europeans led to the dissolution of Jonker Afrikaner's hegemony in Namaland and Hereroland in the 1860s.

Within the Ovambo communities too, kings firmly controlled economic resources and trade. How then did the Ovambo try to control the activities of the Europeans among them, and how did they succeed in so doing?

Special care was taken to follow the actions of unknown visitors within the Ovambo communities. As the explorers Andersson and Galton approached Ondonga in 1851 they ran into the first Ndongan guard post south of the Etosha Pan.<sup>131</sup> Andersson's exploratory journey to the Okavango River at the end of the 1850s further revealed the effectiveness of the Ndonga control system.<sup>132</sup> He observed that the Ndonga closely followed the movements of both Africans and Europeans outside of the area inhabited by the community. The approach of anyone from southward was known about a week before they arrived in Ondonga. Cattle posts and water places were central to the control system. Ondonga's southernmost cattle post in the 1850s was located at the Namutoni (Omutjamatunda) water place in the southeastern corner of the Etosha Pan. The herders kept an eye on traffic while grazing their cattle.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1977, p. 87.

<sup>131</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 183—184; Galton, 1853, p. 202.

<sup>132</sup> Andersson, 1968, pp. 105, 131, 139, 182, 221.

<sup>133</sup> Andersson, 1968, p. 139; Andersson, 1987, pp. 183—184; Galton, 1853, pp. 202—211. See also Mossolov, 1983, p. 29.

Natural conditions greatly eased the control of traffic entering Ovamboland from the south, since transport routes were connected with water places. Because of the uneven distribution of rain, movement was season bound. The most favorable time for travel in Ovamboland was after the rainy season in May/June.<sup>134</sup>

Because of the mud, movement was difficult during the rainy season. For example, it took the natural scientist Hans Schinz six weeks to go from Ondonga to Grootfontein in March and April, while during the dry season it was possible to do the trip in ten days.<sup>135</sup> Europeans particularly avoided residence in the northernmost parts of Ovamboland at the end of the rainy season, when diseases raged. In order to escape fever diseases most European hunters withdrew at the end of the rainy season from Ondonga to the mountain regions of northern Hereroland.<sup>136</sup>

During the 1850s Europeans knew only one route from Walvis Bay to Ovamboland. Up to Otavi there were several routes to choose from. After that the route circled around the east side of the Etosha Pan, following the traditional Ndonga trade route leading to Hereroland and the Otavi copper deposit. Because of the harshness of nature to the north of Otavi, there were no alternative routes. The way was determined by the location of water.

At the end of the 1860s, a route to Ovamboland going along the western side of the Etosha Pan came into use. According to travel reports, Captain Een was the first European to travel the western route. In 1867 he returned from Ondonga to Otjimbingwe by the west side of the Etosha Pan, and believed that he was the first European to use the route. Een justified the opening of the new route, explaining that it shortened the trip time and made it possible to dodge robber bands preying on the trading caravans along the eastern route. To the north of Outjo the western route was, however, harsher than the eastern route; water places were further apart, and less grass was available.<sup>137</sup>

The late opening of the western route is indicated by, among other things, the fact that the missionary Hugo Hahn used the eastern route for his expedition to and from Ovamboland in 1866.<sup>138</sup> The Finnish mis-

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<sup>134</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 90.

<sup>135</sup> Schinz, 1891, pp. 342–344.

<sup>136</sup> Een, 1872, p. 67; Rosenblad, 1924, p. 50. See also Pereira to Andersson, Ondonga 26 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW.

<sup>137</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 121–129.

<sup>138</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 284–287, 296–297.

sionaries travelled the eastern route to Ovamboland in 1870.<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, because of its shortness the popularity of the western route grew swiftly among the Walvis Bay traders, with the eastern route being used only in exceptional cases. For example, in his examination of routes to Ovamboland from the south, the American explorer and trader Gerald McKiernan considered the western way as the main route.<sup>140</sup> By going the western route travelers ended up, depending on which way they chose, either in Ondonga or Uukwambi.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, there was a third way of entering Ovamboland, namely, the northern trade route. It went east from Mossamedes Harbor whence it followed the Caculovar River to Humbe. After crossing the Kunene River it was possible to reach the various Ovambo communities from the route.

The Portuguese colonial government restricted all traffic to Ovamboland from the north to one route. At the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the next decade the Portuguese tried to conquer the regions of Huilla and Humbe. To ensure the accomplishment of this, they founded military bases in Huilla and Humbe. Because of resistance by the local population and the scarcity of available resources, this venture failed and the Portuguese colonial officials were forced to withdraw, in the beginning of the 1860s, from the interior of southern Angola. In spite of the soldiers' departure, Huilla and Humbe retained their status as trading centers, and were main stages for trading trips to Ovamboland.<sup>142</sup>

Due to the scarcity of routes, it was easy for the Ovambo to control traffic entering their territory. Those entering the communities had to obtain royal permission to move about, trade and exploit natural resources therein.<sup>143</sup> In practice permission to enter and travel in the community was obtained upon arrival at a community border post by applying to the king.<sup>144</sup> The applicant had to explain his plans and the purpose of

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<sup>139</sup> See e.g. Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 27—35.

<sup>140</sup> McKiernan, 1954, pp. 94—96; also see Möller, 1974, p. 138.

<sup>141</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>142</sup> Pelissier, 1977, pp. 139—150; Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 59—61.

<sup>143</sup> Europeans were also controlled in Nama communities. Traders had to abide by the rules laid down by the chief. For instance, among the Witboois, traders were not allowed to go hunting without permission; if they did so, they were punished: Bochert, 1980, p. 41.

<sup>144</sup> E.g. Galton, 1853, p. 204; Andersson, 1987, p. 186; »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, pp. 287—288, 290, 293; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 100—101.

his trip. In Uukwambi travel applications were traditionally transmitted to the king by the sons of the headmen of the outlying districts.<sup>145</sup> In Ondonga in the mid-1850s it was the job of a man named Tjizemba to lead visitors entering from the south to the king.<sup>146</sup>

After granting permission to travel, the king first invited the traveler to visit him; this was an occasion for the visitor to present gifts to the king. In 1851 the explorer Galton presented King Nangolo an ox, beads, a sword, a magnifying glass and various small objects.<sup>147</sup> The more eminent a visitor deemed himself to be, the greater were the gifts he brought for the king.<sup>148</sup>

The kings, suspecting that Europeans would cause harm, were not always willing to grant them permission to travel. For example, in 1877 the king of Uukwambi, Negumbo IyaKandenge, forbid traders from traversing his territory to Ongandjera.<sup>149</sup> Nor was it permitted to leave community territory without royal permission.<sup>150</sup>

The conditions for the king of Uukwambi to control traffic going to Ongandjera were truly excellent, since the best route leading there went through his domain. If the king of Uukwambi did not grant them right of transit, then Europeans usually gave up their travel plans, because the alternative route to Ongandjera by the south side of Uukwambi was considerably rougher. The other rulers of the Ovambo communities also at times behaved in the same manner as the king of Uukwambi.<sup>151</sup>

Once they entered the communities Europeans remained under strict supervision. The explorers Galton and Andersson experienced King Nangolo's control as irritatingly strict. For example, Europeans had to ob-

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<sup>145</sup> E.g. Kurvinen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 30 July 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 7 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA. Cf. APeD 19 February 1889, 20—21 February 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>146</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1024, 1029.

<sup>147</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 185, 211. Cf. Hahn's and Rath's arrival in Ondonga in 1857: Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1035—1056.

<sup>148</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 13 March 1900, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>149</sup> Skoglund, report for July 1877, undated, Eac:5, FMSA; Rautanen to Sirelius, Omandongo 27 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA. For instance, in 1891 King Negumbo of Uukwambi forbid the missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society to traverse his territory on their way to Ongandjera: Wulfhorst, 1917, pp. 2—4, C/i:20, UEMA.

<sup>150</sup> E.g. Galton, 1853, pp. 220, 226; McKiernan, 1954, p. 104; APeD 22—23 February 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>151</sup> E.g. Andersson, 1987, pp. 207—208; Galton, 1853, pp. 226—227; Hahn, 1984/85, p. 1056; *Diary of Frederick Green*, April-Sept. 1857, A. 83, vol. 17, NAW.



tain permission from the king to trade with households.<sup>152</sup>

Movement within and between the Ovambo communities was likewise firmly controlled and restricted to established routes. Water places, oshanas and woodland zones channelled travelers to the same routes. For their own security Europeans avoided illicit residence and movement within community territory, since such behavior was easily interpreted as a sign of intent to raid or wage war. The Ovambo themselves planned and carried out their raids as inconspicuously as possible. For this reason they often deviated from established routes in order to increase surprise.<sup>153</sup>

Through the control of natural resources, production, movement and trade the Ovambo kings effectively supervised both the members of their own communities and the movement of outsiders. This functioning control system thus provided the king with a good framework for supervising European-led trade, and for monopolizing it in his community. For example, at the end of the 1860s all the firearms in Uukwambi were in the possession of King Nuujoma, and were stored at his residence.<sup>154</sup>

### 4.3. The Vigorous Growth in Trade in Ovamboland in the 1870's

#### 4.3.1. The Activation of the Walvis Bay Traders' Operations

##### 4.3.1.1 The Decline of the Hereroland Market

The peace of Okahandja in 1870 marked the overthrow of Afrikaner hegemony in Hereroland and Namaland and, correspondingly, the bolstering of the economic and political position of European traders. The downfall of Jonker Afrikaner's control also met with satisfaction among the missionaries.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Andersson, 1987, pp. 207–208; Galton, 1853, pp. 220, 226. See also Hahn, 1984/85, p. 1053; ASD vol. 1, 4 September 1895, PC.

<sup>153</sup> ELC, pp. 868–878; Gustaf De Vylder's letter to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873, PC.

<sup>154</sup> Een, 1872, p. 105.

<sup>155</sup> Government Notice No. 480, 1870, Colonial Office, Cape of Good Hope, A. 335, Letters from acquaintances in S.W.A., NAW.

The improvement of the political situation in Hereroland and Namaland, and a strong rise in the price of ivory and ostrich feathers attracted traders from the Cape to the South West African region in the early part of the 1870s. Most of these traders confined their activities to Walvis Bay's sphere of influence; Walvis Bay became South West Africa's most important export and import harbor.<sup>156</sup>

With ships arriving at Walvis Bay continually bringing new hunters and traders, there was a virtual flood of traders in Hereroland in the 1870s.<sup>157</sup> According to Vedder, 137 Europeans, most of which were traders, resided in South West Africa in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>158</sup> In fact, the amount of Europeans was considerably greater than this.

Most of these traders were almost penniless, like the explorer James Chapman's (d. 1872) son William, who arrived in Walvis Bay in the summer of 1874, and entered the service of the trader James Harrison.<sup>159</sup>

While in Namaland the lungsickness epidemic had nearly terminated the cattle trade with the Cape Colony in the 1860s, in Hereroland the disease was not widespread and did not cause as great damage. The struggle against lungsickness was waged in Hereroland from the 1860s onward, with vaccinations and quarantine regulations.<sup>160</sup> For example, in 1875 Herero headmen prohibited the entrance into Hereroland of oxen born in Ovamboland, because nothing had been done there to stop the spread of lungsickness.<sup>161</sup>

The cattle trade in South West Africa shrank considerably in comparison to what it had been before the lungsickness epidemic. While in the early part of the 1850s, 8,000—10,000 head of cattle were annually exported to the Cape, in the mid-1870s the number plunged to 3,000.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 16; *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 23—24, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 22—25, A. 233, NAW; Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/40—25/41, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA; Piirainen, report for January, February and March 1875, Omaruru 31 March 1875, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>158</sup> Vedder, 1985, pp. 580—584. Cf. Piirainen, report for January, February and March 1875, Omaruru 31 March 1875, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>159</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 21, A. 233, NAW. See also: Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/40, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA; Tabler, 1973, p. 75.

<sup>160</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 123; Büttner, 1884, p. 252.

<sup>161</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Stellenbosch 18 March 1875, Eac:4, FMSA. See also McKiernan, 1954, p. 76.

<sup>162</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 89; Palgrave, 1877, p. 83.

In the Walvis Bay sphere of influence ivory and ostrich feathers, the export of which reached its high point in the 1870s, surpassed cattle in importance as export items. With the breakdown of Jonker Afrikaner's hegemony, hunters and traders were able, from the early 1860s on, to move about freely in Hereroland's best hunting grounds, and extend their trading and hunting trips to, for example, Ovamboland.<sup>163</sup>

To the Cape alone 14,500 kg of ivory were shipped from Walvis Bay in 1875; one year later the figure was 15,600 kg. During the same years the amount of ostrich feathers shipped was 2,500 kg and 2,600 kg, respectively. The annual export of ivory to the Cape doubled in the 1870s in comparison to the previous decade (6,800—9,000 kg).<sup>164</sup> Ivory and ostrich feathers were probably also exported from Walvis Bay directly to Europe, but there is no information available concerning this export.

Unable to withstand the sudden increase in hunting, Hereroland's wild animal population swiftly dwindled. First, in the beginning of the 1870s, the elephants were depleted followed by the ostriches somewhat latter.<sup>165</sup> In the beginning of the 1870s, the hunter Green remarked that elephant hunting had become a matter of luck in Hereroland.<sup>166</sup>

In spite of the decrease in game in Hereroland, the Walvis Bay traders were optimistic about the growth of commercial hunting. This is well demonstrated by, among other things, Eriksson's trading company's plans. Eriksson intended to expand trading, particularly to Ovamboland and Lake Ngami, where plenty of ivory and ostrich feathers were still to be had.<sup>167</sup> In the 1860s, the Lake Ngami region had become an important source of big game for the Walvis Bay traders.<sup>168</sup>

To improve the profitability of trade Eriksson began to import to Walvis Bay part of the trading goods he needed in large amounts directly

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<sup>163</sup> E.g. *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 23—24, A. 233, NAW; Rautanen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 18 March 1875, Eac:4, FMSA; Piirainen, report for October, November and December 1876, Omaruru 31 December 1876, Eac:5, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 21 May 1877, Eac:5, FMSA.

<sup>164</sup> Palgrave, 1877, p. 83; Lau, 1987, p. 91.

<sup>165</sup> Irle, 1906, p. 35; Büttner, 1953, p. 69.

<sup>166</sup> Fr. Green, »Ovamboland and the Hunting Veld«, *The Cape Argus* 24 February 1872. See also *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 30—31, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>167</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 22—23, A. 233, NAW; Palgrave, 1877, pp. 24—25.

<sup>168</sup> van Zyl to Maharero, Doorfontein 8 February 1876, A. 3, No. 3, NAW; J. von Moltke, *A Soldier's Life and Adventure*, p. 1, A. 100, NAW. See also Büttner, 1953, p. 69.

from Great Britain and Sweden, thus avoiding the Cape government's high customs duties. The first thing he imported directly from Europe was a large shipment of arms, ammunition and other goods.<sup>169</sup>

In the mid-1870s, there were about twenty traders working for Eriksen's company, and by the end of the decade their number had almost doubled. Trading trips were regularly undertaken from the company's headquarters in Omaruru to the different parts of South West Africa.<sup>170</sup>

Unfounded optimism concerning commercial hunting was also fomented in 1876 by Special Commissioner Palgrave who was sent by the Cape Colony's Governor Barkly to investigate the assimilation of the region between the Orange River and Portuguese territory into the Cape Colony.<sup>171</sup> The Cape government's interest in South West Africa grew in the first part of the 1870s, with the requests for protection it received from traders, hunters, missionaries and Herero headmen.<sup>172</sup> In 1876 the Herero headmen concluded a protection agreement with the Cape government as represented in Hereroland by Special Commissioner Palgrave.<sup>173</sup>

In regard to the possibilities for exploiting the natural resources of South West Africa, Palgrave emphasized that the future of the region could not be built upon the mining industry, but rather upon trade with the »tribes of the interior«. He predicted that the future growth of trade would be just as favorable as in the early 1870s. Accordingly, important targets of trade were the Ovambo communities, and the communities living along the Okavango River.<sup>174</sup> Palgrave believed that trade with the »tribes of the interior« would be centered upon commercial hunting. This decision was greatly influenced by his earlier trader-hunter background.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 34—35, A. 233, NAW; Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, p. 25/40, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>170</sup> Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 12; Palgrave, 1877, pp. 24—25.

<sup>171</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 2—5.

<sup>172</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 88—89, xxxix; Vedder, 1985, pp. 542—543; Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 14—17.

<sup>173</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 41—44; Vedder, 1985, pp. 545—550. See also Maharero to Sir Henry Barkly, Okahandja 9 September 1876, A. 3. No. 17, NAW.

<sup>174</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 47—48. For the previous mining ventures, see e.g. Andersson, 1987a.

<sup>175</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 47—48. Palgrave himself had worked in the 1860s as a trader and hunter in the service of the wholesaler C.J. Andersson. During this time he made two trading expeditions to Ovamboland, in 1864 and 1866/67, see: Tabler,

The period of economic growth in Hereroland which began in the early 1870s came to a halt with the collapse of world market prices around the time of Palgrave's visit there. The prices of ivory and ostrich feathers took a sharp decline in 1876, and in two years they dropped to half of what they had been at mid-century.<sup>176</sup>

The collapse of prices was linked to the deep depression in the world economy which began in 1873, and which affected the producers of agricultural and other basic goods most severely.<sup>177</sup> The depth of the depression is well displayed by the fact that not even luxury goods, such as ivory and ostrich feathers, escaped the fall in prices.

The fall in prices drove the traders who had focused their activities in Hereroland into great financial difficulties. Furthermore, large stores of unsold goods had been accumulated in Hereroland which, with the price fall, caused a situation of excess supply.<sup>178</sup> The greatest excess was in arms and ammunition; in 1876 stores contained about 6,000 rifles, twenty tons of powder and a corresponding amount of lead. This equalled about a two year's peacetime supply. The Hereroland market was, as Special Commissioner Palgrave noted, saturated with weapons.<sup>179</sup>

Traders tried to adapt to the change in commercial conditions by initiating the wide scale import and selling of spirits in Namaland and Hereroland.<sup>180</sup> The growth of the liquor trade irritated the missionaries in particular; they demanded that it be restricted. The controversy end-

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1973, pp. 83—86; Palgrave to Andersson, Ondonga 12 May 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; CJAD 24 March 1865, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW.

<sup>176</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 47. See also: Piirainen, report for April, May and June 1876, Omaruru 30 June 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; Piirainen, report for October, November and December 1876, Omaruru 31 December 1876, Eac:5, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 21 May 1877, Eac:5, FMSA.

<sup>177</sup> Foreman-Peck, 1983, pp. 87—90.

<sup>178</sup> E.g. Piirainen, report for October, November and December 1876, Omaruru 31 December 1876, Eac:5, FMSA; Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/39—25/48, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>179</sup> Palgrave, 1877, pp. 22, 84. Cf. Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/44, 25/47, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>180</sup> Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, p. 25/40, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA; also see Piirainen, report for October, November and December 1876, Omaruru 31 December 1876, Eac:5, FMSA.

ed in 1878, with a compromise according to which the sale of spirits was prohibited within ten kilometers of mission posts.<sup>181</sup>

#### 4.3.1.2. Ovamboland as the Main Site of Commercial Hunting

In the 1860s the business operations of the Walvis Bay traders were dependent on the wholesaler Andersson: it was he who supplied, on credit, poor small traders with everything needed for hunting and trading trips. After Andersson's death in 1867, financial difficulties forced the penniless traders and hunters working in Ovamboland to return to Hereroland.

The decline of trade in Ovamboland was brief, because with the diminishment of wild animals commercial hunting became unprofitable in most of Hereroland. In the 1870s the Lake Ngami region, and the regions north of Outjo and Otavi became the main commercial hunting sites.<sup>182</sup> A positive correlation can be observed between the decline of big game in Hereroland and the growth of the Ovambo market.

The business operations of Walvis Bay traders began to revitalize from the beginning of the 1870s onward.<sup>183</sup> In the latter part of the decade trade accelerated more than ever, as was noted by the missionaries. Five Walvis Bay traders had already visited Ondonga during the first half of 1877 according to the missionary Gustaf Skoglund, who considered this to be an unusually high number.<sup>184</sup> Antti Piirainen, the Finnish missionaries' agent in Omaruru, Hereroland noted that the number of expeditions departing therefrom for Ovamboland had clearly increased.<sup>185</sup> The traders' optimistic attitude toward economic growth in Ovamboland is demonstrated by the trader Carl Leen's move, accompanied by his family, from Omaruru to Ondonga.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 21.

<sup>182</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 58. Cf. *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 30–31, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>183</sup> See e.g. Tabler, 1973, pp. 20–21, 37–40, 53–54. See letters sent by the Finnish missionaries to the Mission Director Sirelius during 1870–1875, Eac:1, 2, 4, FMSA.

<sup>184</sup> Skoglund, report for May 1877, undated, Eac:5, FMSA. See also Skoglund, report for November 1877, Olukonda 1 December 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Rautanen to Heinonen, Omandongo 17 April 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1. p. 76, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>185</sup> Piirainen, report for January, February and March 1878, Omaruru 31 March 1878, Eac:6, FMSA.

<sup>186</sup> Reijonen, report for June, August and September 1879, Omulonga 30 September 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.



The array of Walvis Bay-based traders greatly differed in the 1870s from what it had been in the 1860s. The deceased Andersson's trading company was surpassed by Eriksson's, which ruled supreme on the South West African market. Smaller companies, for example those of James Harrison, Charles Thomas and John Hickey, which supplied trading and hunting expeditions to Ovamboland, worked in cooperation with Eriksson.<sup>187</sup>

A clear indication of the growth of Ovamboland's economic significance is that trading and hunting trips there became regular. For example, an examination of the work of William Chapman, who arrived in Walvis Bay in 1874, well portrays the central position of Ovamboland in trade. First Chapman entered the service of the Walvis Bay trader Harrison, who sent him on a trading trip to Ovamboland at the end of 1875. At the end of the 1870s Chapman also worked for two other traders — John Hickey and Henry Carew — under whom he made trading trips mainly to Ovamboland and Kaokoveld.<sup>188</sup>

The sudden activation of trade was due primarily to the decline of big game in Hereroland and the fall of world prices. In spite of the fall in prices, Ovamboland was considered a potential market because plenty of ivory and ostrich feathers were available there.

In the Ovamboland region in the mid-1870s, 2,500 ostriches were slain annually.<sup>189</sup> With each ostrich yielding a half kilo of feathers, then at least half of the ostrich feathers exported from Walvis Bay (about 2,500 kg in 1875) in the mid-1870s were from the Ovamboland region.<sup>190</sup> This assertion is based on the fact that almost all of the feathers of ostriches slain in Ovamboland were exported from Walvis Bay, since the ostrich feather trade did not interest the Mossamedes traders.<sup>191</sup> Sufficient statistics are not available for making such rough estimates of the Ovamboland-Walvis Bay ivory trade in the 1870s. Nevertheless, it must have been considerably greater than in the 1860s.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 50—51, 58—59, A. 233, NAW; Tabler, 1973, pp. 104—107.

<sup>188</sup> For William Chapman's trading expeditions in the 1870s: Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 50—85, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>189</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 71; Gustaf De Vylder's letter to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873, PC. Cf. Rautanen to Sirelius, Ondonga 29 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Heinonen, Omandongo 17 April 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

<sup>190</sup> Palgrave, 1877, p. 83; Noltke, 1895, p. 66.

<sup>191</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 134—135.

<sup>192</sup> See e.g. Piirainen, report for June, August and September 1874, 31 September

Thus the business activity of the Walvis Bay traders in Ovamboland was based in the 1870s, as in the preceding decade, on commercial hunting.<sup>193</sup> Small amounts of cattle were also exported, but in relation to the ivory and ostrich feather trade the role of cattle among exports as a whole was small.<sup>194</sup>

Europeans' business operations were centered in Uukwambi, Ondonga and Uukwanyama, but irregular visits were also made to other communities.<sup>195</sup> Ongandjera was the most difficult community for them to do business with, because the king of Uukwambi often prevented traders from entering therein by prohibiting transit through his community.<sup>196</sup> As far as known, of the Walvis Bay traders only William Chapman visited Ongandjera, in 1876. He did not use the route through Uukwambi but entered from the west from Kaokoveld.<sup>197</sup> The king of Uukwambi's transit policy kept Ongandjera technologically inferior to its eastern neighbors.<sup>198</sup>

Natural conditions, legislation and political change during the last years of the 1870s were reflected in Walvis Bay-Ovamboland trade. The drought which had been afflicting the whole of South West Africa for about three years culminated in a severe famine in 1879, which clearly disturbed trade.<sup>199</sup>

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1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>193</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>194</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 50, 61, A. 233, NAW; McKiernan, 1954, p. 108.

<sup>195</sup> E.g. Fr. Green, »Ovamboland and the Hunting Veld», The Cape Argus 24 February 1872; McKiernan, 1954, pp. 100—111; Gustaf De Vylder to the Dagens Nyheter, Ondonga 10 October 1873, PC; Skoglund, report for November 1877, Olukonda 1 December 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Björklund, report for December 1878, Omandongo 31 December 1878, Eac:6, FMSA; Rautanen to Heinonen, Omandongo 17 April 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Reijonen, report for July, August and September 1879, Omulonga 30 September 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 50—85, A. 233, NAW; Tabler, 1973, pp. 20—21, 104—106.

<sup>196</sup> Skoglund, report for July 1877, undated, Eac:5, FMSA. See also Rautanen to Sirelius, Omandongo 27 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>197</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 59—62, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>198</sup> Koivu, Memoirs II, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>199</sup> E.g. Waerneman, 1955, p. 49; Vedder, 1942, p. 67; Björklund, report for December 1879, Omandongo 31 December 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Reijonen, report for October, November and December 1879, Omulonga 2 January 1880, Eac:7, FMSA; Weikkolin to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 13 December 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

The tightening of regulations concerning cattle lung sickness likewise disturbed trade with Ovamboland. In Hereroland a 50£ fee had to be paid for every ox with lung sickness, and all the other cattle in its herd had to be killed. In order to prevent their inoculated wagon bulls from contracting lung sickness, traders and hunters avoided the northern areas where the disease was still raging free. Strict lung sickness regulations also hindered the missionaries working in Ovamboland from obtaining supplies.<sup>200</sup>

In 1878 the Cape government established a trade and hunting licensing system in its protectorate in Hereroland, and set a one pound weapons tax on rifles imported through Walvis Bay. These measures caused a rise in the price of commodities imported through Walvis Bay, and drove traders into great financial difficulties.<sup>201</sup>

The extreme decline of trade in South West Africa at the turn of the 1880s is indicated by the decrease in trade and hunting licenses purchased, from ninety-four in 1878 to fifty-two in 1879, and finally to only three the following year.<sup>202</sup> This conclusion is supported by the fact that the traders had always paid their license fees earlier almost without exception; this is because if they did not pay, the fee was forced from them by taking away their right to import and sell arms and ammunition.<sup>203</sup> The most notable factor, however, in the obstruction of trade with Ovamboland from the south at the turn of the 1880s was the outbreak of war between the Nama's and Herero's.

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<sup>200</sup> Rautanen to Heinonen, Omandongo 17 April 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Otjimbingwe 3 October 1882, Eac:10, FMSA.

<sup>201</sup> Esterhuyse, 1968, pp. 21—22; Vedder, 1985, p. 555; Büttner, 1884, pp. 307—308. See also Piirainen, report for April-September 1878, Omaruru 30 September 1878, Eac:6, FMSA.

<sup>202</sup> Pechuel-Loesche, 1888, p. 328. Cf. Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/60—65, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>203</sup> Loth, 1963, pp. 138—140; Quellen 30b, pp. 48—49, 55—56, NAW.

## 4.3.2. The Relation between Missionary Work and Trade

### 4.3.2.1. The Conflict between Missionary Goals and Others' Expectations

The Board of the Rhenish Missionary Society had as early as the mid-1850s granted permission for the initiation of missionary work in Ovamboland.<sup>204</sup> The first investigative trip of the missionaries Hugo Hahn and Johannes Rath was restricted to Ondonga, and ended unfortunately in armed confrontation with the Ndonga. In 1866 Hahn returned to investigate conditions for initiating missionary work in Ovamboland and found them excellent. Hahn's exclamation, »what a difference between this year and 1857«, well displays his enthusiasm.<sup>205</sup>

The Rhenish Missionary Society was not the first to begin missionary work in Ovamboland. It delegated the task to the Finnish Missionary Society, whose first representatives arrived in Ondonga in July of 1870.<sup>206</sup> The Finnish missionaries were warmly received there, and plans were made for establishing mission stations in other communities. By the end of 1871 missionary work was being carried out in Uukwambi and Ongandjera, in addition to in Ondonga. Furthermore, the establishment of a mission station in Uukwanyama was under consideration.<sup>207</sup>

Within a year and a half the seemingly bright conditions grew dark: the missionaries were being expelled from Ovamboland. First, they had to give up Uukwambi in May of 1872; in September they abandoned mission work in Uukwanyama, and in mid-1873 they were forced out of Ongandjera.<sup>208</sup> Finally, the operations of the Finnish Missionary Society

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<sup>204</sup> Generalversammlung der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, 18 April 1855, A/a:5, UEMA.

<sup>205</sup> Tagebuch von C.H. Hahn über die Reise nach Ovamboland im Jahre 1866, 18 July 1866, 20 August 1866, Hhb:1, FMSA.

<sup>206</sup> Peltola, 1958, pp. 30—31, 40.

<sup>207</sup> MBC at Ondonga 20—21 December 1870, § 1, 3 and 4, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, 1, 2 and 3, annexes 1—4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Uukwanyama 11 July 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>208</sup> MBC at Ondonga 13—14 June 1872, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Omandongo 17 June 1872, Eac:4, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 3 June 1873, § 1, annex 8 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 16 July 1874, § 2, Hha:1, FMSA.

were restricted solely to Ondonga until 1903.<sup>209</sup>

The difficulties encountered by the missionaries arose out of the conflict between their own aims and what the Ovambo kings and traders expected of them. The missionaries came to preach the gospel and to »up-root paganism», while the kings expected the missionaries to work as advisors and traders.<sup>210</sup> In spite of its modest scale, the missionaries' educational work irritated the kings, because its target was the whole population of the community. For example, King Nuujoma of Uukwambi declared that the missionaries were to instruct only the king; this shows that he expected missionaries to function as his personal advisors.<sup>211</sup>

In addition to acting as advisors the missionaries were expected to actively engage in trade; but here again their behavior did not meet the expectations of the kings. At first the missionaries reluctantly exchanged arms and ammunition and refused altogether to trade in spirits.<sup>212</sup>

The Portuguese traders visiting the Ovambo from Mossamedes were not so much troubled by the missionaries presence as competitors in trade as by their work as moral guardians. The missionaries' rigid opposition to the slave trade, and their efforts to help abolish it, interfered with the Mossamedes traders' business. In retaliation they spread anti-missionary propaganda among the kings.<sup>213</sup>

The missionaries also angered the Walvis Bay traders by criticizing their trading habits and morals. They accused the trader Axel Eriksson of,

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<sup>209</sup> MBC at Ontananga 16 June 1903, § 1, Hha:4, FMSA; MBC at Oniipa 8 September 1903, § 2, Hha:4, FMSA.

<sup>210</sup> E.g. MBC at Ondonga 20—21 December 1870, § 7, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, § 1, 4, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Ondonga 13—14 June 1872, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 3 June 1873, § 1, annex 7 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA. See also Peltola, 1958, pp. 49—51.

<sup>211</sup> MRD 22 April 1871, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>212</sup> E.g. MBC at Ondonga 20—21 December 1870, § 7, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, § 4, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Ondonga 13—14 June 1872, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>213</sup> E.g. Kurvinen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 15 June 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Piirainen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Piirainen to Sirelius, Elim 29 January 1872, Eac:4, FMSA; Piirainen, report for January-May 1872, Omandongo 17 May 1872, Eac:4, FMSA; MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, annex 2 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Elim 13—14 June 1872, annex 4 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA.

among other things, intentionally cheating the king of Uukwambi in connection with the sale of a canon.<sup>214</sup> Angered by the missionaries' accusations, Eriksson threatened to bribe King Shikongo of Ondonga to drive them from their last bridgehead.<sup>215</sup> In another incident the missionary Kurvinen's accusations made the hunter Green's morals appear questionable.<sup>216</sup> In the course of heated argument, the missionaries were forced to withdraw part of their accusations against the traders.<sup>217</sup>

Otherwise as well the missionaries' behavior did not meet the expectations of the Walvis Bay traders. Their model was the Rhenish Missionary Society, which took a more liberal attitude toward trade in Hereroland and Namaland than the Finns in Ovamboland. The missionary Hahn emphasized that the spread of Christianity should not be confined solely to preaching, but that handicrafts and small trade should be carried out as well at the mission stations. In 1870 a separate company was founded, called Die Rheinische Missions Handels Aktiengesellschaft, whose profit was used to support missionary work.<sup>218</sup>

In Namaland and Hereroland trade and missionary work were closely bound together. According to the missionary Joseph Tindall, who worked in Namaland during the 1840s and 1850s, when Africans wanted to trade they called either a trader or a missionary.<sup>219</sup> The missionary stations promoted the creation of fixed settlements among the Nama and Herero pastoral communities. These settlements then became centers of trade and military bases.<sup>220</sup> From the trader's point of view missionary sta-

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<sup>214</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 21 October 1873, § 2, Cbb:1, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 16 July 1874, § 5, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>215</sup> Kurvinen to Green, 30 September 1873, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>216</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Kurvinen to Green, 30 September 1873, Eac:4, FMSA; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 21–22.

<sup>217</sup> E.g. SLSa 1871, pp. 105–111; SLSa 1872, pp. 82–87; Piirainen to Sirelius, Omandongo 14 December 1872, Eac:4, FMSA; Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 21 October 1873, § 2, Cbb:1, FMSA; Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 25 January 1875, § 1, Cbb:1, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 16 July 1874, § 5, annexes 1 and 2 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>218</sup> For more on the trade politics of the Rhenish Missionary Society, see: Büttner, 1884, pp. 273–288; Loth, 1963, pp. 31–35; Driessler, 1932, pp. 71–73; Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 12–13.

<sup>219</sup> Tindall, 1959, p. 92.

<sup>220</sup> Lau, 1987, pp. 76–86. See also: Werner, 1980, pp. 76–94; Bochert, 1980, pp. 45–80.



tions secured access to the regions' natural resources and insured his security.<sup>221</sup>

The Walvis Bay traders expected the Finnish Missionary Society's envoys to take the same attitude toward trade as their German colleagues, but at first their hopes were frustrated. On the other hand, the missionaries' strict opposition to the slave trade was welcomed by the Walvis Bay traders, since it strengthened their commercial position. Portuguese traders avoided visiting Ondonga after the Finnish missionaries arrived there. Nevertheless, with the Mbangala acting as intermediaries, Portuguese trading connections with Ondonga were not severed.

The Walvis Bay traders probably furthermore supposed that the missionaries would promote the interests of Protestant traders in order to prevent the advance of Catholic missionary work and Catholicism through the agency of Catholic traders. This assumption became stronger during the visit of the Catholic missionary Carlos Duparquet in Ovamboland. The missionaries considered the Jesuit Duparquet to be a concrete threat to their own work, and were not willing to share the Ovamboland missionary field with the Catholics.<sup>222</sup>

The initiation of missionary work among the Ovambo was thus closely tied to the Walvis Bay traders' efforts to strengthen their position on the Portuguese dominated Ovamboland market in the beginning of the 1870s. In spite of their disagreements, the Walvis Bay traders and the Finnish missionaries shared the same goal. The traders sought to supplant the Portuguese on the Ovamboland market, just as the missionaries sought to man the Ovamboland missionary field before the Catholics.

#### 4.3.2.2. Missionaries' Commercial Activities

The hunter Green stressed, in an article for the paper *Cape Argus* in 1872, that missionaries could not survive in Ovamboland without trading. Trade

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<sup>221</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 78.

<sup>222</sup> E.g. Björklund, report for August and September 1879, Omandongo 30 September 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Reijonen, report for April, May and June 1879, Omulonga 30 June 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Reijonen, report for July, August and September 1879, Omulonga 30 September 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Skoglund, report for July, August and September 1879, Olukonda 1 October 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

was necessary if only for securing supplies.<sup>223</sup>

At the beginning of the 1870s, however, the directors of the Finnish Missionary Society strictly disapproved of missionary commercial involvement, because it hindered and endangered the spread of evangelical work.<sup>224</sup> Contrary to the negative position of the Missionary Society's directors, the field missionaries decided in a conference held in 1870 to allow themselves to trade independently to an extent which they deemed suitable to their missionary work. Nevertheless, it was clearly emphasized at the conference that the missionaries were to avoid being labeled as traders.<sup>225</sup> The decision of the Board of the Finnish Missionary Society of 1875 to allow missionaries to engage in trade simply legitimized prevailing practice.<sup>226</sup>

It was indeed impossible for the missionaries to live merely on their annual salary, a fact with which the missionary Martti Rautanen was so dissatisfied that he sent a irate letter to Mission Director Tötterman demanding a pay increase.<sup>227</sup> The problem of how extensive their business should be, nevertheless, continually troubled the missionaries. Trading was considered damaging to missionary work, since in carrying out business trips the missionaries were viewed as traders.<sup>228</sup>

The missionaries chiefly traded for grain and cattle, which they used for their own consumption. They traded to a lesser extent for ivory and ostrich feathers, which they resold to the Walvis Bay traders. Like the Walvis Bay traders, the missionaries used tobacco, arms and ammunition, clothes and various functional items and trinkets as mediums of exchange.<sup>229</sup> Arms and ammunition became the central item of exchange

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<sup>223</sup> Fr. Green, »Ovamboland and the Hunting Veld», The Cape Argus 24 February 1872.

<sup>224</sup> Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 5 October 1871, § 1, Cbb:1, FMSA.

<sup>225</sup> MBC at Ondonga 20—21 December 1870, § 7, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>226</sup> Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 7 June 1875, § 2, Cbb:1, FMSA.

<sup>227</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Omandongo 10 March 1877, Eac:5, FMSA. See also MBC at Omandongo 5—7 March 1877, § 2, Hha:1, FMSA; Minutes of the Board of the FMS, 24 September 1877, § 3, Cbb:2, FMSA.

<sup>228</sup> E.g. Piirainen, report for July, August and September 1873, Omandongo 30 September 1873, Eac:4, FMSA; Piirainen, report for January, February and March 1884, Omandongo 31 March 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; Rautanen, Roiha and Hakala to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>229</sup> E.g. MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, § 4, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Oniipa September 1873, Eac:4, FMSA; Björklund to Tötterman, Omandongo April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board

between the missionaries and the kings. This demonstrates the missionaries' swift attitude change: when they first arrived in the field they outspokenly opposed the arms trade. The missionary Björklund aptly pointed out in 1871 that it was not possible to obtain cattle from the kings except for rifles and gunpowder. Nonetheless, the arms and ammunition business was profitable for the missionaries.<sup>230</sup>

In Ovamboland the missionaries did not trade solely with the kings or with Ondonga. For example, most of their vital supplies were procured through trade with households. In the 1870s the missionaries undertook trading trips outside of Ondonga at least to Uukwambi, Uukwanyama, Ongandjera, Ombandja and Kafima.<sup>231</sup> They undertook trading trips outside of Ondonga partly out of necessity, for example, during years of famine. The kings occasionally forbid the sale of grain and cattle to the missionaries, when relations between them were strained. The missionaries were thus forced to seek supplies from other communities.<sup>232</sup> Through trading trips, however, missionaries could become familiar with other Ovambo communities as exemplified by Tolonen's trading trip to Ombandja and Kafima in 1873.<sup>233</sup>

The expulsion of the missionaries did not sever their trade ties to these other communities. The missionaries Martti Rautanen, Karl A. Weikkolin and Pietari Kurvinen made a trading trip to Uukwambi already in 1874, even though King Nuujoma of Uukwambi had been the first person to order the prohibition of missionary work in Ovamboland. Weikkolin thought that although it did not seem possible to begin missionary work in Uukwambi during King Nuujoma's life time, there was nothing to prevent the maintenance of trade relations. Pietari Kurvinen, for example, succeed in concluding good arms deals with Nuujoma.<sup>234</sup>

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of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; MRD 20 June 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>230</sup> MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, § 4, Hha:1, FMSA; also see Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>231</sup> E.g. Tolonen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 19 March 1873, Eac:4, FMSA; Weikkolin to Sirelius, Ondonga 18—19 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; Weikkolin, report for March, April, May and June 1876, Ondgumbo 29—30 June 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; Heinonen to Tötterman, Omandongo 23 October 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Skoglund, report for May 1878, undated, Eac:6, FMSA.

<sup>232</sup> E.g. Heinonen to Tötterman, Omandongo 23 October 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Skoglund, report for May 1878, undated, Eac:6, FMSA; Reijonen, report for July, August and September 1879, Omandongo 30 September 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

<sup>233</sup> Tolonen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 19 March 1873, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>234</sup> Weikkolin to Sirelius, Ondonga 18—19 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

Trade became an important source of income for the missionaries. In the 1870s they normally paid transport costs and servants' wages with this income.<sup>235</sup> The interest of individual missionaries in trade varied greatly. The most enthusiastic traders among them even had money left over from their business profits for saving after taking care of necessary expenses.<sup>236</sup>

The great significance of trade in the missionaries' economy was increased with the activation of the Walvis Bay traders' business in Ovamboland from the beginning of 1877 on. With the acceleration of competition and the shrinking supply of ivory and ostrich feathers accompanying the threatening decline of big game, the missionaries were driven into dire economic difficulties.<sup>237</sup> The missionaries' economic crisis was intensified when the Cape government forbid the import of arms and ammunition through Walvis Bay with the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War in 1880.<sup>238</sup>

Economic hardship gave the missionaries a distinctly more positive attitude toward trade and the Walvis Bay traders. They were forced to accept the arms and ammunition trade, and to practice it themselves. Although the business activities of the missionaries composed only a fraction of the trade carried out by the Walvis Bay traders in Ovamboland it was essential for their livelihood.

#### 4.3.3. The Status of the Mossamedes Traders on the Ovambo Market

Upon arrival in Ovamboland the Finnish missionaries observed that Portuguese traders clearly dominated trade everywhere there, except for in Ondonga; even in Ondonga most of the firearms owned by the king were

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<sup>235</sup> Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; MBC at Omulonga 5—8 and 11—13 March 1878, § 1, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>236</sup> E.g. MBC at Omandongo 29—30 June 1880, § 1, Hha:1, FMSA; Björklund to Tötterman, Omandongo April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>237</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Omandongo 10 March 1877, Eac:5, FMSA.

<sup>238</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

procured from the Mossamedes traders.<sup>239</sup> How did the activation of Walvis Bay trade, and the arrival of the missionaries affect the status of Mossamedes-based Portuguese traders on the Ovambo market?

The competitive position of the Mossamedes traders in relation to the Walvis Bay traders was weakened by the disorganization of their business operations and their lack of capital. For example, in the 1870s they still hauled their trading goods between Mossamedes and Ovamboland by back.<sup>240</sup> The ox-wagon, a considerably more advantageous mode of transport than the carrier, could not be used on the route from Mossamedes to the Kunene River in the 1870s, because the switch-over to its use would have required road work. The renovation of the route would not, however, have required great investments, as proved by the fact that in the early 1880s the Boers made it fit for ox-wagon traffic within a brief time.<sup>241</sup> Many Mossamedes traders would not, however, have had the means to procure an ox-wagon.

The Portuguese traders lack of capital was clearly revealed in the arms and ammunition trade. They initiated the arms trade in Ovamboland and sold the kings muzzle-loading rifles which proved technically backward upon the arrival of the Walvis Bay traders on the market.<sup>242</sup> For example, from the latter part of the 1860s on King Shikongo of Ondonga bought his weapons primarily from the Walvis Bay traders because he considered them to be technically superior to those sold by the Portuguese.<sup>243</sup>

In the 1870s the Mossamedes traders could no longer compete with the Walvis Bay traders for arms deals with the quality-conscious Ovambo kings.<sup>244</sup> The collapse of the Portuguese position as a supplier of arms and ammunition is well displayed by the missionary Matti Rauta-

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<sup>239</sup> E.g. Piirainen to Sirelius, Ondonga 31 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>240</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Palgrave, 1877, p. 49; Skoglund, report for November 1877, Olukonda 1 December 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; W. Chapman, *Angola Boers*, p. 17, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>241</sup> Mayo, 1883, p. 462; Waerneman, 1955, pp. 55—56; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 26 September 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>242</sup> Piirainen, report for April, May and June 1874, Omandongo 30 June 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; W. Chapman, *Angola Boers*, p. 18, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>243</sup> CJAD 16 April 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>244</sup> E.g. Sayaux, 1879, vol. 2, p. 168; Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, pp. 59—61; W. Chapman, *Angola Boers*, p. 18, A. 233, NAW. See also Piirainen, report for April, May and June 1874, Omandongo 30 June 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.



nen's fear that with the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War (1880), which broke off Walvis Bay's arms imports, Portuguese arms traders would try to reconquer their lost position on the market.<sup>245</sup>

Because the medium of exchange in the arms and ammunition trade was primarily ivory and ostrich feathers, the Walvis Bay traders took the lead on the ivory market in the 1870s. According to Clarence-Smith, the Walvis Bay traders almost monopolized the ivory trade in Ovamboland at the beginning of the 1880s.<sup>246</sup>

A clear division of labor arose between the Mossamedes and Walvis Bay traders in the 1870s. The Walvis Bay traders concentrated on exchanging arms and ammunition, horses, riding oxen, ox-wagons, clothes, tobacco, beads and a variety of trinkets for ivory and ostrich feathers.<sup>247</sup> For their part the Portuguese traded chiefly with spirits, beads and a variety of jewelry as well as other trinkets for which they obtained cattle, slaves and ivory.<sup>248</sup>

The Mossamedes traders' were inclined to concentrate on the alcohol trade because it did not, in comparison to the arms business, require much capital. On the other hand the profitability of the alcohol trade was improved by the fact that the product was produced in Angola. Immigrants from Brazil had begun the cultivation of sugar cane in the vicinity of Mossamedes Harbor at the end of the 1850s. Sugar cane was refined in the Mossamedes area by distilling alcohol from it. Moreover, local production was bolstered by restriction the import of spirits into Angola.<sup>249</sup>

In addition to sugar cane, cotton plantations were established in the Mossamedes area when the world market price of cotton took a sharp increase due to the Civil War in the United States. The cotton boom in Angola lasted until 1875, when the price of cotton began to decline shar-

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<sup>245</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>246</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 99.

<sup>247</sup> E.g. Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Omaruru 14 April 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Kurvinen, report for April, May and June 1875, undated, Eac:4, FMSA; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 61, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>248</sup> E.g. McKiernan, 1954, p. 108; Sayaux, 1879, vol. 2, pp. 167—172; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for October, November and December 1873, Oniipa 2 January 1874, Eac:4, FMSA; Skoglund, report for November 1877, Olukonda 1 December 1877, Eac:5, FMSA; Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 25 November 1878, Eac:6, FMSA.

<sup>249</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 72. See also explorers' observations: Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, p. 218; Sayaux, 1879, vol. 2, p. 169.



ply.<sup>250</sup> The plantation work force was composed of slaves obtained from the interior of Angola. The number of slaves in the Mossamedes area increased from approximately 400 in 1840, 600 in 1854, and 2,500 in 1864 to 7,000 in 1877.<sup>251</sup> In addition to laborers cattle was procured from the interior for food and for work as beasts of burden. According to the explorer Monteiro, there was plenty of cattle in the Mossamedes area in the mid-1870s, which could be bought at a reasonable price.<sup>252</sup>

The structure of economy within the Mossamedes area visibly determined the character of Mossamedes-centered trade in Ovamboland, with its focus in the 1870s on the sale of spirits. Portuguese business operations were most active in Uukwambi and Uukwanyama.<sup>253</sup> In contrast, visits to Ondonga were avoided, partly because of the presence there of the Finnish missionaries who firmly opposed the slave and alcohol trade.<sup>254</sup>

The growth of the Mossamedes traders' business operations in Ovamboland was limited not only by dearth of capital, but also by the restless political situation in southern Angola. The Portuguese colonial government had, with poor results, tried to subject the interior regions of southern Angola already in the end of the 1850s and beginning of the following decade. The aim of Portuguese military operations was to prevent the Kunene River region ivory trade from slipping into the hands of the Walvis Bay traders.<sup>255</sup>

Until the end of the 1870s the Mossamedes traders' bridgehead for excursions into the interior regions of Angola was the small military base of Huilla. In 1875 the Portuguese colonial government tried to subject the kingdom of Huilla to its control, but failed. Trading conditions deteriorated after the Portuguese offensive. The robbing of traders along the trade route leading from Mossamedes to Humbe and on to the Ovambo communities greatly increased, and the kings began to charge traders

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<sup>250</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 74; Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, pp. 184—185.

<sup>251</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 76—77; Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, pp. 182—185.

<sup>252</sup> Monteiro, 1875, vol. 2, p. 218.

<sup>253</sup> E.g. McKiernan, 1954, pp. 102—103, 107—109; Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 50—52; Kurvinen, 1979, pp. 19—23, 67; Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27; Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Weikkolin to Sirelius, Ondonga 18—19 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>254</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; ASD vol. 2, 25 June 1897, PC.

<sup>255</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 59—61; Clarence-Smith, 1978, pp. 171—172.

fees for insuring safe passage through their lands. Finally the Portuguese were left with no choice but to turn to diplomacy. In 1879 the colonial officials concluded an agreement with the headman of Humpata and a year later by the king of Njau by which they agreed to stop the robbery of traders and protect them.<sup>256</sup>

Portuguese Angolan law did not place restrictions on trade with Ovamboland, except in relation to customs. It was possible to freely carry on trade in slaves in the interior, since the slave trade prohibition of 1836 referred exclusively to the export of slaves. In 1875 a law was passed to end slavery in Angola. Accordingly, all slaves were to be freed by 1879, but they were forced to sign five year work contracts with their former masters. Thus slavery only changed into forced contract labor.<sup>257</sup>

The law to end slavery did not effect the slave trade in Ovamboland at all. The Mossamedes traders continued to buy slaves in the old way, in spite of the prohibition. The exchange of slaves for spirits even increased at the beginning of the 1880s.<sup>258</sup>

Nor did the world-wide economic depression beginning in 1873 have any noteworthy effect on the Mossamedes traders business in the interior, because most of the products bought, for example, from Ovamboland were consumed in Angola, and only a small amount of, for example, ivory was sold on the international market. The coastal cotton plantations and other agricultural export enterprises were driven into great economic difficulties with the breakdown of the world market, and because of drought.<sup>259</sup> The depression also strained Portugal's own economy, which was driven to the brink of ruin.<sup>260</sup>

There is no detailed information available on the volume or value of European-led trade in Ovamboland in the 1870s. In comparison to the previous decade, the Ovambo economy was throughout this period, and especially at its end, experiencing strong growth. Market expansion was due primarily to the activation of Walvis Bay traders' operations. In con-

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<sup>256</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 96—97; Pélissier, 1977, pp. 155—157; Wheeler and Pélissier, 1971, p. 58. See also traders' judgements of the political situation in southern Angola in the 1870s: *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 85, A. 233, NAW; J. von Moltke, *A Soldier's Life and Adventures*, p. 74, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>257</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 100—101; Nevinson, 1968, pp. 28—30.

<sup>258</sup> E.g. Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 21 October 1880, Eac:8, FMSA; Weikolin to Tötterman, Omandongo 23 November 1880, Eac:8, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 16 October 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>259</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 100.

<sup>260</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1985, pp. 81—112.

trast, the Mossamedes traders were not able to expand their own operations to the same extent. This is why market leadership was gained by the Walvis Bay traders. Thus in one decade there was a redistribution of market control between Europeans in Ovamboland.

## 4.4. The Influence of Resource Depletion and Politics on European Commerce 1880—1896

### 4.4.1. The Walvis Bay Traders' Difficulties on the Ovambo Market

#### 4.4.1.1. The Effect of the Nama-Herero War on European Commerce in Hereroland

The strong growth in trade following the peace of Okahandja (1870) declined at the end of the decade with the depletion of big game populations and the fall of world market prices. Traders' difficulties were increased further by the Nama-Herero War in the 1880s. The basic cause of the war was the fact that Herero cattle herds had grown beyond the capacity of their pastures to support them. The search for new pastures and water places caused disagreements between the Herero and Nama, which finally escalated into armed confrontation at the Guruman water place in August of 1880.<sup>261</sup>

When the war broke out the Cape government forbid the import of arms and ammunition through Walvis Bay, except for purposes of Europeans' own self-defense. At the same time the British withdrew from the interior to Walvis Bay to follow the situation, which in practice signified the dissolution of the 1876 protection agreement concluded between the Cape government and the Herero headmen. Consequently, the traders and hunters operating in Hereroland were now also left without the pro-

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<sup>261</sup> Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/47, /49, /55, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA. Cf. Vedder, 1985, pp. 584—587; Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 29; Sollars, 1972, p. 39.

tection of the Cape government.<sup>262</sup> The import ban on arms and ammunition affected traders using the import and export harbor of Walvis Bay; but it did not terminate trade altogether in Nama and Hereroland. Arms and ammunition still flowed into the war zone through Angra Pequena (Lüderitz) Harbor, and by land along various routes.<sup>263</sup>

The withdrawal of Cape government representatives to Walvis Bay spurred the swift spread of the war. Traders working in Hereroland felt insecure in the resulting commotion, since the Nama sought to prevent the flow of weapons to the Herero. The war, along with the prohibition of arms and ammunition imports, drove these traders into grave economic difficulty.<sup>264</sup>

With economic prospects on the Hereroland market looking dismal, most of the traders departed. By the latter part of 1881 over eighty-one traders had left Hereroland: in the favorable economic situation of the 1870s over 140 traders had done business in South West Africa.<sup>265</sup> Finnish Missionary Society agent Antti Piirainen wrote that he was the only trader in Omaruru in August 1881.<sup>266</sup> Trade threatened to come to a standstill in Walvis Bay; from the beginning of 1881 there were only two trading companies left there, one of which, Eriksson's, announced that it would pull out in June.<sup>267</sup>

After two years of war the peace agreement concluded at Rehoboth on 13 June 1882 was expected to pacify the strained situation in Hereroland and Namaland, and to improve the conditions for trade. The partners in the peace treaty agreed, among other things, to allow traders and other travelers free right of transit to Cape Colony.<sup>268</sup>

Hopes concerning the concluded peace were over-optimistic among the Europeans, since the agreement had not been signed by all of the area's

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<sup>262</sup> Musgrave to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Walvis Bay 19 March 1881, AP 3/1/2, A 36/81, pp. 1–3, NAW; Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 30; BRMG 1881, p. 152.

<sup>263</sup> Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/20–21, 25/52–53, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA; Quellen 30a, pp. 23–24, NAW. See also: BRMG 1883, p. 339; BRMG 1883, p. 365; Piirainen to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 3 April 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Cape Town 27 April 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>264</sup> Sollars, 1972, p. 40; Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 31–32.

<sup>265</sup> BRMG 1881, p. 367. Cf. Vedder, 1985, pp. 580–584.

<sup>266</sup> Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 1 August 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>267</sup> Musgrave to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Walvis Bay 19 March 1881, AP 3/1/2, A 36/81, pp. 1–3, NAW.

<sup>268</sup> BRMG 1882, pp. 327–336.

headmen. Jan Jonker Afrikaner, for example, refused to sign because he could not return to Windhoek, his former place of residence. Unrest increased again in the beginning of 1883, when the headmen not party to the agreement continued their raids, the victims of which were missionaries and traders in addition to Africans.<sup>269</sup>

After the peace of Rehoboth the political situation in Hereroland remained confused until the year 1894. The raids of the Nama headman of Gibeon, Hendrik Witbooi, were feared in particular.<sup>270</sup> The chief function of Witbooi's cattle raids was, besides the weakening of Herero power, to strengthen his own position among the Nama headmen, and to obtain the means for purchasing arms and ammunition for new wars and raids.<sup>271</sup>

The situation in Hereroland was further confused by a protection agreement concluded between Headman Maharero of the Herero and Commissioner Dr. Göring of the German colonial administration on 21 October 1885.<sup>272</sup> The agreement negotiations between these two men were speeded up by Hendrik Witbooi's threat to attack. The Germans announced their willingness to protect the Herero in case of an attack.<sup>273</sup> Maharero was not, however, the first headman in South West Africa to conclude a protection agreement with the Germans. Similar agreements were concluded a year earlier among the Nama.<sup>274</sup>

In spite of the protection agreements, raiding continued in Hereroland and Namaland. With their small force the Germans were not able to intervene in the course of events.<sup>275</sup> Maharero withdrew from the agreement in dissatisfaction on 30 October 1888 upon the advice of the English trader Lewis. Maharero still considered as valid a secret agreement

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<sup>269</sup> E.g. Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 36; BRMG 1883, pp. 76—87; BRMG 1883, pp. 335—344; BRMG 1883, pp. 363—365; Piirainen to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 15 February 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 24 March 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 1 September 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>270</sup> Schrank, 1974, p. 63; Sollars, 1972, pp. 77, 83.

<sup>271</sup> Sollars, 1972, pp. 77—78, 83—84. See also: BRMG 1883, pp. 363—370; BRMG 1884, pp. 133—135.

<sup>272</sup> Sander, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 32—34.

<sup>273</sup> Sollars, 1972, p. 59; Esterhuysen, 1968, p. 104; Weber, 1985, p. 35. See also APD 23 September 1885, PC.

<sup>274</sup> Sander, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 3—36.

<sup>275</sup> E.g. Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 112—116; Sollars, 1972, pp. 83—84; BRMG 1885, pp. 36—48; BRMG 1886, pp. 237—238; BRMG 1887, pp. 39—40; BRMG 1887, pp. 82—85; BRMG 1888, pp. 100—105; BRMG 1888, p. 203.

he had concluded with Lewis on 9 September 1885. In this agreement he had conceded to Lewis not only mining rights and the right to build railways and dams but also the power of attorney to act as the Herero's agent with the Europeans.<sup>276</sup> As a result of the broken protection agreement and Maharero's scornful behavior, after eight days the Germans withdrew under Göring from Otjimbingwe to Walvis Bay.<sup>277</sup>

The termination of the protection agreement was followed by a period of uncertainty and political chaos in Hereroland. Hendrik Witbooi equipped himself for new attacks on the Herero with thorough purchases of arms and ammunition from the English trader Robert Duncan, among others.<sup>278</sup> Faced with Witbooi's threatened attack, Maharero was in 1890 again prepared to enforce his protection agreement with the Germans, and to invalidate his agreement with Lewis, even though at that time he had no trust in the Germans' capacity or desire to protect the Herero.<sup>279</sup>

Maharero's suspicions about the German's capacity to fulfill their protection promises proved correct. Hendrik Witbooi implemented his threat by carrying out numerous destructive cattle raids in various parts of Hereroland in 1890, and continued his raiding in the following year.<sup>280</sup> The continuation of Witbooi's raids concretely proved to the Germans that the establishment of colonial power in South West Africa could not succeed until the Hendrik Witbooi problem was solved.

At first the Germans sought to arrive at a negotiated settlement with Witbooi.<sup>281</sup> When negotiations broke down they resorted to military force. Hendrik Witbooi yielded to German superiority and concluded

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<sup>276</sup> Kingon, 1889, documents A-E; also see J. von Moltke's interviews with J. Basingtwaighte, A.H. Sabatta and W.B. de Witt about R. Lewis, W. Jordan, Otavi Mines, Piet van Zyl, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>277</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 52; Voeltz, 1984, pp. 624—625.

<sup>278</sup> Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 145, 158. See also: Göring to von Bismarck, Hoachanas 7 July 1890, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, pp. 9—10, ZStA; Mallett to von Marschall, Berlin 28 March 1891, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, pp. 62—63, ZStA; von Treskow to von Caprivi, Cape Town 29 April 1891, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, pp. 81—82, ZStA; Bower to von Treskow, Cape Town 1 April 1890, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, p. 84, ZStA; Vigne and Mallett to Shippard, Kimberley 10 March 1890, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, pp. 86—88, ZStA.

<sup>279</sup> Sollars, 1972, pp. 92—94.

<sup>280</sup> Sollars, 1972, pp. 95—97; Esterhuysen, 1968, pp. 158—162. See also: Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 4 February 1890, Eac:18, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Cape Town 16 August 1890, Eac:18, FMSA.

<sup>281</sup> For Hendrik Witbooi's negotiations with the District Commander von Francois in Hornkranz on 9 June 1892, see Witbooi, 1982, pp. 126—132.



a protection agreement with Major Leutwein on 15 September 1894. Accordingly, Witbooi retained his headmanship and his men were allowed to keep their weapons for hunting.<sup>282</sup> The conclusion of peace with Hendrik Witbooi terminated a period of war in Hereroland which lasted fourteen years.

The long war along with the prohibition on the import of arms and ammunition affected Europeans' business in Namaland and Hereroland. In the 1880s Europeans were most interested in the mineral resources of Namaland and Hereroland. For example, in 1882 and 1883 the Walvis Bay-centered traders H.W. Carrington-Wilmer, G. Everson and F.C. Dreary obtained mining rights from the Topnaar community. In 1888 gold fever suddenly broke out in the Otjimbingwe region, but it quickly subsided when the finds proved worthless. Along with individual traders companies were interested in mining operations. Their agents arrived at the end of the 1880s to chart the region's mineral resources.<sup>283</sup> The coming of enterprises was a new feature in the operations of European's in South West Africa; at the high point of the cattle trade and commercial hunting trade had been carried on mainly by individual traders.

The strengthening of the German colonial administration's position in the beginning of the 1890s created favorable conditions for the activation of trade in the protected area. It was estimated that there were about one hundred European traders in German South West Africa in 1893.<sup>284</sup> After concluding the agreement with Hendrik Witbooi the Germans had the chance for the first time to systematically implement colonial policy after ten years of ruling Namaland and Hereroland in name only.

#### 4.4.1.2. The Collapse of Trade with Ovamboland

The business of Walvis Bay traders in Ovamboland was based on the exchange of arms and ammunition with the kings for ivory and ostrich feathers along with other products of commercial hunting. The new technology obtained by the kings provided them with more effective means for commercial hunting.

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<sup>282</sup> Bochert, 1980, pp. 117—121; Drechsler, 1984, pp. 70—81. See also: Leutwein, 1906, pp. 57—58; Francois, 1899, pp. 35, 139—170, 185—211.

<sup>283</sup> Esterhuyse, 1968, pp. 36—37, 88—96, 121—138.

<sup>284</sup> Bochert, 1980, p. 38.

Neither in their own hunting ventures, nor in granting Europeans permission to hunt did the kings in control of hunting take into account the limited reproductive capacity of game. The over-exploitation of big game populations in the Etosha Pan flood plain in the latter part of the 1870s led to the depletion of elephant and ostrich populations, and to a sharp decline in the trade based upon them in the early 1880s.<sup>285</sup> Thus the period of intensive commercial hunting in southern Ovamboland lasted less than a decade.

The application of new technology to hunting led to the same type of brief commercial hunting booms in other African communities. For example, in the Cokwe communities of mid-Angola the spread of firearms in the 1850s initiated a commercial hunting boom which lasted half a decade. With the depletion of the elephant population, the Cokwe had to extend their hunting trips to new regions.<sup>286</sup>

In spite of the depletion of game populations, no effort was made to replenish them through the restriction of hunting. The kings continued to exploit the dwindling big game populations, because they had no alternative products of interest to the Walvis Bay traders. The result of over-hunting was that big game did not revive during the whole period under study.<sup>287</sup>

The imbalance of supply and demand became a burning problem in Ovambo-Walvis Bay trade at the beginning of the 1880s. First of all, Ovamboland had no exportable substitutes for ivory and ostrich feathers. For their part, the Walvis Bay traders were unable to satisfy the kings' desire to obtain primarily arms and ammunition through trade because the sale of these items had become illegal at the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War.

Nevertheless, the Nama did not believe that a mere import prohibition would stop the arms trade in Hereroland. They thought that the Herero would procure part of the arms and ammunition they needed from Portuguese Angola through Ovambo middlemen; the Swedish trader Ohlsson doubted the veracity of this assumption.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> E.g. Björklund to Tötterman, Omandongo April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Omandongo 13 November 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen, Hakala and Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Olukonda 26 October 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>286</sup> Miller, 1969, pp. 24—25.

<sup>287</sup> E.g. MRD 23 November 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; MRD 14 July 1913, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>288</sup> Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 1 August 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Report of the

In order to prevent the Herero's supposed import of arms and ammunition, Petrus Zwartbooi one of the Nama headmen, began supervising traffic between Ovamboland and Hereroland.<sup>289</sup> For example, in 1883 the Nama stopped the northward bound party of the traders de Witt and Sabatta, thoroughly examined their ox-wagons, and confiscated part of their personal arms and ammunition.<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, traders and missionaries using the route from Omaruru to Ondonga had to pay Zwartbooi's people a fee in order to ensure the safe passage of their convoys.<sup>291</sup> In 1883 the western route from Omaruru to Ovamboland was deemed so dangerous that traders and missionaries did not dare to travel alone, but only in large armed parties.<sup>292</sup>

Walvis Bay-Ovamboland trade came to a near halt in the beginning of the 1880s. According to the missionary Martti Rautanen, trade had almost ceased between Omaruru and Ondonga at the end of 1881.<sup>293</sup> At the same time mail transport between Ovamboland and Ondonga ran into complications, because during the 1870s traders and transporters had carried the missionaries' mail. In October 1880 the agent of the Finnish Missionary Society in Omaruru, Antti Piirainen, was forced to pay a servant to take mail to Ondonga. Piirainen's resort to such means was not unique: henceforth, with the decline of commercial traffic along this route, the missionaries had to arrange for the transport of their mail themselves.<sup>294</sup>

The decline of trade along the route between Walvis Bay and Ovamboland was not of short duration. The considerable increase in transport costs and the duties imposed on exports from Walvis Bay — now

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Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, p. 25/20, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>289</sup> Weikkolin, report for July, August and September 1882, Omandongo 30 September 1882, Eac:10, FMSA.

<sup>290</sup> J. von Moltke, *A Soldier's Life and Adventures*, pp. 60—61, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>291</sup> E.g. Reijonen, report for September 1883, Omulonga 30 September 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Otjovazandu 27 August 1887, Eac:15, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Omandongo 8 August 1887, Eac:15, FMSA; APD 23—28 June 1885, 12 September 1885, 7 October 1885, 19 November 1885, 6 January 1886, 2 February 1887, 12 July 1887, PC.

<sup>292</sup> Hakala to Tötterman, Omaruru 26 February 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Piirainen to Tötterman, Walvis Bay 15 February 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>293</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Omandongo 13 November 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>294</sup> Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 20 October 1880, Eac:8, FMSA. See also: Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 16 January 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Reijonen, report for April, May, June and July 1881, Omulonga 31 July 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

Cape Colony controlled — further discouraged traders' interest in undertaking business trips to Ovamboland.

#### 4.4.1.3. The Position of Ovamboland in the Commercial Policy of the German Colonial Government

The German colonial administration's efforts to control trade in the Protectorate of South West Africa got under way slowly. The missionaries working in Hereroland particularly desired tighter control over the arms and ammunition trade.<sup>295</sup> In the 1880s, in order to stop the flow of military supplies to their enemies, the warring Herero and Nama carried out more effective control on the arms and ammunition trade than the colonial government.

The German colonial administration's first law for the regulation of arms and ammunition came into force in the beginning of 1888. Accordingly, anyone dealing in these products had to purchase a one hundred mark permit. The law did not, however, limit the arms trade in any other way.<sup>296</sup> In 1890 the regulations were tightened by requiring a license from the traders for each imported shipment.<sup>297</sup> According to Governor Leutwein there had been a period of unlimited free trade in the arms business in South West Africa before the regulations, which came into force in April 1890.<sup>298</sup>

The Germans' measures for the termination of the import and sale of weapons in their Protectorate did not satisfy the British who, upon German request, had tried to limit the sale of arms and ammunition to South West Africa from Bechuanaland. The British accused the Germans, in spite of their alleged efforts to limit the import of arms to South West Africa, of actually increasing the sale of arms and ammunition by granting a large number of import licenses.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> BRMG 1887, pp. 82—84.

<sup>296</sup> Verordnung des Kaiserlichen Kommissars im südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiete, betreffend die Erhebung einer Lizenz Gebühr für den Handel mit Gewehren, Munition, etc., [came into force 1 January 1888], RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/1, p. 77, ZStA.

<sup>297</sup> Verordnung des Kaiserlichen Kommissars im Südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiete, betreffend die Einfuhr und den Handel mit Waffen und Munition, Usab 25 March 1890, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, p. 7, ZStA.

<sup>298</sup> Leutwein, 1906, p. 249.

<sup>299</sup> G. Seyman Fort to the Imperial German Consul General, Cape Town 10 November 1890, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, p. 18, ZStA; Bower to von Treskow, Cape Town 24 June 1891, ZBU Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.1, p. 40, NAW.

The British accusations were well grounded: the legal import of arms and ammunition began to rise again after 1888. Altogether 826 rifles and pistols were imported through Walvis Bay to the Protectorate of German South West Africa in 1891, while in 1882, when the arms import was at its lowest, the number was only twenty-three.<sup>300</sup> Nevertheless, in comparison to the 1870s, the import of arms and ammunition was small in the beginning of the 1890s.<sup>301</sup>

The growth of arms and ammunition imports revived the Walvis Bay-Ovamboland arms trade at the end of the 1880s, after it had come to a near standstill.<sup>302</sup> King Kambonde kaMpingana of Ondonga and his brother Nehale IyaMpingana reacted to the increase in supply by sending parties to Hereroland to procure arms and ammunition.<sup>303</sup>

In 1892 the German colonial authorities began to take more forceful measures for the limitation of the arms trade. Legislation enforced in 1892 forbid the arms trade everywhere in German South West Africa.<sup>304</sup> Control over the dispersion of arms and ammunition was further improved by new freight regulations. A bill of lading in three copies had to be made for all freight, one copy for the carrier of freight, one for the recipient and one for the colonial officials in Otjimbingwe.<sup>305</sup> The regulations for the control of lungsickness facilitated traffic control, because the officials had to be informed about cases of sick animals, including where they were from and where they contracted the disease.<sup>306</sup>

After 1892 legislation provided the Germans with good means for the

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<sup>300</sup> Bieber to von Bismarck, Cape Town 6 July 1886, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, p. 13, ZStA; Bericht betreffend die Einfuhr von Waffen und Schiessbedarf in das Schutzgebiet, ZBU, Nr. 800, G.VI.a.I.Bd.1., pp. 63—64, NAW; Leutwein, 1906, pp. 249—251.

<sup>301</sup> For more on importation of arms in the 1870s, see: Palgrave, 1877, pp. 22, 84; Esterhuyse, 1968, p. 12; and in the 1890s: see BzDKB 1894, pp. 116, 119; BzDKB 1896, pp. 131—133; BzDKB 1900, pp. 142—143; BzDKB 1901, pp. 206—207; BzDKB 1904, pp. 280, 286—287.

<sup>302</sup> E.g. APeD 10 November 1889, 4 April 1890, 25 August 1890, 6 February 1890, 13 June 1891, 17 July 1891, 26 February 1891, 22 June 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; MRD 5 May 1889, 16 January 1891, 20 April 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>303</sup> APeD 12 October 1890, 3 November 1890, 6 January 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 10 October 1890, Eac:18, FMSA.

<sup>304</sup> DKB 1 October 1892, pp. 484—485. See also: Bochert, 1980, p. 106; Witbooi, 1982, pp. 123—124.

<sup>305</sup> DKB 15 August 1891, p. 333 See also other regulations concerning freight traffic: DKB 1 July 1895, pp. 266—267; DKB 1 January 1896, p. 5.

<sup>306</sup> DKB 1 April 1892, pp. 210—211; DKB 1 December 1894, pp. 619—620.

control of trade and traffic both entering and within the Protectorate. The tightening of control is indicated by, among other things, the establishment of import quotas on arms and ammunition in 1894. Private individuals were now allowed to import for their personal use only one rifle and fifty cartridges, three pounds of powder, two pounds of lead and five pounds of shot.<sup>307</sup> The fact that the traders Robert Duncan, Robert James Duncan and Robert McKimmie — Hendrik Witbooi's most important suppliers — were apprehended in the smuggling of arms and ammunition is proof of the tightening of control.<sup>308</sup>

The 1892 legislation prohibiting the arms and ammunition trade halted the small legal Walvis Bay-Ovamboland arms trade almost entirely. For example, according to the missionary Roiha, during the best time of the year for trading in 1893 not a single white trader — by which he apparently meant the Walvis Bay traders — visited Uukwambi.<sup>309</sup> According to the missionary Rautanen, the cessation of the flow of arms and ammunition from Walvis Bay to Ovamboland improved the position of Portuguese traders on the Ovamboland market.<sup>310</sup>

Deputy Governor von Lindequist came to a very pessimistic conclusion in his assessment of the economic situation in Ovamboland at the beginning of 1895. According to him, trade from the Protectorate of South West Africa to Ovamboland was at a near standstill.<sup>311</sup> In the early part of the 1890s Walvis Bay traders only occasionally travelled among the Ovambo to sell horses.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Bekanntmachung, Windhoek 25 July 1894, ZBU, Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.1, p. 97, NAW.

<sup>308</sup> Concession Hendrik Witbooi to Robert Duncan, Robert James Duncan & Robert McKimmie, A. 37, NAW; McKimmie to the Commanding Officer of the Fort Windhoek, Windhoek 23 July 1894, A. 154, NAW. For more on the smuggling of arms and ammunition into South West Africa: von Nordenflecht to von Capri-vi, Cape Town 25 November 1893, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/3, p. 123, ZStA; »German Treatment of a British Trader«, The Standard 20 February 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 23, ZStA; Gofrelin to von Marschall, Berlin 24 March 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 33, ZStA; Bower to the Acting German Consul General, Cape Town 23 October 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 140, ZStA; Bochert, 1980, p. 118.

<sup>309</sup> Roiha to Tötterman, Elim 26 November 1893, Eac:21, FMSA.

<sup>310</sup> Rautanen to Hahn, Walvis Bay 28 July 1892, A. 335, NAW.

<sup>311</sup> von Lindequist to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Windhoek 30 January 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 40—46, ZStA.

<sup>312</sup> MRD 1 February 1893, 19 October 1894, 9 April 1895, 23 November 1895, Hp XXVIII:2—3, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 6 April 1894, Eac:22, FMSA.



The export of ivory from Ovamboland to Walvis Bay, which flourished in the 1870s, dwindled to near insignificance during the 1880s. In the mid-1870s 13,000 kg of ivory was annually exported from Walvis Bay to the Cape Colony, but by 1886 this figure had dropped to one thousand and in the 1890s it shrank to less one hundred.<sup>313</sup> At the height of ivory export in the late 1870s, Ovamboland was the most important source of ivory in South West Africa.

In examining Walvis Bay-Ovamboland trade as a whole from the beginning of the 1880s to the mid-1890s, it can be observed that it was, up until the beginning of the 1890s, affected more by the depletion of big game, and especially by the confused situation created by the Nama-Herero War, than by the directives of colonial authorities. Only after this period did the German colonial government get control over trading and traders in South West Africa. In volume Walvis Bay-Ovamboland trade shrank to a minimum in the 1880s, in comparison to what it had been during the economic summit of the late 1870s; during the mid-1890s it came to a near standstill.

#### 4.4.2. The Status of Portuguese Angolan Harbors in Ovamboland's Export Trade

##### 4.4.2.1. Mossamedes as the Walvis Bay Traders' Export Harbor

With the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War most of the Walvis Bay-based traders withdrew altogether from the South West African markets. In the middle of 1881 the region's largest trading house, Eriksson & Co., also prepared to pull out.<sup>314</sup> Axel Eriksson did not plan a complete withdrawal from South West Africa, but intended to do business in the Kunene River region with his base at Mossamedes Harbor.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> See: Palgrave, 1877, p. 83; Bieber to von Bismarck, Cape Town 22 June 1887, RKA 10.01, Nr. 2236, p. 25, ZStA; BzDKB 1894, pp. 116–120; BzDKB 1896, p. 134; BzDKB 1900, p. 141; BzDKB 1901, p. 157; BzDKB 1903, pp. 238–239.

<sup>314</sup> Musgrave to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Walvis Bay 19 March 1881, AP 3/1/2, A 36/81, pp. 1–3, NAW. See also: Björklund to Tötterman, Omandongo April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 8 January 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Omandongo 13 November 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>315</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 54. See also Reijonen, report for April, May, June and July 1881, Walvis Bay 31 July 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

Eriksson's interest in the region north of the Kunene River predated the outbreak of the Nama-Herero war. In the early part of 1880 he sent the French cartographer Dufour to map the Etosha flood plain. Additionally, it was Dufour's job to find out about opening an ox-wagon route from the Kunene to Mossamedes Harbor. Dufour's cartography work ended, however, in misfortune when he was murdered on the north side of the Kunene.<sup>316</sup>

Walvis Bay traders were primarily attracted by the abundance of big game in the vicinity of the Kunene's northern bank.<sup>317</sup> Another attraction was possible access to Mossamedes Harbor. Under Eriksson's direction a small group of Walvis Bay traders transferred their business operations to the north side of the Kunene at the end of August 1881. In deciding to move his headquarters away from Hereroland, Eriksson first considered using Ondonga as a new base. When King Kambonde kaNankwaya refused him permission to construct permanent buildings, he chose Chella Ridge, on the northern side of the Kunene, as his new headquarters.<sup>318</sup>

The Walvis Bay traders had not used Mossamedes Harbor earlier, even though they knew of the route leading there. Using the Mossamedes route considerably shortened the trip for them from Ovamboland to the coast. The Walvis Bay traders had avoided Mossamedes Harbor primarily because of the protectionist customs policy of Portuguese Angola.<sup>319</sup> When export and import traffic was directed elsewhere than Portugal then it was more beneficial to use Walvis Bay Harbor, in spite of the longer transport trip.

The lowering of customs tariffs was an important consideration for the Walvis Bay traders in regard to their plans for using Mossamedes as their export/import harbor. After leaving Hereroland, A.W. Eriksson travelled directly to Mossamedes to negotiate with the Portuguese colonial authorities concerning the organization of trade. The main sub-

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<sup>316</sup> Reijonen, report for January, February and March 1880, Omulonga 31 March 1880, Eac:8, FMSA; Weikkolin, report for April, May and June 1881, Omulonga 7 July 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>317</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 83—84, 88—89, 102—103, 109, A. 233, NAW. Cf. J. von Moltke, *A Soldier's Life and Adventures*, p. 70, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>318</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 85, 91, A. 233, NAW; Tabler, 1973, pp. 13, 17, 38; MRD 1 March 1881, 602—91, NAF; Reijonen, report for April, May June and July 1881, Walvis Bay 31 July 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>319</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1985, pp. 65—76; Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 131.

ject of the negotiations was protectionist import duties, which Eriksson wanted lowered to the Walvis Bay level.<sup>320</sup> According to the Finnish missionaries, import duties caused the price of weaponry to be two times higher when imported through Mossamedes than through Walvis Bay.<sup>321</sup>

The Portuguese bluntly refused to lower the import duties on commodities coming from outside Portugal, because it would have weakened the competitive capacity of goods produced therein. It was suggested to Eriksson that instead of advocating the lowering of customs duties, he should import his trade goods from Lisbon, and thus the whole problem would be eliminated. Nevertheless, Eriksson did obtain small concessions in his negotiations, the most important of which was a modest reduction of the export duty on ivory.<sup>322</sup>

Another reason why the Walvis Bay traders had avoided the route to Mossamedes was its poor condition. Whereas Portuguese traders and their middlemen carried their goods from the interior to the coast, the Walvis Bay traders were accustomed to transporting their goods by ox-wagon, the use of which on the Kunene-Mossamedes route would have required road work.<sup>323</sup>

The Walvis Bay traders' transport problems were eased with the settlement of a Boer community at Humpata, on the route to Mossamedes, in the beginning of 1881. The Boers left the Transvaal in three groups between 1874 and 1877. They wandered in the regions of the Okavango River and Ovamboland before settling at Humpata. The Boers experienced grave hardship during their journeys, and only 270 of them made it to Humpata.<sup>324</sup>

In Humpata they began farming the land and raising cattle; they engaged in commercial hunting as well.<sup>325</sup> Their most important source of income, however, was their freight business, using ox-wagons, on the routes from Humpata, Humbe and especially Benguela Highlands to the harbors of Mossamedes and Benguela. From the plantations of the Hum-

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<sup>320</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 55; Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 132—135. For more on Portugal's protectionistic economic policy, see Clarence-Smith, 1985, pp. 81—112.

<sup>321</sup> MBC at Omulonga 12 December 1884, § 2, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>322</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 132—135.

<sup>323</sup> W. Chapman, *Account of History of Angola Boers*, p. 17, A. 233, NAW. See also: Mayo, 1882, pp. 5, 35; Mayo, 1883, p. 462.

<sup>324</sup> For more on Boer wanderings: Clarence-Smith, 1976, pp. 42—43; Pélissier, 1977, pp. 417—420; Mayo, 1882, pp. 37—61.

<sup>325</sup> W. Chapman, *Account of History of Angola Boers*, pp. 13, 70, A. 233, NAW; also see Clarence-Smith, 1976, p. 44.

pata area the Boers mainly transported cotton to the coastal harbors. The renovation of the road from Humbe to Mossamedes for ox-wagon traffic signified a small revolution in transport technology in the interior of Mossamedes Province.<sup>326</sup>

The reorientation of the Walvis Bay traders' export/import traffic abruptly increased the export of ivory and ostrich feathers through Mossamedes Harbor. The export value of these goods rose in 1882 to almost seven times what it had been in the latter half of 1870. Moreover, in the beginning of the 1880s ostrich feathers appeared for the first time in the list of goods exported from Mossamedes Harbor; this was an indication of the presence of a new group of traders among the Harbor users.<sup>327</sup>

The export value of ivory and ostrich feathers remained high until 1885, when it suddenly and permanently fell to a level even below the low point reached in the latter part of the 1870s. The forceful rise in export value was due almost exclusively to the strong increase in hunting, because the prices of goods did not decisively change. Even during the high point of commercial hunting in the early 1880s ivory and ostrich feathers were not the dominant products among Mossamedes Harbor exports. The most important products exported from Mossamedes Harbor from the 1870s on were agricultural products and fish and, from 1890 on, rubber.<sup>328</sup>

The Walvis Bay traders' business in the Kunene River area was based on commercial hunting. In combination with the Humpata Boers' hunting this explains the abrupt growth in the export of products derived from hunting from Mossamedes Harbor. The most attractive hunting areas were located in the easternmost parts of southern Angola where big game was still plentiful in some places. For example, in 1882 Axel Eriksson organized a great elephant hunt in the vicinity of the Kunene River's northern shore.<sup>329</sup>

The extent of the Walvis Bay traders' investment in commercial hunting is indicated by the fact that there were sixty hunters on the payroll of Eriksson's trading company alone. Big game, however, unable to withstand the forceful increase in hunting, became depleted in the beginning of the 1880s. Eriksson even feared that the elephant and ostrich species

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<sup>326</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 130—131.

<sup>327</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 134—135. See also *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 109, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>328</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 73, 134—135, 176, 213, 331, 423.

<sup>329</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 102—103, 109, A. 233, NAW; Waerne-man, 1955, p. 56.

would be completely exterminated if hunting were to continue on the current scale.<sup>330</sup> On a hunting expedition he organized in 1887, Eriksson was forced to acknowledge that the elephant had disappeared almost without a trace.<sup>331</sup>

In the 1880s the focal point of the Walvis Bay traders who had begun using Mossamedes Harbor was no longer Ovamboland but rather the north side of the Kunene. Their trading trips to Ovamboland were directed mainly to Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ondonga. Volume-wise this trade was less than it had been in the latter half of the previous decade.<sup>332</sup> The Walvis Bay traders' switch to Mossamedes Harbor did, however, revive the arms and ammunition trade in Ovamboland from the slump it entered because of the Nama-Herero War. At the beginning of the 1880s the Finnish missionaries were forced to import through Mossamedes Harbor the arms and ammunition which they sold.<sup>333</sup> The Ovambo kings preferred, regardless of their high price, to purchase German and English rifles from the Walvis Bay traders rather than the technically inferior muzzle-loading rifles sold by the Portuguese.<sup>334</sup>

In 1884, for example, King Namadi jaMweihanjeka of Uukwanyama asked the trader E.W. Sabatta, who had come to Humbe, to found a trading post in Uukwanyama. Portuguese traders had earlier built a storehouse for the king where he kept spirits. The king expected to be able to purchase arms and ammunition from Sabatta and de Witt, who accepted his offer.<sup>335</sup> The Walvis Bay traders also continued to supply horses, now imported through Mossamedes, to the Ovambo kings.<sup>336</sup>

The decline of big game in the interior of Mossamedes Province drove the traders who had come from Hereroland to the brink of ruin in the

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<sup>330</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 117—118, A. 233, NAW; also see Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 136.

<sup>331</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 71.

<sup>332</sup> E.g. Roiha to Tötterman, Olukonda 15 November 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 23 December 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 100—113, A. 233, NAW; J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, pp. 1—4, 15—16, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>333</sup> MBC at Omulonga 12 December 1884, § 2, Hha:1, FMSA.

<sup>334</sup> J. von Moltke, Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, pp. 3—4, A. 100, NAW; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 112—113, A. 233, NAW; W. Chapman, Account of History of Angola Boers, p. 18, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>335</sup> J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, pp. 1—4, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>336</sup> J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, p. 3, A. 100, NAW; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 113, A. 233, NAW.

mid-1880s. Besides ivory and ostrich feathers, only cattle was in demand in the Mossamedes area, but the income from the cattle trade remained smaller than that from these other two goods. Furthermore, Angola's worthless paper money weakened the economic position of those whose businesses were not Portugal-oriented.<sup>337</sup>

The greatest setback for the Walvis Bay traders who used Mossamedes Harbor was the prohibition against the import of modern firearms to Angola implemented in 1887. The aim of the prohibition was to secure the market for the technically outdated rifles manufactured in Portugal by keeping out the breech-loading rifles imported by the Walvis Bay traders which were, in spite of their expense, more popular among Africans.<sup>338</sup> The prohibition of the import of modern firearms terminated the Walvis Bay traders' trading trips to Mossamedes, since their business was based primarily on the exchange of arms and ammunition for ivory and ostrich feathers.

One of the rare Walvis Bay traders who adapted to the new market conditions and continued using Mossamedes Harbor was William Chapman. During the whole latter half of the 1880s, he focused on breeding and trading cattle on the north side of the Kunene. During the next decade his interest was directed to the rubber trade and mining activities.<sup>339</sup> The export of cattle from Mossamedes Harbor declined abruptly after 1892 because a duty of almost one pound per head was instituted.<sup>340</sup>

The position of individual traders in southern Angola was further complicated by the foundation of the French financed *Compagnie de Mossamedes*, which was granted permission to carry out trade and mining operations.<sup>341</sup> According to German colonial officials, by 1897 this company clearly dominated trade in the environs of Mossamedes Harbor.<sup>342</sup>

From the latter part of the 1880s on, the visits of the Walvis Bay traders who continued using Mossamedes Harbor to Ovamboland decreased. The

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<sup>337</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 136—137, 144, 237; Clarence-Smith, 1985, pp. 81, 85.

<sup>338</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 136—137; also see W. Chapman, *Account of History of Angola Boers*, p. 18, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>339</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 115—140, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>340</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 239.

<sup>341</sup> *Compagnie de Mossamedes*, 1894, RKA 10.01, Nr. 9018, pp. 16/5, 16/17—16/21, ZStA; also see *Südafrikanische Zeitung* 21 September 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 9018, p. 39, ZStA.

<sup>342</sup> Perbandt to Leutwein, Swakopmund 6 September 1897, RKA 10.01, Nr. 9018, p. 62, ZStA.



only visits known for sure were W. Chapman's cattle buying trips in 1894, 1895, 1896 to Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Ondonga. German South West African legislation forbid the importation of arms and ammunition into Ovamboland, even though this region did not yet belong to the Protectorate. On these trips Chapman violated this legislation.<sup>343</sup>

For example, on his trading trip of 1896 to Ondonga and Uukwanyama, Chapman bought four hundred oxen in exchange for ammunition. When Chapman's arms deals became known to the German colonial officials, he confessed and assured them that he had stopped smuggling.<sup>344</sup>

The efforts of the Walvis Bay traders who had switched to the use of Mossamedes Harbor to gain a foothold in the markets of Mossamedes Province miscarried for two reasons: the depletion of big game and the protectionist economic policy of Portuguese Angola.

#### 4.4.2.2. The Strengthening of the Position of Portuguese Traders on the Ovamboland Market

Portuguese traders had lost their position on the Ovamboland market, especially as suppliers of arms and ammunition. But the almost complete severance of the trade connection to Walvis Bay following the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War caused the missionary Matti Rautanen to fear an influx of Portuguese traders into Ondonga.<sup>345</sup>

Rautanen's fear proved relevant in part, as shown by the clear increase of the alcohol trade in Ondonga and in the other Ovambo communities as well.<sup>346</sup> The depletion of big game did not diminish Portuguese in-

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<sup>343</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 139—148, A. 233, NAW. For more on Chapman's business in Ovamboland in the 1890s: MRD 26 November 1894, 3 December 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; ASD vol. 1, 30 November 1894, 3 December 1894, 26 August 1895, 16 September 1895, PC; Stahlhut to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 19 September 1896, B/c II:60, UEMA.

<sup>344</sup> von Marschall to Pindella, Berlin 17 August 1896, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.1.Bd.1, pp. 27—28, NAW; Chapman to Leutwein, Humpata 28 April 1897, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1, p. 65, NAW.

<sup>345</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA.

<sup>346</sup> E.g. MRD 7 October 1881, 602—91, NAF; Reijonen, report for July 1883, Omulonga 31 July 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; Hannula to Tötterman, Olukonda 8 August 1887, Eac:15, FMSA; MRD 29 April 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 14 June 1888, Eac:16, FMSA; J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, p. 4, A. 100, NAW; W. Chapman, Account of History of Angola Boers, pp. 24—35, A. 233, NAW; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah«, C/k:22, UEMA.

terest in the Ovamboland market, because from the beginning of the 1870s their business had been based on the exchange of alcohol for cattle and slaves. Alcohol was sold to the Ovambo in containers, called anchors, holding about twenty-five liters.<sup>347</sup>

Sugar cane cultivation and the distillation of alcohol began in the Mossamedes area in the 1850s, but only in the 1870s, when the cotton boom caused by the US Civil War ended, did production of these products experience strong growth. With the collapse of the price of cotton many southern Angolan cotton plantations switched to the cultivation of sugar cane, from which spirits were distilled.<sup>348</sup>

The expansion of alcohol production in Angola was still limited by the import from Hamburg of cheap spirits distilled from potatoes. Foreign competition was eliminated from the spirits market with the increased import duties of 1892 and 1895. Consequently, the import of spirits declined from one million liters in 1894, to less than one tenth of that amount at the turn of the century. Bolstered by customs policy, the cultivation of sugar cane and the distillation of alcohol increased significantly in Mossamedes Province. Alcohol production grew from 220,000 liters in 1891 to 567,000 liters in 1896.<sup>349</sup>

The most important buyers of alcohol were the nearby African communities. Alcohol trade among the Ovambo increased almost in proportion to the growth in production. According to the missionary Hannula, about ten anchors of spirits were supplied monthly to the king of Ondonga.<sup>350</sup> In 1888 the missionary Pettinen reported the alcohol trade to be experiencing »tremendous growth» in Ondonga.<sup>351</sup> Martti Rautanen's diary likewise indicates the pick up in alcohol trade. He noted in 1889 ten alcohol selling trips by Portuguese and their middlemen to the king of Ondonga alone.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Dove to AAKA, Göttingen 22 May 1894, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/3, p. 136, ZStA.

<sup>348</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 214—219.

<sup>349</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 215—216; Angemyndt, Angola report, RKA 10.01, Nr. 9019, pp. 25/1, 26/2, 37/13—41/17, ZStA; Angemyndt to AAKA, Berlin 3 March 1899, RKA 10.01, Nr. 9019, pp. 59/7—59/8, ZStA.

<sup>350</sup> Hannula to Tötterman, Olukonda 8 August 1887, Eac:15, FMSA. See also Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890.

<sup>351</sup> MBC at Olukonda 8—9 January 1889, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA. See also Pettinen to Nels, Olukonda 16 July 1889, ZBU, Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1, p. 7, NAW.

<sup>352</sup> MRD 13 January 1889, 12 February 1889, 14 March 1889, 13 May 1889, 19 May 1889, 30 June 1889, 24 September 1889, 14 October 1889, 4 November 1889, 16 December 1889, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

The increase in the alcohol trade was not a problem of concern solely to the Ovambo. The sale of arms, ammunition and spirits to the inhabitants of Africa was deliberated by colonial governments at the Brussels Conference in 1890. The states participating in the Conference, including Portugal, agreed to terminate the sale of alcohol to the Africans living between the twentieth northern parallel and the twenty-second southern parallel.<sup>353</sup>

In practice the Portuguese did nothing to limit the production and sale of alcohol in Angola before the turn of the century.<sup>354</sup> The alcohol trade actively continued among the Ovambo throughout the 1890s.<sup>355</sup> The greatest change in the alcohol trade was that the Portuguese no longer wanted to exchange alcohol for cattle, but only for slaves.<sup>356</sup> In spite of the 1875 law prohibiting it, the slave trade continued in Mossamedes Province during the whole period under study.<sup>357</sup>

The missionaries had to adapt to the new circumstances caused by the increase of alcohol consumption; this involved the re-evaluation of their strictly negative attitude toward spirits. In order to preserve good relations with the king of Ondonga, the missionaries occasionally presented him wine. But they did not engage in the actual sale of alcohol. In order to preserve his peace of mind, the missionary Martti Rautanen diluted his gifts of alcohol with water.<sup>358</sup>

Following alcohol, the second most important category of products used by the Portuguese for trade in Ovamboland was arms and ammunition. The Walvis Bay traders dominated the arms trade from the 1870s

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<sup>353</sup> Alkohol und Eingeborenenpolitik, Denkschrift über die Bekämpfung des Alkoholkonsums in den afrikanischen Kolonien, ZBU, Nr. 11, A.I.e.3.Bd.1, pp. 11—13, NAW.

<sup>354</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1979, pp. 24—25.

<sup>355</sup> E.g. MRD 8 February 1890, 4 January 1891, 30 April 1891, 8 September 1893, 18 January 1894, 3 February 1894, 7 April 1895, 2 January 1896, 27 January 1896, 12 March 1896, Hp XXVIII:2—3, FMSA; Meisenholz to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 1 September 1892, B/c I:45, UEMA; Meisenholz to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 17 August 1894, B/c I:45, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 8 August 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>356</sup> APeD 16 December 1889, 9 August 1890, 14 April 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA. More on slavery and slave trade in section 5.2.2.

<sup>357</sup> E.g. Dove to AAKA, Göttingen 22 May 1894, ZBU, Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1., pp. 12—13, NAW. See also: Clarence-Smith, 1976, pp. 216—219; Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 228—229, 242—243; Nevinson, 1968, pp. 50—54.

<sup>358</sup> MRD 6 October 1887, 14 October 1887, 18 June 1888, 5 December 1889, FMSA, Hp XXVIII:1—2; APeD 24—25 June 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

until the prohibition of the import of modern weapons in 1887, which almost severed the Walvis Bay traders' import of arms and ammunition through Mossamedes Harbor.<sup>359</sup>

The prohibition of the import of modern weapons also pertained to Portuguese traders, but they evaded the law by bribing officials and smuggling. Emigrants and officials who came to Angola evaded the law by selling the arms designated for their personal use to traders, who then supplied them to Africans.<sup>360</sup> The law did not prohibit the import and sale of ammunition.<sup>361</sup>

The changed market conditions induced the Portuguese to strengthen their position in the arms and ammunition trade. For example, in 1887 when one of the Portuguese traders' Mbangala middlemen arrived in Ondonga from Humbe to cultivate trade relations, he presented a rifle and alcohol to King Kambonde and his brother Nehale.<sup>362</sup>

The Portuguese position on the Ovamboland arms market was further improved by the 1892 ban on the sale of arms and ammunition in the Protectorate of German South West Africa. The missionary Martti Rautanen commented that the ban served more as an inducement for the influx of Portuguese arms dealers into Ovamboland.<sup>363</sup> German legislation forbidding the sale of arms had no effect on Portuguese business in the northern parts of South West Africa at the beginning of the 1890s, because the Germans were not able to enforce it. By the mid-1890s the Portuguese attained the lead in the Ovamboland arms and ammunition trade.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> W. Chapman, *Account of History of Angola Boers*, p. 18, A. 233, NAW; J. von Moltke, *A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland*, p. 2, A. 100, NAW; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 11 October 1895.

<sup>360</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 244.

<sup>361</sup> Eriksson to Governor's Council, Windhoek 30 April 1895, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1, p. 14, NAW; Wulfhorst to Hartmann, Omupanda 9 April 1895, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1, p. 17, NAW; Rautanen to Hartmann, Olukonda 28 April 1895, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1, pp. 17—18, NAW.

<sup>362</sup> MRD 29 April 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>363</sup> Rautanen to Leutwein, Olukonda 19 March 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1959, p. 46, ZStA; MRD 26 August 1892, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>364</sup> E.g. MRD 22 October 1890, 8—9 February 1891, 8 March 1893, 16 September 1893, 23—24 February 1894, Hp XXVIII:2—3, FMSA; APeD 20 September 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 8 June 1894, Eac:22, FMSA; Savola to Tötterman, Olukonda 16 March 1894, Eac:22, FMSA; Rautanen to Leutwein, Olukonda 19 March 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1959, p. 46, ZStA; Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 17 August 1894, B/c

The growing arms and ammunition trade of the Portuguese and their middlemen irritated the German South West African colonial officials. Consequently, the Germans undertook an inquiry into the flow of arms and ammunition from Portuguese Angola into South West Africa.<sup>365</sup> In their statements for the inquiry, missionaries and colonial officials emphasized that the Portuguese mainly supplied Ovamboland with spirits and arms and ammunition in exchange for cattle and slaves.

Deputy Governor von Lindequist demanded in his report to the imperial chancellor at the beginning of 1895, that a protest be presented to the Portuguese government requiring the termination of arms and ammunition smuggling from Angola to South West Africa.<sup>366</sup> A protest was also deemed appropriate by Berlin.<sup>367</sup> In response to the German protest, the Portuguese promised to step up control along their border with German South West Africa in order to prevent smuggling. In August 1895 the export of arms over the southern border of Angola was prohibited.<sup>368</sup>

German capacity to control smuggling in the north was, however, limited. With the continuation of smuggling Portuguese officials were only able to threaten to use forceful measures. In 1896 the Portuguese government did tighten the supervision of its border with South West Africa by establishing check points along the Kunene River.<sup>369</sup> Doctor Esser, who travelled in the Humbe area in 1896, did not trust Portugal's capacity to halt the smuggling of arms to Ovamboland.<sup>370</sup>

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I:45, UEMA; Wulforth to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 20 January 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>365</sup> E.g. Gotter to AA, Lisbon 22 January 1889, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/1, p. 64, ZStA; Mallett to von Marschall, Berlin 28 March 1891, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/2, p. 62, ZStA; Dove to AAKA, Göttingen 22 May 1894, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838/3, p. 136, ZStA; Nels to von Bismarck, Walvis Bay 2 August 1889, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1959, p. 2, ZStA.

<sup>366</sup> von Lindequist to Hohenlohe-Shillingsfürst, Windhoek 30 January 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 40—46, ZStA.

<sup>367</sup> The reply of AA to von Lindequist's report, Berlin 24 April 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 51—52, ZStA; Derenthall to Hohenlohe-Shillingsfürst, Lisbon 18 May 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 65—66, ZStA.

<sup>368</sup> d' Avila to von Derenthall, Lisbon 20 May 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 70—71, ZStA; d' Avila to Below-Kutzan, Lisbon 17 August 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, pp. 105—106, ZStA; Below-Kutzan to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Cascaes 15 September 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 122, ZStA.

<sup>369</sup> ASD vol. 1—2, 16 December 1895, 13 March 1896, PC; MRD 17 September 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>370</sup> Esser to Dankelmann, Mossamedes 9 October 1896, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1840, pp.



That trade did indeed come under stricter control, and that existing laws were more effectively enforced, is demonstrated by the fact that a Portuguese trader dealing in arms and ammunition in Ondonga was taken prisoner in Humbe.<sup>371</sup> Smuggling from Portuguese Angola diminished also according to the missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society. By the end of July 1896 only six Portuguese traders selling spirits and arms and ammunition had visited Uukwanyama; the missionary Stahlhut considered this number to be considerably lower than earlier.<sup>372</sup>

The tightening of control over the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Portuguese Angola to Ovamboland was not primarily due to German pressure. According to the trader Eriksson, the Portuguese wanted to cut off the flow of arms and ammunition to Ovamboland, because they wanted to annex the northern part of this area to Angola.<sup>373</sup> Eriksson's supposition proved correct. In 1896 the Commander of Humbe, Luna de Carvalho, announced to King Ueyulu jaHedimbi of Uukwanyama that the Portuguese wanted to man the southern border of Uukwanyama in order to prevent a German invasion there. King Ueyulu did not, however, allow the Portuguese to enter his territory, and the project was dropped for the time being.<sup>374</sup>

The designs of the Portuguese were conveyed to the German colonial officials by Chapman and some missionaries who found out about them through a letter, sent by the Commander of Humbe to King Ueyulu.<sup>375</sup> The measures of the Portuguese colonial government clearly proved that their intention was to annex the whole community of Uukwanyama to Angola.

On the whole, the Portuguese and their middlemen dominated both

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85—90, ZStA.

<sup>371</sup> ASD vol. 2, 27 April 1896, PC.

<sup>372</sup> Stahlhut to Leutwein, Ondjiva 17 September 1896, ZBU, Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1., pp. 36—37, NAW.

<sup>373</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 83.

<sup>374</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 140—141, A. 233, NAW; also see Péllissier, 1977, pp. 437—442.

<sup>375</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 141—142, A. 233, NAW; Stahlhut to Leutwein, Ondjiva 17 September 1896, ZBU, Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1., pp. 36—39, NAW; Wulfhorst to Hartmann, Omupanda 29 January 1897, RKA, Nr. 2159, pp. 30—39, ZStA. For more on Portuguese plans concerning annexation of the community of Uukwanyama to Angola, see: Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 21 September 1896, B/c II:54, UEMA; Stahlhut to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 19 September 1896, B/c II:60, UEMA; BRMG 1897, pp. 40—46.



the illegal and legal Mossamedes-Ovamboland trade in the 1890s. By warding off the Walvis Bay traders' efforts to invade the Mossamedes Province market by means of trade regulations and customs policy the Portuguese succeeded in reconquering their lost position of leadership on the Ovamboland market.

#### 4.4.3. An Alternative to Traditional Market Channels: The Opening of the Trade Route to the Transvaal and Kimberley

Until the first half of the 1880s European commercial operations in Ovamboland were based in the two Atlantic harbors of Walvis Bay and Mossamedes. The Nama-Herero War, the depletion of big game and the protectionist customs policy and trade regulations of the Portuguese government drove the Walvis Bay traders who operated in Ovamboland into grave financial difficulties, which reached their height in the mid-1880s. When trade became unprofitable most of the Walvis Bay traders withdrew altogether from the markets of Ovamboland and Mossamedes Province.

In order to improve the profitability of trade in Ovamboland and the Kunene River region, Axel Eriksson planned the opening of a new route leading from the Kunene region to South Africa in the beginning of the 1880s.<sup>376</sup> He was especially interested in the business prospects offered by the Transvaal gold mines and the Kimberley diamond fields.<sup>377</sup> The initiation of extensive mining operations gave rise to large urban communities in the environs of the mines. For example, in 1866 there were no fixed dwellings in Kimberley, but by 1877 a city had arisen close by the mine with a population of 18,000. During the period from 1866 to the end of the century the small village of Johannesburg grew into a city of 166,000 inhabitants.<sup>378</sup>

The birth of urban communities caused an explosive growth in the demand for, and prices of, supplies. Supplies and cattle had to be transported from the coast to meet the needs of the mining communities. For

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<sup>376</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 54—56. See also *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 36, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>377</sup> Houghton, 1971, pp. 10—14; Valette, 1884, p. 426.

<sup>378</sup> Wilson, 1971, pp. 113—114.

example, American wheat was imported to the Kimberley mines. The fulfillment of meat needs was hindered by the diseases which had taxed the cattle population of southern Africa.<sup>379</sup>

Eriksson fulfilled his plan for opening a trade route in the latter part of 1883 when he set out with 2,500 head of cattle for the Transvaal. Misfortune followed him: near Lake Ngami 450 of his animals were stolen and a further 750 head died of lungsickness. Only 1,300 head of his original herd made it to the Transvaal in the middle of 1884. Part of the first cattle herd he drove to the Transvaal was purchased from Ovambo kings, given that he had stayed in Uukwanyama, Ondonga and other places in the latter part of 1883 before departing for the Transvaal.<sup>380</sup> Eriksson also recruited people from Ondonga to drive the cattle during the trip.<sup>381</sup>

For his trading trips from the regions of the Kunene and Okavango Rivers to the Transvaal and Kimberley Eriksson used two different routes up till Lake Ngami. From Lake Ngami southward he used the established routes of the traders and missionaries coming from Cape Colony and the Transvaal.<sup>382</sup>

In spite of the heavy losses encountered on his first trip Eriksson continued traveling by the new route. His optimism was bolstered by the high price obtained for cattle and, unlike at Mossamedes Harbor, the unrestricted availability and low price of arms and ammunition.<sup>383</sup>

Eriksson procured most of the cattle he sold in the Transvaal and Kimberley from the regions of the Kunene and Okavango Rivers even though there was abundant cattle in Hereroland which was larger and meatier than in Ovamboland.<sup>384</sup> Due to the unstable political situation in Hereroland and Namaland Eriksson's trading house concentrated its busi-

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid., pp. 114—116.

<sup>380</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 61—63; Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 23 December 1883, Eac:11, FMSA.

<sup>381</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 22 October 1884, Eac:12, FMSA.

<sup>382</sup> For more on long-distance trade routes in southwestern Africa, see Appendix 4.

<sup>383</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 64. The opening of the Kimberley diamond fields increased arms trade in southern Africa: Schulz, Hammar, 1897, p. 301.

<sup>384</sup> Bericht des Vorstandes der Deutsch-Westafrikanischen Compagnie — Berlin über das erste Geschäftsjahr vom 1 January — 31 December 1887, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1556, p. 85, ZStA; Leutwein, 1906, p. 350. For more on the cattle wealth of Herero communities, see The South West Africa Company Limited, Notes of the agricultural condition and prospects of the country passed through by the Company's officers, extracted from their official reports, London 10 November 1893, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1481, p. 59/4, ZStA.

ness operations north of the war zone. This is proved by the fact that he was not mentioned among the traders who were caught for smuggling arms and ammunition.<sup>385</sup>

In the 1880s only Eriksson's trading company carried out trade between the Kunene River region and the Transvaal and Kimberley.<sup>386</sup> It was not worthwhile to transport small herds of cattle from the Kunene to the Transvaal and Kimberley because the journey required at least seven months under favorable conditions.<sup>387</sup>

The cattle herds conveyed by Eriksson's company consisted of about 2,000 head. The collection of large cattle herds required plenty of capital, which excluded small merchants from the market. Even though the price obtained for cattle at the mines was at least two times higher than the price paid for them in the interior, the opening of the new trading route consumed plenty of Eriksson's funds. In a letter sent from the Kimberley diamond fields on 22 May 1885, he concluded that so far his business using the new route had caused him extensive losses.<sup>388</sup>

The 1887 ban on imports of modern weapons into Portuguese Angola, however, spurred Eriksson to continue his convoys to the Transvaal and Kimberley. With the changes in market conditions, Eriksson's company focused its business on the new trade route. In 1889 he bought a large ranch in the Transvaal for the fattening up of cattle. The ranch served as a base for trading trips to the Kunene River region.<sup>389</sup>

Eriksson's company continued selling arms and ammunition among the Ovambo in spite of the German prohibition of 1892 against doing so. For example, in 1894 Eriksson sold rifles to King Kambonde kaMpingana of Ondonga.<sup>390</sup>

In response to the tightening of control over the arms and ammunition trade Eriksson's company reduced its business in this sector, at least in Ondonga. Eriksson's caution as an arms dealer is well demonstrated by the fact that the German colonial administrators were not able to indict him for smuggling, even though allegations were expressed.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> For more on smuggling of arms and ammunition from Bechuanaland and the Transvaal into German South West Africa, see section 4.4.1.3.

<sup>386</sup> Schulz, Hammar, 1897, pp. 305–306, 387; Schinz, 1891, p. 368.

<sup>387</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 77–78.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63–65, 71–74, 88.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70–87.

<sup>390</sup> MRD 23 July 1894, also see 15–26 January 1895, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>391</sup> Volkmann to von Lindequist, Omaruru 24 January 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839,

Eriksson's arms deals in the Kunene River region irritated the Portuguese more than the Germans, because he violated the import ban and customs regulations on the sale of modern weapons in Portuguese Angola. Eriksson believed that the Portuguese were intentionally trying to sever his trading connections to the Transvaal and terminate the sale of weaponry to the Ovambo, because they planned to man Uukwanyama and annex it to Portuguese Angola.<sup>392</sup> Eriksson's conjecture proved correct in 1896.

In 1894 a ban on the sale of arms and ammunition in the Transvaal (Republic of South Africa) came into force. The ban also prohibited the sale and transmission of weaponry to Africans outside of the Transvaal. In one blow this destroyed the foundation for trade between the Kunene region and the Transvaal and Kimberley. This was so even though the price of cattle was continually on the increase due to the rinderpest epidemic which was raging on the east coast of Africa. For example, the price of oxen in southern Africa quintupled within a brief time in the 1890s.<sup>393</sup>

When the ban on the arms trade made it unprofitable to conduct his former business in the Transvaal and Kimberley, Eriksson transferred his headquarters back to South West Africa in the mid-1890s. He established a farm in Aukas, near Grootfontein.<sup>394</sup> Nonetheless, Eriksson did not stop doing business in Ovamboland and in the regions of the Kunene and Okavango Rivers. He adapted his operations to the new conditions. Eriksson's resumed use of Walvis Bay Harbor signified the dissolution of the trade link between Ovamboland and the south African mines.<sup>395</sup>

From the opening of the trade route to 1894 Eriksson's company conveyed an estimated 10,000 head of cattle for sale in the Transvaal and Kimberley. Tabler's estimates must be considered conservative. After all this trade lasted ten years and the conveyed cattle herds consisted on the average of 2,000 head. Thus the total amount of cattle conveyed to the

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p. 47, ZStA. Cf. the missionary Rautanen's diary from 1887—1895, Hp XXVIII:1—3, FMSA.

<sup>392</sup> Waerneman, 1955, p. 83.

<sup>393</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 87—88; also see Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 243.

<sup>394</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 85—88.

<sup>395</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 85—88. See also: Rosenblad, 1924, pp. 19, 48—50, 67—69; MRD 27 August 1895, 23 January 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Möller, 1974, p. 137.

Transvaal and Kimberley was probably greater than 10,000 head.<sup>396</sup> It is not possible to precisely determine how much of this cattle was obtained from the Ovambo. It appears, however, to have been considerable in view of the numerous trading trips made among the Ovambo by Eriksson and those in his service.<sup>397</sup>

The opening of the trade route to the Transvaal and Kimberley offered Eriksson's trading company an alternate way to carry on the lucrative arms and ammunition trade in the Kunene River region up until 1894. Traffic along this route was not very active since its use required plenty of capital due to the length of the journey.

## 4.5. Colonial Officials as Directors of Trade 1897—1904

### 4.5.1. The Rinderpest and its Effect on Trade

Until the 1890s, the colonial governments' control over trade with the Ovambo was restricted to the coastal harbors. In the interior the operations of European traders and their middlemen were supervised primarily by local rulers. Only in the 1890s did colonial administrators gain enough power in the interior to improve their capacity to control trade there.

The German colonial officials endeavored from the beginning of the 1890s, as did the Portuguese from the middle of the decade, onward through legislation and increased supervision to cut off the flow of arms and ammunition to the Ovambo communities. The supervision of trade and other traffic from the south to Ovamboland became considerably

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<sup>396</sup> Tabler, 1973, p. 39. Cf. Waerneman, 1955, pp. 63, 71—72, 74, 88; Walther to the Admiral in Command, Sao Thome 20 September 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 138, ZStA.

<sup>397</sup> E.g. Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 23 December 1883, Eac:11, FMSA; MRD 17 June 1887, 20 June 1887, 13 July 1889, 5 December 1890, 19 July 1894, 3 December 1894, 26—27 January 1895, 27 August 1895, Hp XXVIII:1,2,3, FMSA; Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Omaruru 1 July 1887, Eac:15, FMSA; APeD 25 February 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Meisenholz to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 27 June 1893, C/i I:45, UEMA.

more effective in September 1896, when the North District was established in northern Hereroland. The Germans established military bases in Outjo and Grootfontein, which were strategically convenient locations for the supervision of traffic bound for Ovamboland.<sup>398</sup> From Outjo the west side of the Etosha Pan could be watched, and from Grootfontein the eastern route to Ovamboland could be watched. At the end of 1896 there were about 150 soldiers stationed on the border between Hereroland and Ovamboland.<sup>399</sup>

The reason for creating the North District was firstly to strengthen the hold of the German colonial government on northern Hereroland and secondly to halt the advance of the rinderpest threatening South West Africa through the aid of a 550 kilometer long quarantine line formed along the northern and eastern borders of the District.<sup>400</sup>

Before spreading to South West Africa the rinderpest had raged in eastern and southern Africa. The disease was first observed in 1889 in the region of present day Somalia. The Zambezi River stopped the rinderpest's advance for almost four years. But after breaking out on the south side of the river it swiftly advanced, facilitated by the good roadways, into southern Africa.<sup>401</sup> The disease broke out in the region of present day Botswana in 1896, and spread to the environs of Lake Ngami in the beginning of 1897.<sup>402</sup> The first cases of the rinderpest in German South West Africa were registered in April of 1897 in Grootfontein.<sup>403</sup>

An attempt was made to prevent the spread of the disease to German South West Africa through, among other things, traffic control and prohibiting animal trade.<sup>404</sup> By preventing ox-wagons from crossing the Okaukwejo border station the quarantine zone set between Ovamboland and Hereroland at the end of 1896 severed the already meager flow of

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<sup>398</sup> von Estorff, *Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1896/97*, Outjo 28 June 1897, ZBU Nr. 147, A.VI.a.3.Bd.2a, pp. 188—189, NAW.

<sup>399</sup> Leutwein to Stahlhut, Swakopmund 22 October 1896, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1, pp. 34—35, NAW.

<sup>400</sup> von Estorff, *Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1896/97*, Outjo 28 June 1897, ZBU Nr. 147, A.VI.a.3.Bd.2a, pp. 188—193, NAW.

<sup>401</sup> Onselen, 1972, pp. 473—474; Sander, 1897, pp. 3—4.

<sup>402</sup> von Lindequist, *Bekanntmachung*, Windhoek 18 April 1897, ZBU Nr. 1311, O.III.c.1., p. 7, NAW. See also: Onselen, 1972, p. 473; Sander, 1897, pp. 3—4.

<sup>403</sup> Thilo to the missionaries of the FMS, Omaruru 25 April 1897, Eac:25, FMSA. See also Leutwein, 1906, pp. 126—131.

<sup>404</sup> *Verordnung betreffend Massregeln zur Verhütung der Einschleppung der Rinderpest*, Windhoek 22 June 1896, ZBU Nr. 1311, O.III.c.1., pp. 1—2, NAW.



trade through Hereroland to Ovamboland.<sup>405</sup>

The missionaries working in Ovamboland were, however, given special permission to fetch freight from Hereroland as long as the rinderpest stayed out of German South West Africa.<sup>406</sup> As the disease approached, the missionaries had to adhere more strictly to the quarantine regulations. They were requested to restrict their correspondence and travel to a minimum. With the outbreak of the disease in Grootfontein, traffic from Hereroland to Ovamboland was severed completely.<sup>407</sup>

Official measures were not able to prevent the spread of the rinderpest, and by the beginning of July it raged freely in Hereroland.<sup>408</sup> In Ovamboland the disease first broke out in Uukwambi on 30 August and on the next day the first case was observed in Ondonga.<sup>409</sup> Like wildfire, the rinderpest spread in less than a month throughout the whole of Ovamboland.<sup>410</sup> The Kunene River did not deter the rinderpest from spreading onward into Portuguese Angola where it was able to cause great damage before the year's end.<sup>411</sup>

The fear felt toward the rinderpest was not groundless: almost without exception the animals which contracted it died. In eastern Africa 90—95% of the cattle population died of the disease;<sup>412</sup> a corresponding percent died in Ovamboland and Hereroland.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Zusatzverordnung zu der Verordnung, betreffend Massnahmen zur Verhütung der Einschleppung der Rinderpest, vom 22 Juni 1896, Okombahe 30 September 1896, ZBU Nr. 1311, O.III.c.1., p. 3, NAW; Leutwein to Stahlhut and Kaiser, Swakopmund 22 October 1896, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1., pp. 34—40, NAW; MRD 30 October 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>406</sup> Leutwein to Stahlhut and Kaiser, Swakopmund 22 October 1896, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.1., pp. 34—40, NAW. See also: ASD vol. 2, 31 December 1896, PC; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Cape Town 9 February 1897, Eac:25, FMSA; DKB 1 May 1897, p. 266.

<sup>407</sup> MRD 10 February 1897, 1 May 1897, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; ASD vol. 2, 1 May 1897, PC; DKB 1 June 1897, p. 325.

<sup>408</sup> von Estorff, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1896/97, Outjo 28 June 1897, ZBU Nr. 147, A.VI.a.3.Bd.2a, pp. 196—201, NAW.

<sup>409</sup> MRD 30—31 August 1897, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>410</sup> Wulffhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 22 September 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulffhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 18 October 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Ickler to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 4 December 1897, B/c II:68, UEMA.

<sup>411</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 246—247.

<sup>412</sup> Wright, 1985, p. 576.

<sup>413</sup> Schultze, 1914, p. 236; Irlé, 1906, p. 301; Quellen Bd. 30b, pp. 78—80, NAW. See also: Bley, 1971, p. 125; BRMG 1897, p. 376; Sander, 1897, p. 11; Sollars,

The missionaries working in Ovamboland tried to save cattle from the rinderpest by inoculating them according to instructions given by the German colonial officials and under the guidance of the trader Eriksson.<sup>414</sup> Kings Kambonde and Ueyulu of Ondonga and Uukwanyama initially took a suspicious attitude toward the inoculation program, accusing it of spreading the disease in Ovamboland. But their suspicions were somewhat allayed when the rinderpest broke out in Uukwambi, where there were no missionaries at all.<sup>415</sup>

Inoculation proved to be the most effective means for saving cattle, even though the most of the cattle population was lost either to the rinderpest or to lungsickness. The missionary Albin Savola recorded that in the course of 1897 he inoculated altogether 2,800 animals, of which about 1,000 survived.<sup>416</sup> Similar results were attained by Dr. Ludwig Sander who studied the consequences of the rinderpest in South West Africa. He estimated that thirty to fifty percent of cattle inoculated in the Windhoek area survived.<sup>417</sup> Thus only a fraction of the Ovamboland cattle population was saved through inoculation. The destruction brought on by the rinderpest was augmented by the ruin caused by drought and locusts the following year, all leading to a period of famine.<sup>418</sup>

At the beginning of 1898 the missionary Matti Rautanen aptly observed that due to the rinderpest even the rich suddenly became poor in Ondon-

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1972, p. 124. Even in southern Angola about 90 % of the cattle population died of the rinderpest: Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 246.

<sup>414</sup> E.g. MRD 15—16 September 1897, 602—91, NAF; ASD vol. 2, 3 September 1897, 17 September 1897, PC; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Oniipa 15 January 1898, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst, 1917, pp. 35—36, C/i:20, UEMA; MBC at Oniipa 28 September 1897, § 1—3, Hha:3, FMSA. For more on the methods of inoculating cattle: Kohlstock, Impfinstruktion, Swakopmund 28 May 1897, ZBU Nr. 1311, O.III.c.1., pp. 18—19, 21—23, NAW.

<sup>415</sup> E.g. Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 11 December 1897, Eac:25, FMSA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 22 September 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 29 October 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst, 1917, pp. 35—36, UEMA, C/i:20.

<sup>416</sup> MBC at Ondangwa 5 January 1898, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:3, FMSA. Cf. Wulfhorst, 1917, p. 36, C/i:20, UEMA.

<sup>417</sup> Sander, 1897, p. 11.

<sup>418</sup> E.g. Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 31 March 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Ickler to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 6 May 1898, B/c II:68, UEMA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 11 December 1897, Eac:25, FMSA; MBC at Ondangwa 5 January 1898, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:3, FMSA; MBC at Oniipa 12 December 1898, annexes 4 and 5 of the minutes, Hha:3, FMSA.

ga.<sup>419</sup> Because of the central status of cattle in society, the rinderpest did not simply weaken the economic foundation of the communities, but it also had extensive political, social and psychological consequences. The rinderpest clearly strained the Ovambo communities politically and socially more than the depletion of big game.<sup>420</sup>

The quarantine regulations of the latter part of 1896 and the outbreak of the rinderpest caused trade from the south to Ovamboland to come to a near standstill which lasted until mid-1898.<sup>421</sup> The outbreak of the rinderpest also severed Portuguese trade with the Ovambo.<sup>422</sup>

## 4.5.2. The Status of Ovamboland in the Economy of German South West Africa

### 4.5.2.1. The Economic Condition of Hereroland after the Rinderpest

The rinderpest caused a socioeconomic crisis in the African communities of South West Africa. The situation was most grave for the cattle breeding Nama and Herero peoples, whose diet was based on milk products. With the communities weakened by malnutrition, diseases, particularly malaria, gained sway. Only ten percent of the Herero population was spared from disease.<sup>423</sup> According to an estimate by the missionary Irle, which must be considered too high, about ten thousand people died of malaria between March and August 1898.<sup>424</sup> The Herero's economic plight was made worse by the post-rinderpest drought and the destruction of pastures by locust swarms.<sup>425</sup> The severity of the food

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<sup>419</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Caledon 2 March 1898, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>420</sup> More on the economic, social and political consequences of the rinderpest in sections 5.2.2.2. and 5.2.2.3.

<sup>421</sup> Franke, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1898/99, Outjo 26 June 1899, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.4., p. 434, NAW. See also: MRD 14 November 1898, 602—91, NAF; ASD vol. 2, 10 June 1898, PC.

<sup>422</sup> von Estorff to Governor's Council, Outjo 20 April 1898, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2., pp. 21—22, NAW; Savola to von Estorff, Oniipa 7 May 1898, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2., pp. 23—24, NAW.

<sup>423</sup> Bley, 1971, pp. 124—125; also see BRMG 1898, p. 80.

<sup>424</sup> Irle, 1906, p. 302.

<sup>425</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 106; also see BRMG 1898, pp. 115—116.

shortage is well demonstrated by the fact that, to the great surprise of Europeans, the Herero began cultivating vegetables.<sup>426</sup>

The rinderpest also strained the economy, based as it was on the raising of cattle for export, of the European colonists in South West Africa. Thanks to inoculation, however, the cattle losses experienced by the colonists were considerably smaller than those of the native population.<sup>427</sup>

In fact, the rinderpest turned out to be a beneficial event for the European colonists: it broke the Herero monopoly on the cattle trade and created conditions allowing the colonists for the first time to engage in profitable cattle breeding. The profitability of cattle breeding was increased by the 300% rise in the pre-rinderpest price of beef cattle. Earlier the cattle trade had primarily been export-oriented, but with an increase of immigration the internal cattle market of South West Africa began to develop at the turn of the century.<sup>428</sup>

Following the rinderpest the economy of Hereroland became divided more distinctly than ever into two sectors, the African and the European. What is meant here by the European sector is the economic production of the colonists which began on a small scale in the 1890s. Until the rinderpest Europeans had focused mainly on trading in South West Africa.

After the rinderpest the growth rate of the European sector clearly accelerated. The German Colonial government encouraged investment by developing the infrastructure. Following the rinderpest there was a transport crisis in South West Africa, because most of the oxen for hauling were lost and there was no alternative form of transport available. In order to ease the transport problem the government had a railroad built from Swakopmund to Windhoek (382 km). The work lasted from 1897 to 1902.<sup>429</sup> Helmut Bley thought that the railroad did not actually promote economic growth, but that instead its function was a symbolic one.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 126.

<sup>427</sup> Wellington, 1967, p. 192.

<sup>428</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 126; Schrank, 1974, p. 131. See also Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 28 March 1900, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>429</sup> Quiring, 1911, pp. 8—9.

<sup>430</sup> Bley, 1971, pp. 130—131. The construction of the Swakopmund harbor was begun in 1892, because Walvis Bay, the most important export/import harbor in the South West African coast, belonged to the British and was part of the Cape

The European sector swiftly recovered from the rinderpest, as indicated by the doubling of the European civilian population in South West Africa between 1897 and 1903. Most of the new settlers were induced to come by government investment in the construction of railways and Swakopmund Harbor.<sup>431</sup> Colonist farming and cattle breeding likewise rapidly expanded after the rinderpest. The number of farmers trebled between 1899 and 1903, and by 1902 the number of cattle they owned (46,000 head) surpassed that of the Herero (44,500).<sup>432</sup>

The economic development of the Herero communities did not follow the European sector. Economic recovery from the rinderpest was inhibited by cattle's limited reproductive capacity, unfavorable natural conditions and the occasional outbreak of cattle diseases such as the rinderpest and lungsickness.<sup>433</sup>

On the other hand increasing dependence on European manufactured goods and on trade with Europeans dissolved the foundation for the development of Herero economic self-sufficiency. Following the rinderpest the Herero ran into problems concerning how to finance trade with Europeans, because besides cattle the latter were only interested in Herero pasture lands.<sup>434</sup>

Instead of terminating trade with Africans because of the rinderpest, Europeans sold them the goods they desired on credit. After the rinderpest, the Herero headmen preferred to pay their debts with pasture land — their most important means of production — rather than with the product of production, namely cattle. The sale of pasture land undermined

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Colony. For the Germans the main aim of the construction project was to diminish their economic and political dependence on the Cape Colony: Rautenberg 1987, p. 64.

<sup>431</sup> The European population increased from 2,628 in 1897 to 4,682 in 1903: Bley, 1971, p. 131.

<sup>432</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 123; Schrank, 1974, p. 130. Before the rinderpest the cattle wealth of the Herero was estimated at 300,000 to 500,000 head: The South West Africa Company Limited, »Notes of the agricultural conditions and prospects of the country passed through by the Company's officers, extracted from their official reports«, London 10 November 1893, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1481, pp. 59/3—59/4, ZStA; Leutwein, 1906, p. 350.

<sup>433</sup> E.g. Eggers, Jahresbericht des Distriktskommando Grootfontein 1899/1900, Grootfontein 21 June 1900, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.5., p. 252, NAW; BRMG 1901, p. 83; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 28 December 1900, Eac:26, FMSA; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 9 February 1901, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>434</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 135.

the traditional Herero principle of the social ownership of land.<sup>435</sup> For the colonists the most effective way of procuring land was to sell goods on credit to Africans, and then demand land and cattle in payment from the headmen.<sup>436</sup>

The colonial officials under Governor Leutwein were greatly troubled by the indebtedness of Africans. They tried to make trade with Africans cash-based. In spite of traders' protests, trade on credit was prohibited in 1903. Europeans were required to obtain payment from Africans for debts due before the year's end; this strained relations between Europeans and Africans.<sup>437</sup>

The sale of goods on credit by Europeans undermined the principle of social land ownership and use in Hereroland as headmen were forced to sell their communities' pastures to Europeans. Furthermore, the dependence of native communities on European commodities increased after the rinderpest. As their traditional ways of living vanished, the Herero were forced either to diversify their economy or to seek paid work in the European sector.<sup>438</sup>

#### 4.5.2.2. Ovamboland's Status as a Market Area

Conditions for the recovery of the African sector's economy and trade following the rinderpest were more favorable in Ovamboland than in the middle and southern parts of South West Africa. Firstly, the cattle population in Ovamboland recovered more swiftly than in Hereroland.<sup>439</sup> According to the Imperial German consul in Luanda, Dorbritz, the cattle population of Ovamboland surpassed that of Hereroland in number in the beginning of the 1900s. Formerly the Herero had always possessed

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<sup>435</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 135; Moorsom, 1973, p. 53.

<sup>436</sup> Schrank, 1974, pp. 132—133; Moorsom, 1973, p. 52. For the prices of land in central and southern parts of South West Africa in 1902: land purchased from the companies 1—5 M/ha, land purchased from the government 0,30—1,50 M/ha and land purchased from the local headmen 0,50—1 M/ha: Drechsler, 1984, p. 123; also see Leutwein, 1906, pp. 405—407.

<sup>437</sup> Bley, 1971, pp. 135—138, 142—145. See also: Drechsler, 1984, pp. 128—136; Schrank, 1974, p. 134.

<sup>438</sup> Moorsom, 1973, pp. 55—57.

<sup>439</sup> Pettinen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 11 March 1899, Eac:25, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 15 March 1899, Eac:25, FMSA.



more cattle than the Ovambo.<sup>440</sup>

Moreover, because the Ovambo lived by farming, the rinderpest did not cause them the same kind of nutritional crisis as occurred in Hereroland. During the rinderpest of 1897 and the following year the Ovambo did indeed suffer nutritional deficiencies due to drought and crop destruction by locusts, but relief came already in 1899 when there was a normal harvest.<sup>441</sup>

Even though in Hereroland there was a lack of beef cattle, and of breeder cows in particular, it did not cause an influx of traders into Ovamboland; trade there remained at a near standstill until mid-1898.<sup>442</sup> The revival of trade was impeded firstly by the transport crisis caused by the rinderpest, which caused an estimated loss of two-thirds of all transport oxen. The rapid rise in the price of oxen made the equipping of trading parties very expensive.<sup>443</sup> Moreover, traffic regulations implemented in order to prevent the spread of cattle diseases impeded the recovery of trade, since when the epidemics broke out traffic from Hereroland to Ovamboland was severed immediately.<sup>444</sup> The ban on the arms and ammunition trade was likewise an impediment to the recovery of trade, because the Ovambo kings had a preference for these products, along with alcohol, in their trading with Europeans.

Control over the arms trade was again tightened in 1898 with a law specifying that arms and ammunition could be procured only for personal use, and only with the permission of the colonial authorities. Furthermore, the government established a monopoly on the sale of arms,

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<sup>440</sup> Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 12 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 85, NAW. See also Laubschat, 1903, p. 645.

<sup>441</sup> E.g. Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 11 December 1897, Eac:25, FMSA; MBC at Ondangwa 5 January 1898, § 3, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:3, FMSA; I. Rönkä to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 7 June 1899, Eac:25, FMSA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 July 1899, Eac:25, FMSA.

<sup>442</sup> Franke, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1898/99, Outjo 26 June 1899, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.4., p. 434, NAW; Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1899/1900, Outjo 15 June 1900, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.5., p. 235, NAW; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 28 March 1900, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>443</sup> The average price of a transport ox was approximately 120 M before the rinderpest, but after it even inferior transport oxen cost over 250 M/head: Sander, 1897, pp. 16—18. In general the price of cattle tripled after the rinderpest: Schrank, 1974, p. 131.

<sup>444</sup> BRMG 1898, p. 25; BRMG 1901, p. 83. Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 28 December 1900, Eac:26, FMSA.

and confined it to its own stores. All new weapons had to be stamped, and their owners had to have a permit to bear arms requiring renewal every five years. Both native Africans and Europeans were required within three months following the implementation of the law to deliver all weapons in their possession to the police for stamping, and to procure permits to bear arms.<sup>445</sup>

In principle this law applied to the arms possessed by the Ovambo, but in practice the weapon stamping did not extend to Ovamboland, which lay outside of the colonial government's reach. Stamps and permits were required only for new weapons and their bearers in Ovamboland. For example, in 1900 the commander of North District granted Kings Ueyulu and Kambonde permission to buy rifles. All other weapons transmitted to the Ovambo from the south must be considered contraband.<sup>446</sup> The limitations of the legal supply of weaponry to Africans is well displayed by the statistics from 1899—1902 on the sale of arms and ammunition at government stores:<sup>447</sup>

Year	M/71 rifles	M/71 cartridges	hunting rifles	cartridges	powder kg.	shot kg.
1899 e	276	166 851	73	11 292	488	1 596
a	43	8 405	1	75	47	73
1900 e	288	218 311	53	18 166	373	1 679
a	72	9 500	2	164	34	82
1901 e	218	222 297	23	18 325	748	1 982
a	42	7 678	1	110	41	86
1902 e	155	243 937	29	19 992	532	1 660
a	16	4 699	1	130	39	116

a = sales to Africans

e = sales to Europeans

<sup>445</sup> DKB 1 October 1897, pp. 566—567; Leutwein, 1906, pp. 249—254. For revision of the arms trade regulations in 1902: Verordnung betreffend die Einführung von Feuerwaffen und Munition in Deutsch Südwestafrika, Windhoek 30 July 1902, ZBU Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.2., pp. 174—181, NAW. For more on the weapon stamping: von Estorff to Governor's Council, Outjo 22 August 1898, ZBU Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.2., p. 27—28, NAW; Eggers to District Council of Outjo, Otavi-Fontein 30 December 1898, ZBU, Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.2., pp. 41—42, NAW.

<sup>446</sup> Nachweisung der in der Zeit von 1.1.1900 bis 31.12.1900 ausgestellten Legitimationskarten zum Tragen von Waffen, Outjo 15 December 1900, ZBU Nr. 802, G.VI.a.4.Bd.2., pp. 235—241, NAW.

<sup>447</sup> Nachweisung über aus amtlichen Verkaufstellen in der Zeit von 1899—1903 verkaufte Waffen u. Munition, ZBU Nr. 810, G.VI.f.2.Bd.1., pp. 6—7, NAW.

The procurement of arms and ammunition by Africans was further hindered by price policy. The price paid by Africans for these goods was double that paid by Europeans. For example, at government stores a M/71 rifle cost Europeans 60 marks and Africans 120 marks at the end of 1896. Correspondingly, cartridges for the M/71 cost Europeans 0.25 marks and Africans 0.50 marks a piece.<sup>448</sup>

An effort was made to prevent the smuggling of weaponry by restricting sales. Europeans had permission to buy only fifty cartridges per month. Larger amounts could be purchased only by special permission when the buyer's destination was situated, for example in Ovamboland, far away from the government stores.<sup>449</sup> In practice, at the beginning of 1898 for example, the authorities strictly enforced the fifty cartridge monthly limit.<sup>450</sup>

Among the ways the colonial administrators tried to end the clandestine arms trade between the Ovambo and the Herero was to impound all arms and ammunition at Outjo from Africans entering Hereroland for the duration of their visit.<sup>451</sup> In spite of stricter legislation, the smuggling of arms and ammunition from the south to Ovamboland continued. For example in the spring of 1899 some migrant Ndonga laborers returning home from Hereroland were caught smuggling seven muskets which they had bought from the Herero. According to the missionary Rautanen, the Herero sold the Ndonga their obsolete muzzle-loading guns, for which ammunition could no longer be obtained.<sup>452</sup>

Migrant Ovambo laborers returning home were not the only smugglers; European traders were also guilty. In giving arms and ammunition as gifts the representatives of licensed trading companies and missionaries

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<sup>448</sup> von Lindequist to District Councils, Windhoek 15 October 1896, ZBU Nr. 803, G.VI.b.1.Bd.1., pp. 1—2, NAW. See also: Verkaufstarif für Handelswaffen und Munition gültig vom 1.7.1899, Windhoek 23 June 1899, ZBU Nr. 803, G.VI.b.1.Bd.1., p. 36, NAW; Verkaufstarif für Handelswaffen und Munition, Windhoek 28 June 1908, ZBU Nr. 803, G.VI.b.1.Bd.2., pp. 48—49, NAW.

<sup>449</sup> Kliefoth to Governor's Council, Outjo 3 September 1900, ZBU Nr. 800, G.VI.a.1.Bd.2., pp. 123—124, NAW.

<sup>450</sup> Perbandt, Verzeichniss der Einfuhr- und Käuferlaubnisschein welche in der Zeit von 1.1. bis 30.6.1898 erteilt sind, Swakopmund 1 July 1898, ZBU Nr. 801, G.VI.a.3.Bd.1., pp. 23—40, NAW.

<sup>451</sup> Franke to Governor's Council, Outjo 14 April 1899, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2., pp. 32—34, NAW.

<sup>452</sup> MRD 24 April 1899, 26 March 1900, 602—91, NAF. See also Jürn to Governor's Council, Okahandja 22 April 1902, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2., pp. 76—78, NAW.

violated current laws.<sup>453</sup> In August of 1904 the traders Koch and Jacobs were charged with the smuggling of arms and ammunition. Moreover, other Europeans carrying out trading trips, like Sabatta and Rüdiger, from the south to Ovamboland were accused of smuggling, but charges against them were dropped.<sup>454</sup>

On the basis of known cases, the overall volume of arms and ammunition smuggled during the first years of the twentieth century was smaller than during the previous decade. That King Tshaanika of Ongandjera requested Finnish missionaries to provide him with arms and ammunition, which they refused to do, is an indication that the procurement of weapons had become more difficult.<sup>455</sup>

In addition to smuggling, the legal trade between the south and the Ovambo communities also revived, from the latter part of 1898 on, after the break caused by the rinderpest and the quarantine regulations. At the turn of the century Kliefoth, the commander of North District, concluded that trade had recovered from the rinderpest more slowly than predicted in northern Hereroland, but that prospects for progress in Ovamboland looked brighter.<sup>456</sup> By the turn of the century trading trips were carried out regularly from Hereroland to the north.<sup>457</sup>

Following the rinderpest there were extensive changes in the composition of the community of traders doing business in Ovamboland. Most of the traders operating out of Walvis Bay had come from either Cape

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<sup>453</sup> AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 113—131, NAW; Gerber to AAKA, Freiburg 23 February 1905, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1842, pp. 15—17, ZStA; Hartmann, 1905, pp. 20—26. For instance, in 1902 the missionary Liljebald exchanged a rifle with Headman Nehale of East Ondonga for four cows: Liljebald to Mustakallio, Onajena 10 December 1902, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>454</sup> Leutwein to the Territorial Court, Windhoek 15 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.3.Bd.1., p. 77, NAW; Schottelius to Governor's Council, Windhoek undated, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.3.Bd.1., pp. 79—80, NAW. See also the minutes taken at the hearing of the trader C.H. Sabatta, Okaputa 7 March 1906 and the trader Rüdiger, Omaruru 15 August 1906, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.3.Bd.1., pp. 91—92, NAW.

<sup>455</sup> MBC at Oniipa 2 December 1904, § 2, Hha:4, FMSA.

<sup>456</sup> Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1899/1900, Outjo 15 June 1900, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.5., pp. 237—238, NAW.

<sup>457</sup> E.g. MRD 22—26 January 1900, 20 June 1900, 21 August 1900, 29—30 August 1900, 1 September 1900, 16 October 1900, 602—91, NAF; Tönjes to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 23 August 1900, B/c II:74, UEMA.

Colony, Great Britain, Sweden or Germany; after the rinderpest the trader community was clearly Germanified. The gradual withdrawal of Eriks-son's trading company from the Ovamboland market was among the events which provided room for new entrepreneurs.<sup>458</sup> The Germanification of the trader community was based on the increase of migration from Germany to South West Africa.<sup>459</sup>

The business operations of German traders were hindered by the fact that the Ovambo associated them with the threat posed by the expansion of German colonial power. The Ovambo first came into direct contact with this power at the end of 1899 with the visit of First Lieutenant Franke to Ondonga and Uukwanyama.<sup>460</sup> That Franke's travel plans were considered in Ondonga to be an indication of the feared German incursion is evidence of the anti-German attitude of the Ovambo.<sup>461</sup>

The German colonial administrators' exploratory trips during the first years of the twentieth century further increased the anti-German attitude of the Ovambo. Following Franke, the vice-commander of Schutztruppe, Major Mueller, carried out an investigative trip in Ovamboland in June-September 1900. At that time he gathered information for the take-over of the northern part of the territory. Mueller considered the occupation of Ovamboland politically necessary for the definition of the colony's northern border. Economically the occupation of Ovamboland was unsound since the area's cattle population had not fully recuperated from the rinderpest and the Ovambo produced only enough grain for themselves. Mueller considered labor to be the area's most exploitable resource, which could be recruited without the establishment of German governmental machinery in Ovamboland.<sup>462</sup>

On his trip to the north at the end of the year 1900, Governor Leutwein visited Okaukwejo where construction of the so-called Ovamboland border station was begun. In March of 1901 the Okaukwejo station was designated as a Division Office of the Outjo District.<sup>463</sup> Leutwein threat-

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<sup>458</sup> Waerneman, 1955, pp. 92—100; MRD 16 October 1900, 602—91, NAF. Eriks-son died of a stroke at the end of May 1901.

<sup>459</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 131.

<sup>460</sup> Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 1—19, NAW.

<sup>461</sup> For more on Franke's visit to Ovamboland, see Eirola, 1987, pp. 233—250.

<sup>462</sup> Mueller, Die Erforschungen meiner Reise durch das Ovamboland bis zum Kunene in der Zeit vom 19.6.-27.9.1900 in militärischer Hinsicht gemacht habe, Windhoek 15 November 1900, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3, pp. 71—107, NAW.

<sup>463</sup> Leutwein, 1906, pp. 164—165; Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des

ened to carry out a punitive expedition against King Negumbo IyaKandenge of Uukwambi if he refused to pay compensation to German traders who were robbed in Uukwambi. Leutwein's retributive expedition was not carried out, but his threats contributed to the increase of Ovambo anti-German sentiment.<sup>464</sup>

Motivated by the Uukwambi confrontation, District Commander Kliefoth made a militarily grandiose trip to Ovamboland in 1901, stopping first in Ondonga and Uukwanyama. Kliefoth's visit to Uukwambi was a complete failure: he neither met King Negumbo nor succeeded in obtaining the demanded compensation for the robbery of German traders.<sup>465</sup>

After Kliefoth, the next German colonial official to visit Ovamboland was First Lieutenant Winkler, who was there from August to November 1901. He was accompanied by Doctor Hartmann of Otavi Minen und Eisenbahn Gesellschaft, who was investigating the possibilities for building a railway from Otavi through Ovamboland to Port Alexander in Portuguese Angola.<sup>466</sup> Doctor Gerber visited Ovamboland in July and August of 1902, as did Lieutenant Arnim in March of 1903.<sup>467</sup> The purpose of these expeditions was to inquire into economic resources; therefore,

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Nordbezirks 1900/01, Outjo 28 May 1901, ZBU Nr. 149, A.VI.a.3.Bd.6., pp. 221—222, NAW.

<sup>464</sup> E.g. Liljeblad to Mustakallio, Olukonda 3 December 1900, Eac:26, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 6 October 1900, Eac:26, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 31 December 1900, Eac:26, FMSA; Liljeblad to Mustakallio, Olukonda 2 May 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 8 April 1901, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>465</sup> Kliefoth to Governor's Council, Outjo 17 August 1901, ZBU Nr. 2037, W.II.k.1.Bd.1., pp. 139—149, NAW. See also: Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 19 June 1901, Eac:24, FMSA; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 11 July 1901, Eac:24, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 10 June 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; Tönjes to the Mission Director of the RMS, Namakunde 26 June 1901, B/c II:74, UEMA; Kliefoth to Leutwein, Nohorongongo 12 July 1901, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1, pp. 98—105, NAW.

<sup>466</sup> von Winkler to Governor's Council, Windhoek 1 February 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 176—197, NAW; Hartmann, 1905, pp. 20—29; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 18 August 1901, Eac:24, FMSA. For more on the investigations concerning the building of a railway from Otavi to Port Alexander, see Drechsler, 1961, pp. 77—89.

<sup>467</sup> Gerber to Leutwein, Omupanda 6 September 1902 and Ondjiva 9 September 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 286—289, NAW; von Arnim, Jahresbericht über der Distrikt Okaukwejo 1902/03, ZBU Nr. 150, A.VI.a.s.Bd.8., pp. 43—51, NAW.



they were not regarded by the Ovambo in the same manner as Franke's and Kliefoth's trips.

It was German traders in particular who were confronted by Ovambo anti-German sentiment. Just before First Lieutenant Franke's trip, a trading party led by Eriksson, including two Germans, arrived in Ondonga. King Kambonde did not even want to see the German traders, but Eriksson and the other members of his party were given a friendly welcome.<sup>468</sup>

The German traders J.H. Schneidewind and E. Petersen received rougher treatment in August of 1900 on their journey from Kaokoveld to Uukwanyama, which they were forced to call off in Uukwambi. When King Negumbo heard that the traders were Germans, and not the Englishmen or the representatives of Eriksson's company he was waiting for, he had them expelled from his territory. After this the traders were robbed and their wagon driver was killed.<sup>469</sup> In his report on the Uukwambi incident District Commander Kliefoth emphasized that Ovambo anger was targeted exclusively at Germans, while others were allowed to carry out trade in Ovamboland in peace. In the name of German economic interests Kliefoth asked Governor Leutwein for permission to undertake a punitive expedition to Uukwambi. Leutwein, however, refused for fear that it would lead to a more extensive war.<sup>470</sup>

The growth of opposition to the Germans was thus a definite restriction on the recovery of trade between the south and Ovamboland: only the traders which had earlier gained the confidence of the kings, such as Eriksson and Struys, could now carry on successful business.<sup>471</sup> In his report from 1900—1901 Kliefoth, commander of North District, stated that trade with Ovamboland was not of great significance for the economy of South West Africa, even though a year earlier he had seen bright prospects for its development.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> MRD 16 October 1899, 602—91, NAF. See also Wulforth to the Mission Director of the RMS, »Die Besetzung Ovambolands«, Omupanda 6 January 1905, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.4., pp. 41—44, NAW.

<sup>469</sup> MRD 1 September 1900, 602—91, NAF. For a detailed analysis of the Uukwambi incident, see Eirola, 1986, pp. 66—86.

<sup>470</sup> Kliefoth to Leutwein, Outjo 15 September 1900, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1., pp. 1—8, NAW; Leutwein to Kliefoth, Windhoek 26 September 1900, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1., pp. 21—24, NAW.

<sup>471</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 8 August 1902, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>472</sup> Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1900/01, Outjo 28 May 1901, ZBU Nr. 149, A.VI.a.3.Bd.6., pp. 217—218, NAW. Cf. Kliefoth,

Colonial officials' capacity to control trade with Ovamboland improved considerably at the beginning of the century, when military bases were established along the routes leading north on both the west and east sides of the Etosha Pan at Okaukwejo and Namutoni. These bases were located near important water and resting places and were thus excellent places for the supervision of trade. One of the most important tasks of the military bases was to supervise northward bound trade and traffic.<sup>473</sup>

The Germanification of the trader community did not affect the structure of trade between the south and Ovamboland. Trade continued to be carried on by small private traders who provided the Ovambo primarily with horses, manufactured clothes, cloth and spirits. The most significant change in the structure of trade was traders' growing interest in the cattle business: earlier Ovamboland mainly provided hunting products such as ivory, ostrich feathers and skins.<sup>474</sup> For example, the ivory trade became irregular and marginal in significance, as is revealed by an examination of South West African ivory exports.<sup>475</sup> In 1913 King Nambala dhaKadhikwa of Ondonga remarked that not a single elephant had been felled in his realm in the last fifteen years.<sup>476</sup>

After the rinderpest traders from the south concentrated their operations in the southern Ovambo communities of Ondonga and Uukwambi. They did not succeed in competing with the Portuguese in the northern communities.<sup>477</sup> The strengthening of the German hold on South

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Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1899/1900, Outjo 15 June 1900, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.5., pp. 237—238, NAW.

<sup>473</sup> Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1900/01, Outjo 28 May 1901, ZBU Nr. 149, A.VI.a.3.Bd.6., pp. 221—222, NAW. See also Volkmann, Jahresbericht des Distrikts Grootfontein 1902/03, Grootfontein June 1903, ZBU Nr. 150, A.VI.a.3.Bd.9., p. 194, NAW.

<sup>474</sup> E.g. AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 120—121, NAW; Kliefoth, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks 1899/1900, Outjo 15 June 1900, ZBU Nr. 148, A.VI.a.3.Bd.5., pp. 237—238, NAW; Minutes kept at the hearing of C.H. Sabatta, Okaputa 4 March 1906, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.3.Bd.1., p. 91, NAW; MRD 21 August 1900, 602—91, NAF; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 31 October 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; Liljeblad to Mustakallio, Onajena 13 April 1903, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>475</sup> The export of ivory from German South West Africa in 1898—1902: 1898, 1,000 kg; 1899, 35 kg; 1900, 0 kg; 1901, 0 kg; 1902, 110 kg; see BzDKB 1900, p. 141, 1901, p. 157, 1902, pp. 208—209, 1904, pp. 290—291. Most of the exported ivory was procured from Ovamboland and the Okavango region.

<sup>476</sup> MRD 14 July 1913, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>477</sup> Gerber to Leutwein, Ondjiva 9 September 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J. XIII.b.3.Bd.3.,

West Africa, and the tightened control over trade which accompanied it, clearly hindered the recovery of trade between the south and Ovamboland following the rinderpest.

### 4.5.3. Northern-based Trade with Ovamboland

The decline of Portugal's state economy to the brink of bankruptcy in 1898 directly affected colonial economies. Initially an effort was made to ease the economic devastation by cutting down spending both in the home country and in the colonies. This approach was implemented most clearly in Mossamedes Province, which had become the heaviest burden for the economy of the colony.<sup>478</sup> One of the means applied to ease the economic crisis was to cut military spending. In practice this resulted in a freeze on the implementation of military plans for the region bordering German South West Africa. At the turn of the century the army concentrated on protecting white colonists and the routes leading from the interior to coast in southern Angola.<sup>479</sup>

The slackening of control over trade following the cuts in military spending did not, however, immediately lead to a swift increase in the arms trade among the Ovambo and the Nkhumbi; what happened, in fact, was just the opposite.<sup>480</sup> One main reason for this was that the spread of the rinderpest throughout Hereroland and Ovamboland and at the end of 1897 on into southern Angola destroyed about 90% of the cattle population. Before the rinderpest, cattle had been second only to fish as Mossamedes Harbor's most important export item. After the rinderpest, the value of cattle exports fell from thirty-four contos in 1897 to about one conto in 1898. It did not ascend during the period under study to anywhere near its pre-rinderpest level.<sup>481</sup>

The rinderpest pressured the cattle traders of southern Angola to switch

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pp. 288—289, NAW. See also Laubschat, 1903, p. 646.

<sup>478</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 250; also see Hammond, 1966, pp. 265—268.

<sup>479</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 273.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>481</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 246, 274. 1 conto = 3,000 M. For more on the economic situation in southern Angola after the rinderpest, see: Gleim to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Cassinga 27 November 1900, ZBU Bd. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.3., pp. 46—57, NAW; Gleim to von Bülow, Loanda 25 March 1901, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.3., pp. 70—93, NAW.

to the rubber trade mainly in the Benguela highlands. The value of rubber exports increased from twenty-six contos in 1898 to 120 contos in 1901. The rubber boom turned out, however, to be of short duration, with a sharp drop in its export value after 1903. The boom's reversal was primarily caused by the sharp fall in the world market price of rubber following 1900 and by gathering methods which wasted rubber and damaged rubber plants. By 1910 only three rubber traders were doing business in the Huilla region.<sup>482</sup>

The rubber trade also attracted traders working in the Nkumbi and Ovambo communities. For example, William Chapman, who had traded among the Ovambo from the mid-1870s on, took up the rubber business on the Cuito River after the rinderpest.<sup>483</sup> The recovery of trade in southern Angola was further hindered by the revival of Ovambo raiding following the rinderpest. Raiding expeditions extended deep into southern Angola, reaching as far as the Ganguella and Caconda regions. Cattle was stolen and prisoners were taken from African communities. The most active raiders came from the Uukwanyama and Ombandja communities.<sup>484</sup>

Raiding was not aimed solely at the African population. European colonists and traders were also victims of the small commando groups sent out from the Ovambo communities. Moreover, it was not rare for the trading caravans travelling between Caconda and Benguela Harbor to be subject to robbery.<sup>485</sup> William Chapman, for example, was robbed on his journey from Humpata to the interior to buy rubber in August 1903. Chapman identified the robbers as the commandos of King Ueyulu of Uukwanyama, with whom he had engaged in trade. He demanded that the king return the booty. Most of the stolen cattle were returned, but Chapman never recovered the rifles and other goods which were stolen.<sup>486</sup>

The primary aim of the Ovambo kings was, however, to cultivate good relations with European traders, upon whom they had become depen-

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<sup>482</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 274, 331—332.

<sup>483</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, pp. 163—167, A. 233, NAW. See also: Waerneman, 1955, pp. 97—100; MRD 16 October 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>484</sup> The Ovambo raiding will be discussed in detail in section 5.2.2.2.

<sup>485</sup> Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 7, NAW; Gleim to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Cassinga 27 November 1900, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.3., p. 46, NAW.

<sup>486</sup> *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 2, pp. 6—13, A. 233, NAW.

dent. The maintenance of trade relations with the north was considered especially important because the desired ammunition, arms and spirits could be obtained more readily and inexpensively therefrom than through Hereroland. Moreover, already before the rinderpest the traders of Humbe paid higher prices, as measured in exchangeable goods, for cattle than, for example, missionaries.<sup>487</sup> After the rinderpest the Ovambo clearly reserved their cattle for exchange with the traders from the north of the Kunene. In addition to cattle, slaves were still commonly used as a medium of exchange.<sup>488</sup>

Because of the activation of Ovambo raiding operations, traders increasingly travelled in parties during their trips to southern Angola and Ovamboland.<sup>489</sup> In addition to the Portuguese, representatives of the other, less numerous, nationalities living in southern Angola undertook trading trips to Ovamboland.<sup>490</sup>

A new feature of trade between Ovamboland and the north was the confinement of trading trips mainly to Uukwanyama.<sup>491</sup> The missionary Savola commented in 1903, that the situation had clearly become more peaceful now that the Portuguese alcohol and slave traders had stopped visiting Ondonga.<sup>492</sup>

Trading trips from the north of the Kunene to the south of Uukwanyama were avoided, firstly because traders traveling among the southern Ovambo communities were clearly in German South West African territory, whereas part of Uukwanyama was located in Portuguese Angola. Secondly, such traders were not merely violating German South West

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<sup>487</sup> AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 119, NAW; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 31 March 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA. See also Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 31 August 1905, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>488</sup> E.g. Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 18, NAW; Mueller to Leutwein, Windhoek 15 November 1900, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3, p. 83, NAW; Volkmann to Leutwein, Grootfontein 2 September 1903, ZBU Nr. 1009, J.XIII.b.4.Bd.1, pp. 34—35, NAW; Hanefeld to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 2 December 1901, B/c I:52, UEMA; BMRG 1902, p. 72.

<sup>489</sup> Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>490</sup> Gibson, 1905, pp. 152—159.

<sup>491</sup> Laubschat, 1903, p. 646; Gerber to Leutwein, Ondjiva 9 September 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 288—289, NAW; Gibson, 1905, p. 159.

<sup>492</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 October 1903, Eac:26, FMSA.

African customs regulations, since most trade between the north and Ovamboland was smuggling according to German law.

German colonial administrators were, however, troubled by the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Angola to South West Africa. Their concern was increased by the uprising of the Zwartbooi people of the Kaokoveld region against the Germans at the end of 1897, which ended in a Zwartbooi surrender in March 1898.<sup>493</sup> At that time Portuguese colonial officials did not even try, nor were they capable, of controlling either the import of, or trade in, arms and ammunition. For example, on his expedition to Ovamboland and Humbe, First Lieutenant Franke concluded that it was necessary to terminate the slave trade and the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Portuguese Angola to Ovamboland in order to pacify the situation and improve the security of the missionaries working there.<sup>494</sup>

Another matter of concern to colonial officials was that now the weapons entering South West Africa from Angola were no longer solely outdated muskets, but included powerful German-made M/88 and M/98 army rifles. German arms and ammunition were shipped from Germany directly to Mossamedes, whence Portuguese traders supplied them to different parts of southern Angola and German South West Africa.<sup>495</sup> The missionaries of the Rhenish missionary Society and the German colonial officials also accused the Catholic missionaries working in Uukwanyama of selling arms and ammunition.<sup>496</sup>

The smuggling of arms and ammunition became especially problematic at the outbreak of the Herero uprising.<sup>497</sup> Kühnel, a German corvette captain, claimed that the Kwanyama procured arms and ammunition by the wagon load from Benguela, where there was less control over trade than in Mossamedes.<sup>498</sup> German newspapers accused Portuguese traders

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<sup>493</sup> Drechsler, 1984, pp. 108—110.

<sup>494</sup> Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 18, NAW.

<sup>495</sup> Gerber to Leutwein, Ondjiva 9 September 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 288—289, NAW; Leutwein, 1906, p. 198.

<sup>496</sup> Tönjes to the Mission Director of the RMS, Namakunde 9 August 1901, B/c II:74, UEMA; Tattenbach to von Bülow, Cascaes 8 November 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 20, NAW.

<sup>497</sup> Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 16 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 39—40, NAW.

<sup>498</sup> Kühnel to the Emperor of Germany, Duala 22 August 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, pp. 188—191, ZStA.



of selling arms and ammunition to the Ovambo, who then supplied them to the Herero.<sup>499</sup>

According to the Rhenish Missionary Society missionaries working in Uukwanyama, the colonial officials exaggerated the extent of the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Ovamboland to the Herero. They cited the Uukwanyama king's lack of such goods as proof.<sup>500</sup> The missionaries' claims are supported by the fact that the colonial officials were unable to provide clear evidence of the scope of the smuggling of arms and ammunition from Ovamboland to Hereroland.<sup>501</sup>

There was, however, sound evidence of the continuance of the slave trade in Angola. Although slavery was officially terminated by law in 1875 the slave trade was still commonly practiced in the beginning of the 1900s. Traders sold the slaves they procured from the interior to plantation owners, with whom the Africans were forced to sign work agreements. Thus the status of contract laborers did not differ at all from that of slaves.<sup>502</sup>

Slaves were, moreover, used as a medium of exchange in trade between the Ovambo and the Portuguese. The slave trade diminished during the initial years of the 1900s in comparison to what it had been in the previous decade.<sup>503</sup> This was most obvious in the southern Ovambo communities where the visits by Portuguese traders and their middlemen became rare.<sup>504</sup>

The concentration of trade between the region north of the Kunene and Ovamboland in Uukwanyama is well portrayed in Dr. Gerber's evaluation of the condition of the area's market made during his expedition

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<sup>499</sup> Westfälische Zeitung 8 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 168, ZStA; Hamburger Zeitung 2 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 175, ZStA.

<sup>500</sup> Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA; Haussleiter to AAKA, Barmen 15 December 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 146, NAW.

<sup>501</sup> von Trotha to AAKA, Ovikokorero 28 August 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, pp. 194—195, ZStA.

<sup>502</sup> Nevinson, 1968, pp. 28—30, 50—57. See also: Gibson, 1905, p. 89; Dorbritz to von Bülow, Loanda 10 May 1903, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.3., p. 78, NAW.

<sup>503</sup> E.g. Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 18, NAW; Hanefeld to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 2 December 1901, B/c I:52, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 6 January 1905, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>504</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 October 1903, Eac:26, FMSA; Wehanen to Mustakallio, Ontananga 4 February 1904, Eac:28, FMSA.

to Ovamboland in 1902. He commented that it would not be worthwhile for the traders of Hereroland to extend their business to Uukwanyama, because the Portuguese and their middlemen were selling there the goods so highly valued among the Ovambo, i.e. arms, ammunition and spirits.<sup>505</sup> Of the goods supplied by the Hereroland traders only horses were in demand in Uukwanyama.<sup>506</sup>

The decline of control over trade between Portuguese Angola and Ovamboland following the crisis in the Portuguese state economy in 1898 meant the initiation of a new period of »free trade« between the region north of the Kunene and the Ovambo communities. Portuguese and their middlemen, as well as traders of other nations, were able to sell the Ovambo arms and ammunition and spirits almost freely. After the rinderpest, the Ovambo clearly preferred to deal with the Portuguese because of the selection of products they provided.

#### 4.5.4. Trade as a Hindrance to Colonial Policy

##### 4.5.4.1. Trade and the Establishment of the Ovamboland Reservation

The political life and economy of German South West Africa from 1904 to 1907 was dominated by the Herero and Nama uprising against German colonial power. With the exception of the East Ondongan Headman Nehale's attack on the German military base of Namutoni at the outbreak of the Herero uprising in 1904, the Ovambo did not join in the uprisings.<sup>507</sup> In spite of this, the changes in the political situation outside of the Ovambo communities led the colonial powers to reconsider their policies in regard to Ovamboland.

The Herero uprising, which began on 12 January 1904, came as a complete surprise to the Germans.<sup>508</sup> It was also a great surprise that the up-

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<sup>505</sup> Gerber to Leutwein, Ondjiva 9 September 1902, ZBU Nr. 1008, J. XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 288—289, NAW. See also: BRMG 1902, p. 72; Wehanen to Mustakallio, Ontananga 4 February 1904, Eac:28, FMSA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>506</sup> MRD 21 August 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>507</sup> E.g. Eirola, 1987, pp. 352—355; Mossolow, 1986, pp. 5—14.

<sup>508</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 131. According to the trader Hälbich, there had been the threat of a general uprising ever since the rinderpest epidemic: Bley, 1971, p. 143.

rising was led by Headman Maharero, who the Germans thought to be their ally. The timing of the uprising was carefully planned: the main force of the German Schutztruppe was 600 kilometers away, putting down the uprising of the Bondelswarts.<sup>509</sup>

Thanks to the surprise attack, the Herero swiftly took control of Hereroland. They destroyed colonists' farms and took their cattle. They did not, however, undertake systematic attacks against German population centers or fortifications. Until June the Germans concentrated on retaining control over transport routes, repairing the railway between Windhoek and Swakopmund, destroyed by the Herero at the beginning of the uprising, and protecting population centers.<sup>510</sup>

A new stage in the suppression of the uprising began in June, when Governor Leutwein was replaced by the commander of the colonial troops, General von Trotha. On 11 August he initiated an extensive siege against the Herero grouped in the Waterberg area, with the intention of defeating them, not in order to offer peace but rather to annihilate them. The Herero, however, succeeded in breaking through the German lines and, chased by the Germans, escaped to the Omaheke Desert, where a large number of Herero families perished.<sup>511</sup>

Peace did not, however, return at once to Hereroland; clashes between German troops and the Herero continued until the end of 1905. Only with the replacement of von Trotha by von Lindequist as governor did a decisive change occur in German policy leading to the termination of the Herero uprising. On 1 December Governor von Lindequist made a proclamation to the Herero announcing von Trotha's return to Germany and his own appointment as governor. This, he said, meant peace to Hereroland. He appealed to the Herero to assemble at the mission stations at Omburo and Otjihaenena and lay down their arms. He promised that all who would do so would not be molested but cared for by the administration and supplied with the necessities of life. The proclamation met with a gratifying response. By 11 January 1906, 1,135 Hereros had assembled at the mission stations.<sup>512</sup> The uprising was a great tragedy for the Herero: by 1906 the former Herero population of 60,000—80,000 had been reduced to 16,000.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 131; Bley, 1971, pp. 143—145.

<sup>510</sup> Bley, 1971, pp. 149—152; Bridgman, 1981, pp. 73—91.

<sup>511</sup> Drechsler, 1984, pp. 155—171, 206—207.

<sup>512</sup> Wallenkampf, 1969, pp. 339—340.

<sup>513</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 214; Bley, 1971, p. 150.

Following the battle of Waterberg the Germans shifted their attention mainly to the southern part of the colony where, the hitherto loyal Nama, to the Germans' surprise, rose in rebellion against the colonial government in the beginning of October, 1904. With the outbreak of the Nama uprising, the focus of German military operations shifted to Namaland where individual Nama communities carried out guerilla struggle against the German colonial government.<sup>514</sup>

The suppression of the Nama uprising was very difficult for the Germans. In the final stage of the war, 14,000 German-led troops were deployed against a few hundred Nama soldiers. The German colonial administrators officially announced on 31 March 1907 that the Nama uprising had been suppressed, and that peace prevailed in South West Africa.<sup>515</sup> For the Nama communities uprising had almost the same consequences as for the Herero: the Nama population fell from 15,000—20,000 to 9,800 after the uprising.<sup>516</sup>

The outbreak of the Herero uprising brought European commercial activity in South West Africa almost to a complete standstill. During the first weeks of the war, the Herero killed altogether 123 German soldiers, colonists and traders.<sup>517</sup> The Herero considered German men their enemies, in particular soldiers, colonial administrators and colonists. They did not, however, want to kill German women, children or missionaries. Nor did the Herero consider the British, Boers or other non-Germans living in the region as their enemies. At the outbreak of the uprising the Herero at least informed the missionaries of their policy in regard to Europeans.<sup>518</sup>

For the most part the Herero adhered to this policy. According to the *Deutsche-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung* only one British trader had been killed by the beginning of March 1904, whereas German traders had been killed, and their property robbed, almost without exception.<sup>519</sup> Nevertheless, regardless of nationality most colonists and traders fled to German military bases.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> Drechsler, 1984, pp. 180—183.

<sup>515</sup> Bridgman, 1981, pp. 132—163.

<sup>516</sup> Drechsler, 1984, p. 214; Bley, 1971, pp. 150—151.

<sup>517</sup> Schrank, 1974, p. 148.

<sup>518</sup> Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany, 1918, p. 57; BRMG 1904, pp. 144—146.

<sup>519</sup> *Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung* 1 March 1904.

<sup>520</sup> Schrank, 1974, p. 149; BRMG 1904, p. 144.

In the initial stages of the uprising the Herero succeeded in destroying vital parts of the German transport and communication networks. This led to the near cessation of civilian traffic. Due to the serious lack of means of transportation, traders and other civilians had to surrender their wagons and hauling oxen to the military.<sup>521</sup>

The colonial government's serious lack of means of transport was observed by a small group of Finnish missionaries on their return journey through Swakopmund to the missionary field in Ovamboland at the beginning of 1904. The missionaries could procure neither a driver nor oxen. Instead they had to procure the necessary means of transport from Ondonga. No one dared, however, to send ox-wagons from Ovamboland into Hereroland until Governor Leutwein promised in writing that ox-wagons coming from Ondonga would not be expropriated by the military.<sup>522</sup>

Trade and civilian traffic was at a near standstill until the first half of 1905. The severance of supply and trade links to Hereroland caused economic difficulties for the missionaries working in Ovamboland. The supply of foodstuffs was a particular problem. The missionaries had procured food through trade with the Ovambo; but now, with the cessation of traffic to Swakopmund, they did not receive the means of exchange, such as cloth, iron wire, etc., they needed to purchase grain. This complicated their economic welfare.<sup>523</sup>

The termination of the Herero uprising created conditions for the recovery of European trade in Hereroland. At the beginning of 1905, officials began to return the ox-wagons requisitioned by the military to their owners. This was of primary importance for the recovery of trade.<sup>524</sup> Coloni-

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<sup>521</sup> von Wangenheim, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1904/05, Outjo 5 May 1905, ZBU Nr. 152, A.VI.a.3.Bd.11., p. 94, NAW. See also: Rautanen to Mustakallio, Karibib 28 April 1904, Eac:24, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Cape Bogelin 26 January 1904, Eac:28, FMSA; Liljeblad to Mustakallio, Nakeke 27 April 1904, Eac:28, FMSA.

<sup>522</sup> Rautanen to Leutwein, Karibib 18 June 1904, ZBU Nr. 1009, J.XIII.Bd.1., p. 129, NAW; Leutwein to Franke, Okahandja 22 June 1904, ZBU Nr. 1009, J.XIII.b.4.Bd.1., p. 129, NAW; Rautanen to Leutwein, Karibib 1 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 1009, J.XIII.b.4.Bd.1., p. 137, NAW; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Karibib 13 September 1904, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>523</sup> E.g. Pettinen to Mustakallio, Cape Bogelin 26 January 1904, Eac:28, FMSA; Liljeblad to Mustakallio, Nakeke 27 April 1904, Eac:28, FMSA; von Wangenheim, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1904/05, Outjo 5 May 1905, ZBU Nr. 152, A.VI.a.3.Bd.11., p. 94, NAW.

<sup>524</sup> von Wangenheim, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre

al officials did not, however, want to revive trade with Ovamboland. On the contrary, they restricted it by prohibiting the export of horses and alcohol thereto.<sup>525</sup>

Initially the revival of trade with Ovamboland was blocked for military reasons. It was feared that the Ovambo would transmit horses and military equipment to the Herero and the Nama for war against the Germans.<sup>526</sup> The reservation and isolation policy adopted by the Germans in regard to Ovamboland did not even aim at economic recovery. By the Ovamboland Act of 25 January 1906, implemented in March, Ovamboland became a reservation.<sup>527</sup>

The Act officially defined the borders of the Ovamboland Reservation. In order to isolate and pacify Ovamboland an effort was made to prevent Europeans from entering therein without a permit. All those permitted into the area had to go through the Namutoni or Okaukwejo border stations. Trade and labor recruitment was allowed only by permission of the governor.<sup>528</sup>

Through its policy of isolation and pacification the colonial government sought to diminish the danger of rebellion in Ovamboland. Another one of the main aims of the Ovamboland Act was to further the recruitment of labor to meet the serious need for workers in Hereroland. Labor recruitment got under way even before the implementation of the Ovamboland Act. Finnish missionaries were requested by colonial officials to support the traders Haag and Lenssen in their work as labor recruiters.<sup>529</sup>

According to Haag the effectiveness of recruitment work was weakened by European traders' business operations among the Ovambo: the direct availability of the goods they desired decreased Africans' interest in becoming migrant laborers. He particularly wanted to restrict the ex-

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1904/05, Outjo 5 May 1905, ZBU Nr. 152, A.VI.a.3.Bd.11., p. 94, NAW.

<sup>525</sup> von Wangenheim to Mühlenfels, Keetmanshoop 24 October 1905, ZBU Nr. 2037, W.II.k.1., pp. 213—216, NAW; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 9 November 1905, Eac:28, FMSA.

<sup>526</sup> Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 16 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 39—40, NAW. See also: Westfälische Zeitung 8 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 168, ZStA; Hamburger Zeitung 2 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 175, ZStA.

<sup>527</sup> DKB 15 April 1906, pp. 222—223.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> Schmidt to Savola, Outjo 17 January 1905, E:1, FMSA.



port of spirits, horses and money to the north.<sup>530</sup> The above points were clearly taken into consideration in the Ovamboland Act.

The colonial administrators' intention to completely isolate the Ovamboland market is evinced by the fact that they accused Finnish missionaries of illegal trading in 1908. In their rejoinder, the missionaries emphasized the necessity for carrying on small scale trade in order to procure necessities and pay workers' wages.<sup>531</sup>

#### 4.5.4.2. Trade and Portuguese Power Politics

The reaction of the Portuguese government in Angola to the Herero uprising was, among other things, to hasten the realization of its plans for the occupation of the northern parts of Ovamboland. The implementation of Portuguese policy in southern Angola was made possible by the recovery of Portugal from the economic crisis which struck it in 1898. The economic crisis receded in 1902, when the Lisbon government came to an agreement concerning its international debts.<sup>532</sup>

The Portuguese justified their plans to conquer the northern Ovambo communities on grounds of security. They wanted first of all to put an end to the Ovambo raids extending deep into Angola, and improve the security of the Europeans residing in the region.<sup>533</sup> For example, in 1902 some Mbandja killed two Portuguese traders near the Kunene River.<sup>534</sup>

Another reason which spurred the concrete implementation of the plans, was the uncertainty felt concerning German behavior in the northern parts of South West Africa following the outbreak of the Herero uprising. In order to strengthen their position on the border facing South West Africa the Portuguese planned an extensive military offensive against Uukwanyama, Ombandja and Evale to be carried out at the beginning of the rainy season at the end of 1904. News of the planned attack reached

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<sup>530</sup> Bericht Hans Haags über die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse im Ovamboland, Windhoek 17 December 1905, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1., pp. 213—224, NAW.

<sup>531</sup> MBC at Olukonda 11 February 1908, § 2, Hha:5, FMSA; MRD 11 February 1908, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>532</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 303.

<sup>533</sup> Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 12 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 80—81, NAW; Tattenbach to von Bülow, Lisbon 20 September 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 28—35, NAW.

<sup>534</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 304—305.

both the German colonial officials and the missionaries.<sup>535</sup>

The Portuguese crossed the Kunene River on 19 September, but strong Mbandja resistance halted their attack. Beset by heavy losses, they were forced to withdraw to Humbe already before the end of the month. In addition to casualties, the Portuguese left the Mbandja a large amount of rifles, ammunition and wagons.<sup>536</sup> It was the heaviest defeat experienced by the Portuguese in decades, which signified above all psychological humiliation for them.<sup>537</sup> For the Ovambo communities, and especially for Ombandja, the military victory provided a boost in self-esteem.

After their heavy defeat in Ombandja, the Portuguese could not afford to undertake such extensive offensives. They therefore concentrated on subjecting the smaller and militarily weaker Nkhumbi communities on the north side of the Kunene. In 1905 they attacked the small community of Mulondo.<sup>538</sup>

The next year preparations were again made for a large offensive against Ombandja and Uukwanyama.<sup>539</sup> For this offensive the Portuguese succeeded in mobilizing about 2,500 soldiers, but their military success was minimal. In 1907 they were militarily more fortunate; they succeeded in taking Ombandja.<sup>540</sup> Nevertheless, Uukwanyama, the strongest community in northern Ovamboland could not be conquered before World War One. Exasperated by unsuccessful and expensive military expeditions, the Portuguese government refused in 1907 to provide funds for new war efforts. The Portuguese then focused on constructing

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<sup>535</sup> E.g. Langwerth to von Bülow, Lisbon 19 May 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, pp. 162—163, ZStA; Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 16 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 38, NAW; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 1 March 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 10 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>536</sup> For a detailed description of the offensive, see the translation of the 'Correio de Mossamedes' December 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 125—141, NAW. See also Schröder to AAKA, 11 January 1905, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 116—121, NAW; Pélissier, 1977, pp. 447—456.

<sup>537</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 307.

<sup>538</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 311—312; Pélissier, 1977, pp. 456—459.

<sup>539</sup> Wangenheim to Commanders of the North Hereroland, Northern and Eastern Districts, Outjo 17 April 1906, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 179, NAW.

<sup>540</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 312—314; Sckär to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 21 November 1907, B/c II:85, UEMA. For more on Portugal's military operations in the Kunene River region, see Pélissier, 1977, pp. 459—468.

small military posts in the areas they had conquered in order to restrict Uukwanyaman raiding in southern Angola.<sup>541</sup>

The activation of Portuguese operations in southern Angola put an end to the period of »free trade« which began at the time of the rinderpest and the economic crisis. The Germans had accused Portuguese officials of allowing trade in arms, ammunition and spirits between Angola and German South West Africa. But it was in order to further their own military goals, and not in response to German pressure, that the Portuguese prohibited trade in arms, ammunition and spirits in the Humbe region in 1905.<sup>542</sup> The intention of these regulations was primarily to reduce the availability of these products to the Ovambo.

The insecurity caused by the Portuguese offensives south of the Kunene, along with the prohibition of the arms and ammunition trade, clearly decreased trade between the north and Ovamboland. Unlike with the Germans, the aim was not to economically isolate Ovamboland, but rather mainly to stop the smuggling of arms and ammunition to the Ovambo. This effort was only partially successful.<sup>543</sup>

The Herero uprising thus spurred Portuguese officials to implement the plans for the subjection of the Ovambo communities located in Angola. In spite of their differing strategies of action, the policies of both the Germans and the Portuguese led to a sharp decline in European trade among the Ovambo. Trade was subordinated to colonial policy.

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<sup>541</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 312—315, 403—405.

<sup>542</sup> von Wangenheim to Commanders of the North Hereroland, Northern and Eastern Districts, Outjo 17 April 1906, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.I., p. 179, NAW.

<sup>543</sup> Wulfhorst, Welsch, Konferenzbericht der Station Omupanda von 1905/06, Omupanda July 1906, C/h:33, pp. 33—35, UEMA; Wulfhorst, 1917, pp. 96—97, C/i:20, UEMA.

## 5. The Socioeconomic Consequences of European-Led Long-Distance Trade in Ovamboland

### 5.1. The Status of European Traders in the Ovambo Communities

#### 5.1.1. The Role of Kings in Long-Distance Trade

Most Ovambo trade was carried on by households, under royal control. Trading with Europeans did not, however, fit in with the established organization of trade; here the kings acted not only as controllers, but took on an active role in trading, with the intention of monopolizing commerce with Europeans. Households were allowed to trade with Europeans only by royal permission.

The kings sought to keep European traders firmly under their control from the outset of their contacts with them. In this they were successful during the entire latter half of the nineteenth century. For example, the trader de Witt, who traded in Uukwanyama in the mid-1880s, commented that it was risky to trade with households without the king's permission.<sup>1</sup> The control of Europeans was most stringent in the community of Uukwambi.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. von Moltke, *A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland*, p. 2, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Rautanen, report for June, July and August, Omandongo 27 August 1874,

Nevertheless, European traders were welcome among the Ovambo communities. The need for firearms, which had become a necessary commodity, actually forced the kings, from the beginning of 1860s on, to induce Europeans to undertake trading trips to their communities.<sup>3</sup> At first, King Nuujoma of Uukwambi was most successful; at the beginning of the 1870s his residence became a center for trade in Ovamboland. In order to attract traders, Nuujoma had special guest huts built for them.<sup>4</sup> Europeans were treated with hospitality by the Ovambo, as long as they obeyed the kings' regulations.<sup>5</sup>

The conflicts which arose between kings and traders were mainly of an interpersonal type: there was no general antipathy toward traders among the Ovambo.<sup>6</sup> Trading trips to East Ondonga were, nonetheless, avoided for years after Nehale, the headman there, killed the trader Jordan in 1886.<sup>7</sup> The threat of German colonial expansion gave rise, however, to general anti-German sentiment at the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, King Kambonde of Ondonga refused to trade with Germans.<sup>8</sup> For his part King Negumbo of Uukwambi robbed two German traders, whose wagon driver was killed in the fray. Even then the object of hate was not all Europeans, but only Germans, as Outjo District Commander Kliefoth commented in his report in August 1900.<sup>9</sup>

The preservation of strong royal power over traders was one factor which repulsed the interest of European companies in Ovamboland. An-

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Eac:4, FMSA; Skoglund, report for June 1876, Olukonda 30 June 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; APeD 26 February 1891, 23 August 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; MRD 1 September 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. CJAD 13—14 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW; J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, p. 1, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>4</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 104; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 18—23; Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1. p. 140, A. 233, NAW; CJAD 13 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. APeD 2 January 1891, 8 January 1891, 13 January 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>7</sup> Roiha to Mustakallio, Omandongo 15 May 1888, Eac:16, FMSA; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 23 May 1890, Eac:18, FMSA. In the background of the trader Jordan's murder was a personal dispute over authority between the trader Jordan and Headman Nehale of East Ondonga. The dispute arose from the ownership of the Otavi copper mine; for more detail, see Eirola, 1987, pp. 135—167.

<sup>8</sup> MRD 16 October 1899, 602—91, NAF. See also Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, »Die Besetzung Ovambolands«, Omupanda 6 January 1905, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.4., pp. 41—44, NAW.

<sup>9</sup> Kliefoth to Leutwein, Outjo 15 September 1900, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1., pp. 1—8, NAW.

other such factor was the area's lack of minerals.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the climate of Ovamboland was considered unhealthy for European colonists.<sup>11</sup> During the whole period under study the trader population consisted of heterogeneous small traders. The most extensive commerce was carried on by Eriksson's trading company.

Traders neither took up permanent residence in the communities, nor established fixed trading stations. Instead, they usually undertook trading trips to Ovamboland once or twice a year.<sup>12</sup> In the 1890s, King Ueyulu of Uukwanyama did not even allow any Europeans, except missionaries, to live in his community.<sup>13</sup> During the period under study, the heterogeneous group of small traders did not become a significant political or economic force in the Ovambo communities. Nor did the traders intentionally try to break Ovambo power structures, as in Namaland and Hereroland in the 1860s.

The chances for Ovambo households to trade with Europeans were very restricted. This was first of all because they were unable, due to royal ownership of big game, to supply ivory and ostrich feathers, the primary goods sought by traders.<sup>14</sup> Europeans mainly sold households tobacco, beads, cloth and iron wire in exchange for the grain and beef they needed during their stay in Ovamboland.<sup>15</sup>

From the end of the nineteenth century on, households gained possession of small amounts of firearms. This was not due so much to the slackening of control over trade, as to the swift advance in arms technology.<sup>16</sup> The guns obtained by households were barrel loading muskets, outmoded and in bad shape, in which the kings were no longer interested. In Ondonga, for example, all modern technology was at that time concentrated in the hands of the king and his closest men.<sup>17</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Voeltz, 1980, pp. 177—179; Leutwein, 1906, p. 266.

<sup>11</sup> Leutwein, 1906, p. 200. See also Pereira to Andersson, Ondonga 26 December 1865, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; Möller, 1974, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Gibson, 1905, pp. 152—153. Also in Hereroland up until the 1890s, trade was carried out mainly by small-scale entrepreneurs: Moorsom, 1973, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Möller, 1974, p. 113.

<sup>14</sup> Rautanen, 1903, p. 343; MRD 27 July 1890, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>15</sup> Smuts to Andersson, Omapue 1 December 1864, A. 83, vol. 5, NAW; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 23 June 1890. Cf. John, 1970, p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> Een, 1872, p. 105; Rautanen to Sirelius, Ondonga 29 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA.

<sup>17</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890. Cf. observations from Uukwanyama, e.g. Gerber to AAKA, Freiburg 23 February 1905, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1842, pp. 15—17, ZStA; Möller, 1974, p. 112; Tönjes, 1911, p. 59.



procurement of horses, which were highly valued and expensive, was beyond the means of households during the period under study. Household procurement of alcohol was complicated by their lack of suitable exchangeable goods: in the beginning of the 1890s Portuguese traders sometimes sold spirits only in exchange for slaves.<sup>18</sup>

On the whole, during the whole period under study, the kings succeeded in maintaining a near monopoly on trade with Europeans. Only in the beginning of the present century did political and economic changes outside of Ovamboland create pressure for change in the system of exchange. One new factor which weakened control over trade in the Ovambo community was the birth of migrant labor system. As engagement in migrant work became more common, trade with Europeans could no longer be controlled from within Ovamboland by the kings. For example, one of the main motives for Uukwanyama people to go to work on the plantations of southern Angola at the turn of the century was to procure funds for the purchase of rifles.<sup>19</sup>

### 5.1.2. Trade on European Terms

Politically, during the whole period under study, European traders were forced to act according to the kings' terms. Their political status was like that of the Europeans in Namaland and Hereroland in the mid-1800s, where Jonker Afrikaner firmly controlled the doings of Europeans and tried to prevent them from cooperating with one another. Economically, however, Jonker Afrikaner's dependency on European traders was continually on the increase, because his power was to a great extent based on the firearms and horses they provided him.

From the viewpoint of European traders, Ovambo interest in firearms arose at a favorable time. With the decline of big game populations in the vicinity of the coastal harbors, traders had to direct their trading and hunting trips more deeply into the interior. Ovambo interest in creating trade relations was increased when their political autonomy was threat-

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<sup>18</sup> APeD 16 February 1889, 9 August 1890, 6 March 1891, 14 April 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>19</sup> AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 123, NAW.

ened by Jonker Afrikaner's two extensive raids into Ovamboland at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s.

Because Ovambo technology was not advanced enough for the manufacturing of firearms, the effort was made to procure them through direct contact with European traders. Ovambo ignorance concerning the cost and technical differences of firearms was well displayed in their first arms deals. Until the beginning of the 1870s, technically obsolete muskets were purchased for ten to fifteen head of cattle a piece, while the same type of weapon sold for three head of cattle in Hereroland in the beginning of the 1870s.<sup>20</sup> For an example of forthright swindling in the arms business one can cite A.W. Eriksson's sale of a useless canon to King Nuujoma of Uukwambi for sixty head of cattle in 1870.<sup>21</sup> The missionary Rautanen confessed in 1899 that traders and missionaries were indeed guilty of extortion during the integration of the Ovambo into European long-distance trade.<sup>22</sup>

It was typical of the development of arms prices in Ovamboland, as in Hereroland and Namaland, that the rate of exchange came to be defined by the technical level of arms.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence of increased demand, the price of weapons, as measured in cattle, also fell in Ovamboland. The greatest fall was in the price of technically outmoded weapons. For example, in 1877 the Kwanyama would no longer offer more than two head of cattle for each musket the missionary Heinonen tried to sell them.<sup>24</sup>

For the most advanced breech-loading guns the kings were always ready to pay high prices. The technically most advanced rifles available in Ovamboland in the mid-1890s were the Henry-Martini and the M/88. In Uukwanyama, for example, one Henri-Martini rifle could be obtained for

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<sup>20</sup> Een, 1872, p. 122; MBC at Elim 1—4 November 1871, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; MBC at Omandongo 16 July 1874, annex 1 of the minutes, Hha:1, FMSA; GDVD 4 August 1874, 22 September 1874, PC. Hereros were willing to pay much higher prices for the most advanced guns, see: Lau, 1987, p. 95; Irle, 1906, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>22</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 14 March 1899, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>23</sup> For the development of the exchange rate of guns to oxen in Namaland: in the 1840s, 2 to 8 head of oxen for a gun; in the 1850s, 1 to 20 head; in the 1860s, 12 to 15 head; in the 1870s, 15 to 30 head: Lau, 1987, p. 95. According to the missionary Irle, in Hereroland the exchange rate of guns to oxen from the 1860s to the 1880s was 1 gun to 12—15 head of oxen: Irle, 1906, p. 165.

<sup>24</sup> Heinonen to Tötterman, Omandongo 23 October 1877, Eac:5, FMSA.

seven head of cattle, while a Snyder was available for three head, and a muzzle-loader could be had for one head.<sup>25</sup>

German colonial administrators' efforts beginning in the early 1890s to restrict the sale of arms to Africans caused an increase in the price of arms and ammunition.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the sharp rise in the price of cattle following the rinderpest prevented the ratio of exchange between cattle and arms from becoming increasingly disadvantageous for the Ovambo.<sup>27</sup> After the rinderpest the rate of exchange was one Henry-Martini rifle for five to ten oxen.<sup>28</sup>

Ivory and ostrich feathers were, however, more important than cattle in exchange for weapons until the mid-1880s. A detailed examination of the exchange rate of arms to ivory and ostrich feathers is very difficult, because only a few cases of such exchange are known, and they do not provide sufficient data for drawing conclusions concerning the general trend of the development of the rate of exchange of these goods.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside of firearms, horses and alcohol in their ratio of exchange to cattle, provide good indicators for examining price developments. As with firearms, the kings were forced to pay high prices for their first horses. The most outstanding case was that of King Nuujoma of Uukwambi who paid 140 head of cattle for a horse in 1870.<sup>30</sup> The rate of exchange for horses became relatively fixed at fifty to sixty head of cattle from the latter half of the 1860s on. Nevertheless, great divergences from the general price level were not uncommon.<sup>31</sup> For example, in 1883 the trader Chapman sold the king of Uukwanyama two horses, one for

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<sup>25</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 245. See also: APeD 23 June 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Möller, 1974, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> Walther to the Admiral in Command, Sao Thome 20 September 1895, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1839, p. 138, ZStA.

<sup>27</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 126; Wulforth to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 31 March 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>28</sup> Baum, 1903, p. 46; Tattenbach to von Bülow, Cascaes 8 November 1904, ZBU Nr. 20. A.I.h.2.Bd.1., pp. 19—20, NAW.

<sup>29</sup> For example, in 1867 King Shikongo of Ondonga was willing to purchase a double-barrel rifle from the trader Andersson for 60 kg ivory, but Andersson's request was 70 kg: CJAD 16 February 1867, A. 83, vol 7, NAW. Two decades later the rate of exchange for a double-barrel rifle was only about 10 kg of ivory: MRD 3 October 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>30</sup> Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, p. 122; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 22 October 1884, Eac:12, FMSA; Möller, 1974, pp. 112, 118; Baum, 1903, p. 46; Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 243—245.

eighty-six and the other for seventy-six head of cattle.<sup>32</sup> In the beginning of 1886 King Kambonde succeeded in buying a horse for only twelve oxen.<sup>33</sup>

The price of horses remained noticeably higher in Ovamboland than in Hereroland, where horses were exchanged for cattle at a rate of eight to thirty from the 1860s to the 1880s. From the early 1870s on, 800—1,000 horses were sold annually in Hereroland.<sup>34</sup> Similar estimates of the number of horses sold in Ovamboland cannot be made.

The most serious problem in regard to the horses sold in Ovamboland was their death rate. During the rainy season horses easily contracted fever, and only a fraction of them survived. In Hereroland horses were protected from fever by taking them at the beginning of the rainy season to the desert north of Omaruru, where they did not catch fever.<sup>35</sup> In Ovamboland such an option was not available. Consequently, only an estimated one in every ten horses was able to survive for many years.<sup>36</sup> For example, according to the explorer Möller, King Ueyulu of Uukwanyama had only twenty horses in the mid-1890s. This was a very small amount considering the amount of horses he bought.<sup>37</sup> The rare horses that survived became immune to fever, which made them valuable objects for trade.

The third main product sold by Europeans to the Ovambo was alcohol. The Portuguese and their middlemen dominated the alcohol trade. Spirits were usually supplied to the kings in amounts of under ten anchors; at their largest the amounts supplied were about twenty anchors.<sup>38</sup> Alcohol was sold in 25 liter containers called anchors, the price

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<sup>32</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 113, A. 83, NAW. Cf. MRD 21 August 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>33</sup> MRD 6 January 1886, 602—91, NAF; also see MRD 20 June 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA. Owing to lack of sufficient data, no trend for development of the exchange rate of horses to ivory can be determined.

<sup>34</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 95; Irle, 1906, p. 165. See also: CJAD 29 June 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; McKiernan, 1954, p. 58.

<sup>35</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> Kurvinen, report for April, May and June 1875, Cape Colony June 1875, Eac:4, FMSA. See also: Andersson, 1875, p. 229; Savola, 1924, p. 138; Schinz, 1891, p. 346; Tönjes, 1911, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Möller, 1974, p. 112. See also: Schinz, 1891, p. 266; J. von Moltke, A trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, p. 3, A. 100, NAW; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, p. 11, A. 83, NAW.

<sup>38</sup> APeD 4 November 1889, 16 December 1889, 9 August 1890, 9 February 1891, 15 March 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Hahn, Olukonda 4 August 1890,

of which varied from one half to one ox or one woman slave until the end of the 1880s.<sup>39</sup> During the following decade spirits were exchanged at an almost fixed rate of one slave or ox per anchor.<sup>40</sup>

The price of grain was not tied to European goods, but instead was determined by harvest size as affected by weather conditions. During a good harvest year, an approximately ninety kilogram sack of grain could be purchased for one head of cattle; but during periods of famine the price of grain skyrocketed. During the famine which struck Ovamboland, and the whole of South West Africa, at the end of the 1870s the price of grain was triple that of normal years.<sup>41</sup>

Although price and quality consciousness continually improved among the Ovambo, trading was nonetheless done on European traders' terms. This is well demonstrated not only by the exchange ratio of goods, but also by the selection of goods available. In their traditional trading with African communities, the Ovambo sold neither their cattle, nor ivory and ostrich feathers. Instead these goods were collected for their high status value.

The kings were most opposed to Portuguese traders' initiatives regarding engagement in slave trading. Until the 1850s the Ovambo refused to sell their prisoners of war to the Portuguese.<sup>42</sup> According to the hunter Green, during the last half of the 1850s the Mbangala, working as middlemen for the Portuguese, traded beads for ivory in Ondonga. They would sell arms only in return for slaves, but King Nangolo refused to sell members of his community into slavery. This, in turn, no doubt hindered the spread of firearms in Ondonga.<sup>43</sup>

Their desire for firearms, which arose in response to Jonker Afrikaner's raids, caused the Ovambo to reevaluate their attitude toward the slave trade. At first they mainly sold the Portuguese prisoners of war as slaves,

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A. 335, NAW.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Kurvinen, 1878, pp. 49—52; Kurvinen, 1879, pp. 18—25; Huttunen, 1969, p. 5; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 21 October 1880, Eac:8, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 April 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 16 July 1889, Eac:17, FMSA.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Dove to AAKA, Göttingen 22 May 1894, RKA 10.01 Nr. 1838/3, p. 136, ZStA; APeD 1 July 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; MRD 18 January 1894, 3 February 1894, 23 February 1894, 6 March 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>41</sup> Björklund, report for October and November 1879, Omandongo 11 December 1879, Eac:7, FMSA.

<sup>42</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1030, 1051.

<sup>43</sup> Sundry Mema, copied from Mr Green's Journals, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW.

but from the end of the 1880s on they began selling their fellow community members as well.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Portuguese put pressure on the Ovambo to expand their engagement in the slave trade by occasionally refusing to accept anything but slaves in exchange for spirits.<sup>45</sup> The expansion of slavery is a good example of the increased economic dependence of the kings on European traders.

The Ovambo carried on the slave trade with traders coming from Portuguese Angola, where slavery was common during the whole period under study. In contrast, there was no trading in slaves in Namaland and Hereroland, where Europeans increased their influence on local rulers through the system of trading on credit. Trading on credit became common in the 1840s. For example, in 1850 Jonker Afrikaner already owed heavy debts to European traders.<sup>46</sup> Selling on credit was practiced most abusively after the great rinderpest, when the traders' forthright aim was to bring the local headmen into debt, and then demand land and cattle in payment.

Exchange with the Ovambo was mainly based on direct payment, and trading on credit did not become as common in Ovamboland as in Hereroland and Namaland. In fact the written sources left behind by, among others, traders and missionaries, contain only a few remarks concerning trading on credit.<sup>47</sup> It was typical of trading between Europeans and the Ovambo that upon the arrival of traders the kings, if they had not already beforehand stored the necessary trade goods, sent out parties to collect the cattle, slaves, ivory and other such goods needed for payment.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> SLSa 1871, pp. 103—105; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Rautanen to Hahn, Olukonda 20 May 1889, A. 335, NAW; Rautanen to Hahn, Walvis Bay 28 July 1892, A. 335, NAW.

<sup>45</sup> APeD 16 February 1889, 9 August 1890, 6 March 1891, 14 April 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>46</sup> Lau, 1987, p. 105, Galton, 1853, pp. 70—71.

<sup>47</sup> Clarence-Smith and Moorsom argue that trading on credit was also common among the Ovambo, but this is an incorrect interpretation. Their conclusion is based on evidence collected north of the Kunene River and from Hereroland where trading on credit was common, but in Ovamboland the situation was completely different: Clarence-Smith, Moorsom, 1977, p. 104; also see: Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 66—67. Cf. CJAD 24 September 1866, A. 83, vol. 6, NAW; APeD 25 May 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Piirainen to Mustakallio, Omaruru 31 October 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 12 September 1901, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 26 November 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Vorträge von Mis-



The limited extent of trading on credit in Ovamboland, as compared to Hereroland, is primarily due to the difference in motives for such trading in these two regions. In Ovamboland trading on credit took place only in exceptional cases, while in Hereroland Africans were directly pressured into buying on credit. An important factor influencing traders' strategies of action in Ovamboland was that they did not seek to take possession of Ovambo land through selling on credit. The reasons for this, in turn, were that Ovamboland had remained outside of German colonial control, that resources attractive to Europeans were scarce and that the region's climate was unhealthy.

## 5.2. Long-Distance Trade Spawns new Economic Sectors

### 5.2.1. The Economic and Social Role of Commercial Hunting

Hunting had two functions for the Ovambo communities before they were integrated into European-led long-distance trade. Households hunted small game primarily to satisfy their need for meat and skins. Big game, which was counted as royal property, was hunted mainly during hunting expeditions organized by the king. Big game was hunted for status, and had no commercial value whatsoever. Objects made from ivory, such as jewelry, indicated their bearer's wealth and status in the community.<sup>49</sup>

Initially it was big game which attracted European traders to Ovamboland. Consequently, ivory and ostrich feathers were transformed from status commodities into important commercial goods. Thus European traders sought such resources which had no commercial use in the traditional economy of the Ovambo.

The commercialization of big game hunting began in Ovamboland in the first half of the 1860s, and reached its height in the latter half of the following decade. The growth of commercial hunting culminated already

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sionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah«, »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA. Cf. also ELC, pp. 842—843.

<sup>49</sup> Bruwer, 1961, p. 100.

in the early 1880s, after which big game populations declined. Nonetheless, commercial hunting did not cease completely. For example, small amounts of ivory continued to be offered for sale. The kings saved their meager ivory supply mainly for funding the purchase of weapons from the Walvis Bay traders.<sup>50</sup> The decline of big game populations in the beginning of the 1880s weakened one of the Ovambo's most important sources of funding for trade with Europeans.<sup>51</sup>

Commercial hunting was linked to the traditional organization of Ovambo hunting on two levels. Households were induced to participate in big game hunting expeditions through various rewards. For example, in Uukwambi the king held a feast for the hunting party which felled an elephant. Moreover, the huntsman who killed an elephant was awarded an ox.<sup>52</sup>

Commercial hunting was primarily carried out on extensive special big game hunting expeditions organized by the kings. For example, in 1867 King Shikongo set out with a large party, equipped with about twenty firearms, to hunt elephants. The party returned a good two weeks later with little game.<sup>53</sup> Not all hunting expeditions yielded such poor results: in the latter part of the 1860s King Shikongo succeeded in annually collecting about 2,000 kilograms of ivory.<sup>54</sup>

The effectiveness of royal hunting expeditions increased with the adoption of European technology in the form of firearms, horses and ox-wagons. In turn, as these goods developed into necessities, one of the main purposes of commercial hunting became to collect the exchangeable goods necessary to procure them.

In order to obtain the goods offered by Europeans, the kings loosened their strict control over hunting, which had hitherto had the purpose of preserving the stability of big game populations. The big game hunting season was expanded to a year-around activity, whereas traditionally it had been confined to the dry season. There is a positive correlation between the lengthening of the hunting season and the diminishment of big

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<sup>50</sup> APeD 12 October 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA. For instance, in 1894 Headman Nehale of East Ondonga wanted to obtain trousers from the missionary Rautanen in exchange for ivory: MRD 22 May 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>51</sup> MRD 23 November 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA. See also: MRD 14 July 1913, 602—91, NAF; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 3 October 1892.

<sup>52</sup> ELC, pp. 1426—1428. See also: Rautanen, 1903, p. 343; Een, 1872, p. 80.

<sup>53</sup> CJAD 15—16 April 1867, 2 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW.

<sup>54</sup> Een, 1872, p. 80.

game populations.<sup>55</sup>

At first, the new technology was not desired merely for increasing the effectiveness of hunting. The first decisions to procure firearms and horses in the 1860s were chiefly made on military grounds.

In the Ovambo communities the commercialization of hunting mainly concerned the king and the leading elite, in whose hands the European goods obtained through commercial hunting were concentrated. With the exception of spirits, weaponry and tobacco, Europeans supplied goods which can mainly be categorized as status commodities;<sup>56</sup> arms, horses and ox-wagons had, in addition to their significance as status objects, a clear productive function. Horses were most highly valued, and the kings were ever ready to pay high prices for them, even though they were likely to be lost to fever within a few years. The horse became one of the most important status symbols among the Ovambo, alongside of wives and cattle.<sup>57</sup>

For households the commercialization of hunting signified a significant increase in the time spent in hunting each year. Nevertheless, commercial hunting did not have a visible effect on the structure of Ovambo production. Among the Ovambo agriculture was carried out by women. Moreover, the increase of time spent in hunting did not visibly hinder the male occupations of cattle tending, handicrafts and trading. On the household level the socioeconomic affect of commercial hunting remained minimal. This was because big game never became a resource over which the household had any control.

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<sup>55</sup> MRD 12 March 1886, 10 April 1886, 602—91, NAF; MRD 19 April 1889, 1 July 1889, 3 September 1889, 16 January 1890, 21 February 1890, 14 December 1890, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. CJAD 14 May 1867, A. 83, vol. 7, NAW; Een, 1872, p. 104; Piirainen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 30 July 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Tolonen to Sirelius, Uukwanyama 11 July 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; Een, 1872, p. 85; Rautanen, 1903, p. 337.

## 5.2.2. The Development of the Raiding Economy

### 5.2.2.1. The Institution of the Raid in the Ovambo Communities

From the domain which it is desired to go and raid one or two spies come and they tell the war leader exactly where the foreign domain's cattle are pastured. After that the war leader goes to tell the king to rise up and go to war.<sup>58</sup>

In Ovambo tradition raiding and war expeditions were considered nearly synonymous.<sup>59</sup> The traders working in Ovamboland emphasized how difficult it was to distinguish between Ovambo warring and raiding.<sup>60</sup> According to tradition as substantiated by the observations of missionaries and traders, the function of war and raiding expeditions was primarily the capture of booty, and not so much to militarily crush the enemy.

A detailed analysis of the distinction between war and raiding expeditions will not be undertaken here. Instead, war and raiding activity will be considered as an economic phenomenon. There is reason to emphasize at the outset that this activity cannot be seen as a consequence of European-led long-distance trade; war and raiding were old traditions among the Ovambo. This study focuses on analyzing the influence of expanding trade connections on traditional war and raiding activity.

The economic nature of war and raiding operations was discernable already in the preparations for them, which usually got under way in a secret meeting of the king, his counselors and the executive war commander. The preparations were begun by sending a spy to the place to be raided to find out where cattle could most easily be stolen. Preparations for raiding were kept secret as long as possible, so that those to be raided would not have time to hide their cattle or prepare to ward off the raiders. Only in the final stages of preparation were the lower war commanders informed, among whom were district headmen. They collected the men of their area into a war band; all healthy men were

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<sup>58</sup> ELC, pp. 868—878.

<sup>59</sup> For more on war and raiding among the Ovambo, see folklore of the Ovambo communities collected by Rev. Emil Liljeblad: ELC, pp. 75—79, 287—289, 955—957, 800—806, 881—882, 1351—1353, 1424—1425. See also Loeb, 1962, pp. 81—95. Cf. the concepts of war and raiding, for instance among the Kikuyu: Leakey, 1977, vol. 3, pp. 1035—1073.

<sup>60</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 109.

subject to military service.<sup>61</sup> The Finnish missionaries working in Ondonga often found out about raids just as the bands were departing or even only when they returned.<sup>62</sup>

Upon arrival at the target of the raid the war party, seeking to avoid armed confrontation, continued to proceed as inconspicuously as possible. Therefore raids were usually timed for before daybreak. Killing was not encouraged on war and raiding expeditions, even though »man killers» were highly honored among the Ovambo. The purpose of raids was not to rob the whole target community, but to attain distinctly limited objectives as determined before hand by spies.<sup>63</sup>

The main purpose of raids was to obtain cattle and prisoners of war. Upon the return of the raiders, the leader divided the spoils so that each soldier received a head of cattle, while the spies and those who distinguished themselves in battle received several. Most of the booty was taken to the king, who divided it among his war commanders.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the increment of wealth, cattle was stolen for breeding purposes. The Ovambo did not trade cattle among themselves, and long-distance trade in cattle did not meet breeding requirements. The cattle breeding function of raiding is displayed by Ovambo traditions concerning war and raiding. For example, warriors specifically had to take the cattle given to them as booty home to reproduce.<sup>65</sup>

The missionaries Björklund and Skoglund claimed that the Ndonga and the Kwanyama even had an agreement according to which they were both allowed to raid or »fetch» a certain number of cattle from one another's cattle posts each year. It was said that this agreement was in force already during the time of King Shikongo.<sup>66</sup>

The missionary Pettinen's observations concerning an Ondongan raid on Uukwanyama confirm to a certain extent Skoglund's and Björklund's claims. First of all, the war party departing for Uukwanyama was poor-

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<sup>61</sup> ELC, pp. 868—878; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 5 November 1891.

<sup>62</sup> Skoglund, report for November 1876, Olukonda 28 November 1876, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>63</sup> ELC, pp. 75—79, 287—289, 803—806.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. ELC, pp. 287—289, 868—878, 881—882.

<sup>65</sup> ELC, pp. 868—878. Cf. Reijonen, report for April, May and June 1882, Omulonga 30 June 1882, Eac:10, FMSA.

<sup>66</sup> Skoglund, report for November 1876, Olukonda 28 November 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; Skoglund to Sirelius, Olukonda 30 November 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; Björklund, report for October, November and December 1876, 30 December 1876, Eac:4, FMSA.

ly prepared. Its weapons included only a few firearms, bows and arrows, spears and wooden canes. According to Pettinen this raid was by no means a matter of war, since the Kwanyama had brought their cattle to the border region cattle post to await the raiders. Thus the Ndonga did not have to do anything else but drive the cattle to Ondonga.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to the procurement of cattle, raids were carried out to capture prisoners of war. Primarily young women and men were taken prisoner. Following a raid, the prisoners' relatives usually went in search them; when they were found a ransom was negotiated, to be paid mainly in cattle, hoes or beads. The size of the ransom depended on the prisoner's age, sex and social position. A prisoner's ransom varied from one to ten head of cattle, and was most commonly between four to eight head.<sup>68</sup>

If the captive's relatives did not pay the ransom, he or she became a slave (omupika). The word »slave» does not suitably describe the status of the prisoner of war among the Ovambo; indeed, captives were well treated, and an effort was made to assimilate them into the community. Child captives could later rise to the positions of royal counselor, war commander and district headman. Juridically their status could be even better than that of the other members of the community.<sup>69</sup>

Many common features can be observed in the manner prisoners of war were treated by the Ovambo and by the Kikuyu people, of present day Kenya. The Kikuyu mainly seized young women, whom they sought to assimilate into their families. In principle the warrior was to treat his captives like brothers and sisters.<sup>70</sup>

The rare comments of missionaries and explorers concerning slavery among the Ovambo support the assumption that prisoners of war were assimilated into the community. Nevertheless, the trader Een and the explorer Schinz told of the kings' slave wives, who were distinguished from

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<sup>67</sup> APeD 29 November 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. ELC, pp. 414, 1238; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA; Tönjes, 1911, p. 124; MBC at Olukonda 13 February 1895, annex of the minutes: Rautanen's letter to Leutwein, Olukonda 19 March 1895, Hha:2, FMSA; Reijonen, report for April, May and June 1879, Omulonga 30 June 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Omadongo 4 August 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; APeD 4 March 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 5 November 1891; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 20 January 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>69</sup> MBC at Olukonda 13 February 1895, annex of the minutes: Rautanen's letter to Leutwein, Olukonda 19 March 1895, Hha:2, FMSA; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>70</sup> Leakey, 1977, vol. 3, p. 1068.



the other royal wives by the heavy copper anklets they bore.<sup>71</sup>

Raiding was not undertaken against communities with whom the so-called »blood peace« had been concluded.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, raiding was usually directed against militarily weaker communities.

Raiding operations were not solely confined to within the Ovambo communities, but extended to the north of the Kunene River. Such extended raiding was usually undertaken during the dryer time of the year, when the Kunene was at its lowest. The Mbandja were most active in raiding to the north of the Kunene in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> The Ovambo did not raid Hereroland for cattle.

Thus, Ovambo raiding was not purposeless stealing: it was institutionalized action, having clear goals and established rules.

#### 5.2.2.2. The Commercialization of Raiding and the Political Consequences thereof

Raiding was not traditionally a commercial activity, even though it was of central importance to the Ovambo economy. Under normal circumstances there was no trading in cattle, nor can the ransoming of prisoners of war be equated with the slave trade.

Because Europeans were interested in trading for cattle and slaves, the Ovambo were forced to reevaluate their attitude toward the sale of them as they became involved in European-led trade. Small scale cattle trading with Portuguese traders, through their Mbangala middlemen, got off to a start in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> In spite of the traders' allurements, the Ovambo kings were not willing in the 1850s to sell war captives, little less their own people.<sup>75</sup>

As trading with Europeans grew, pressure for the expansion of the cattle trade and the initiation of trade in slaves increased. Because the kings'

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<sup>71</sup> Een, 1872, pp. 65, 90; Schinz, 1891, pp. 282—283; Piirainen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 30 July 1870, Eac:1, FMSA.

<sup>72</sup> For more on the concept of »blood peace«, see section 5.2.2.2.

<sup>73</sup> »Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Süd-Afrika: von Karl Mauch, Hugo Hahn und Richard Brenner, 1866 und 1867«, 1867, p. 295. See also Magyar, 1857, pp. 195—198.

<sup>74</sup> Galton, 1853, pp. 217—218; also see »Der Cunene-Strom von Fr. Green erreicht«, 1867, p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Hahn, 1984/85, pp. 1030, 1051; Sundry Mema, copied from Mr Green's Journals, A. 83, vol. 3, NAW.

were willing to exchange neither their own people, nor their cattle for European goods, the traditional institution of the raid was adapted to meet the needs of long-distance trade. From the latter half of the 1860s onward, the kings began to sell, in addition to cattle, their war captives as slaves to the Portuguese.<sup>76</sup> The expansion of trading connections thus led to the commercialization of the traditional institution of the raid.

According to the explorer Galton, the growth of trade had increased the amount of raiding in Namaland in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> One of the central motives for the increase in raiding by the kings of Uukwambi and Ondonga in the beginning of the 1870s was the financing of trade.<sup>78</sup> For example, in the beginning of 1872 King Nuujoma of Uukwambi sent a war party to take cattle and slaves from a small community near the Kunene, in order to trade with a Portuguese trader who had arrived at his residence.<sup>79</sup>

Most of the Ovambo raids were small commando strikes, but sometimes the communities joined together for large raiding expeditions. For example, in 1871 Uukwambi, Uukwanyama and Ongandjera organized a joint war and raiding expedition against Ombandja. On this expedition the Kwambi took 100—200 prisoners and about 400 head of cattle.<sup>80</sup> Another example, as related by Isak Sankala of Ombalantu, is that of a joint raid by Ondonga and Ongandjera against Ombalantu in the beginning of the 1870s.<sup>81</sup>

The crisis in commercial hunting at the beginning of the 1880s caused the financing of Ovambo trade to become more dependent on cattle and slaves. Consequently, raiding increased. For example, raiding between Ondonga and Uukwanyama clearly increased in the early 1880s.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> E.g. Een, 1872, pp. 109—110; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Piirainen to Sirelius, Ondonga 31 December 1870, Eac:2, FMSA; Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Weikkolin, report for January, February and March 1872, undated, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>77</sup> Galton, Report to the Colonial Office, 29 February 1851, p. 2, A. 451, NAW.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Kurvinen's, Piirainen's, Rautanen's, Reijonen's, Skoglund's, Tolonen's and Weikkolin's letters to the Mission Director Sirelius from 1870—1875, Eac:1—4, FMSA. See also McKiernan, 1954, p. 109.

<sup>79</sup> Kurvinen, report for January, February and March 1872, Elim 1872, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>80</sup> Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA. See also MRD 22 April 1871, 602—91, NAF. In 1871 Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, Ongandjera and Ombandja also organized two joint raiding expeditions against Evale: see Tolonen to Sirelius, Ondonga 14 December 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>81</sup> ELC, pp. 1424—1425.

<sup>82</sup> See e.g. the Finnish missionaries' letters to the Mission Director Tötterman from

As a result of the decrease in the volume of trade with Europeans and the shift of such trade to the northern Ovambo communities in the 1880s, the raiding activities of the southernmost communities, such as Ondonga, abated.<sup>83</sup> The improvement of market conditions and the strengthening of the position of Portuguese traders reactivated raiding operations in Ovamboland from the end of the decade onward.<sup>84</sup> At that time the raiding between Ondonga and Uukwanyama reached its height.<sup>85</sup>

In response to the commercialization of hunting, the Ovambo bolstered the guarding of their cattle herds. In Ondonga an effort was made to deter Kwanyama raiders by keeping fires at night around the cattle enclosures, and by killing cattle thieves who were caught.<sup>86</sup> With the spread of firearms and horses, raids continually became more violent and bloodier. The Ndonga had a direct experience of this when they were raided by the Kwanyama in the beginning of 1891. The Kwanyama, equipped with firearms and horses, arrived in Ondonga in a large band. After dispersing into small groups, they stole cattle, women and children. Moreover, they slew a large number of Ondonga men. The cruelty and effectiveness of the Kwanyama raid aroused confusion and fear in Ondonga; in comparison to this raid King Kambonde saw earlier confrontations as mere play. According to the missionary Pettinen, it was as if the Ndonga had taken leave of their senses following the Kwanyama raid.<sup>87</sup>

The communities with the highest capability for carrying out and repulsing raids, such as Ondonga, Uukwambi and Uukwanyama, were those

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1879—1882, Eac:7—10, FMSA; and Martti Rautanen's diary from 1879—1882, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>83</sup> See e.g. Martti Rautanen's diary from 1879—1886, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. Martti Rautanen's diary from 1886—1888, 1888—1893, Hp XXVIII:1—2, FMSA; Hakala, report for January, February and March 1887, Omulonga 31 March 1887, Eac:15, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 14 June 1888, Eac:16, FMSA.

<sup>85</sup> E.g. Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 27 January 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 25 October 1887, 4 December 1887, 11 January 1888, 26 January 1888, 28—29 January 1888, 17 February 1888, 29 March 1888, 8 April 1888, 30 May 1888, 9 December 1888, 13 December 1888, 14 January 1889, 20 January 1889, 9 February 1889, 29 November 1889, 1 December 1889, 25 January 1890, 28 December 1890, 1 January 1891, 8 January 1891, 22 January 1891, 27 January 1891, 29 January 1891, 31 January 1891, Hp XXVIII:1—2, FMSA.

<sup>86</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 14 June 1888, Eac:16, FMSA.

<sup>87</sup> Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 27 January 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Ondangwa 28 January 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 22 January 1891, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

which traded most actively with Europeans, and therefore possessed the most arms, ammunition and horses. As raiding became more violent, the best equipped communities clearly began to avoid confrontations with one another.

The kings of Uukwambi and Ondonga concluded a so-called »blood-peace« in 1868, following a brief, but destructive, war. The kings, in an exceptional act on their part, guaranteed the peace with their lives.<sup>88</sup> The ritual associated with the ratification of the »blood peace« included the sacrifice of a white ox in the woods between the communities, whose blood was used to seal the agreement. The agreement was deemed so serious that he who broke the peace was to die immediately; the violation of the peace by the king was considered to be the commission of a mortal sin on his part.<sup>89</sup> The peace agreement between these two communities put an end to their raids upon one another for the whole period under study.<sup>90</sup> Uukwanyama and Ondonga came to a similar agreement only in 1891, after the Kwanyama's destructive raid.<sup>91</sup> The Uukwanyama kings concluded similar agreements with certain other communities. The missionary Sckär, however, mentioned neither the names of these communities, nor the dates of the agreements.<sup>92</sup>

The peace agreements concluded by Ondonga with Uukwambi and Uukwanyama raised the threshold for large-scale confrontations between the region's politically and economically most powerful communities. The kings honored their »blood peace« agreements, as well evinced in connection with the East Ondonga Headman Nehale's attempted coup against his brother King Kambonde in the first half of 1891. Nehale requested help in the implementation of his scheme from the king of Uukwambi, who firmly refused; thus, for the time being, the coup plans came to naught.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> MRD 1 February 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; also see Een, 1872, p. 98.

<sup>89</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 February 1893, Eac:21, FMSA. Cf. the missionary Koivu's interpretation of the contents and ratification of the »blood peace«: Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>90</sup> MRD 1 February 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; Een, 1872, p. 98. The death of King Shikongo shaKalulu of Ondonga in 1874 was considered to be a punishment for breaking the »blood peace« agreement in 1869: Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 February 1893, Eac:21, FMSA.

<sup>91</sup> Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 30 July 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 1 February 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>92</sup> Sckär, p. 27, UEMA.

<sup>93</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 March 1891, Eac:19, FMSA.

Nehale revived his coup project already the next year, this time by trying to get Uukwanyama's King Ueyulu to join him. Ever desirous of booty, Ueyulu would have gladly joined the war expedition, but he refused the attractive offer for fear of breaking the »blood peace« he had concluded with King Kambonde. Because he was very interested in Nehale's proposition, Ueyulu tried various ways of inducing Kambonde to be the first to commit the mortal sin of breaking the peace. Kambonde did not, however, succumb to Ueyulu's traps.<sup>94</sup> Thus the politically and economically strongest communities in Ovamboland consciously tried to prevent the outbreak of large-scale confrontations through a security system based on peace agreements.

Active trading with Europeans also affected the balance of power between communities. As Uukwanyama's wealth increased through long-distance trading, it was able to attain political independence from Uukwambi, to which it had still been partially bound in the early 1870s.<sup>95</sup> In the 1890s Uukwanyama was even considered militarily superior to Uukwambi. King Ueyulu had more arms, ammunition and soldiers than King Negumbo.<sup>96</sup> Uukwanyama-Uukwambi relations were strained throughout the 1890s, but they succeeded in avoiding extensive confrontations.<sup>97</sup> Uukwanyama, which had grown prosperous through long-distance trading, became a political threat to Uukwambi in the 1890s. This was because these two communities had not concluded a »blood peace« like the one between Uukwambi and Ondonga.

The military and economic effect of European-led long-distance trade on the Ovambo can be seen by comparing the eastern and western Ovambo communities. Uukwambi and Ondonga were said to have been under Ongandjera domination in the past. Ongandjera's power was based on an arrow poison, which it received from the San, and which made it militarily superior to its neighbors.<sup>98</sup> Poison arrows were, however, displaced by firearms as the most effective weapons for war.

Ongandjera, like the other western Ovambo communities, was remote

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<sup>94</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 February 1893, Eac:21, FMSA.

<sup>95</sup> Kurvinen, 1880, p. 27; MRD 22 April 1871, 602—91, NAF; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA.

<sup>96</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 February 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; Roiha to Tötterman, undated, Eac:21, FMSA.

<sup>97</sup> Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 February 1893, Eac:21, FMSA; Roiha to Tötterman, undated, Eac:21, FMSA; Wulfhorst to the Director of the RMS, Omupanda 27 April 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>98</sup> Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

from European trade routes, and remained so. Moreover, Uukwambi intentionally sought to isolate Ongandjera from European-led long-distance trade by controlling traffic thereto. It was possible for Uukwambi to practice such control, since the best route to Ongandjera passed through Uukwambi.<sup>99</sup> In order to prevent the spread of European influences to Ongandjera, the kings of Uukwambi refused traders the right to pass through their land. Consequently, in the adoption of arms technology Ongandjera remained considerably behind communities such as Uukwambi, Ondonga and Uukwanyama.<sup>100</sup> King Negumbo, in 1891, also forbid the Rhenish Missionary Society from entering Ongandjera to practice missionary work there.<sup>101</sup>

As a result of the policy of economic isolation, Ongandjera's dependence on Uukwambi grew. In regard to internal administration Ongandjera preserved its independence, but in external affairs it had to follow Uukwambi. The case of King Tshaanika demonstrates this dependence. In 1887 Uukwambi's King Negumbo made Tshaanika the ruler of Ongandjera.<sup>102</sup> Tshaanika occasionally tried to escape Uukwambi domination; one way he did this was by trying to form an alliance with the Zwart-booï Nama.<sup>103</sup>

Along with Ongandjera, Uukwaluudhi, Ombalantu and Ombandja were at least to some extent dependent on Uukwambi in their foreign affairs.<sup>104</sup> In the spring of 1871 Uukwambi's King Nuujoma, backed by Uukwanyama and Ongandjera, overthrew the current king of Ombandja, supplanting him with a more preferable ruler.<sup>105</sup>

The most outstanding case of the affect of European-led long-distance trade on the relations and balance of power between the Ovambo com-

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<sup>99</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 September 1891, Eac:19, FMSA.

<sup>100</sup> Skoglund, report for July 1877, undated, Eac:5, FMSA. Cf. the Finnish missionaries' experiences, e.g. Rautanen to Sirelius, Omandongo 27 August 1874, Eac:4, FMSA.

<sup>101</sup> Wulfhorst, 1917, pp. 2—4, C/i:20, UEMA; Bernsmann to the Board of the RMS, Olukonda 1 August 1891, C/i:19, UEMA; Bernsmann to the Board of the RMS, Omburo 6 January 1892, C/i:19, UEMA.

<sup>102</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 September 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 23 February 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 31 March 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA.

<sup>103</sup> MRD 24 August 1887, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>104</sup> MRD 3 May 1895, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Koivu, Memoirs II, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>105</sup> E.g. MRD 22 April 1871, 602—91, NAF; Rautanen to Sirelius, Uukwambi 29 May 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; Weikkolin, report for April, May and June 1871, Uukwambi 30 June 1871, Eac:2, FMSA; ELC, pp. 1424—1425.



munities was that of the weakening of Ongandjera's political and economic position in relation to Ondonga, Uukwambi and Uukwanyama. Thus European-led long-distance trade advanced the concentration of economic and political power in Ovamboland. Of the four centers of power existing at the beginning of the period under study only three could be so distinguished in the 1890s. The power of these three had increased in relation to the other communities.

Desiring to avoid confrontations with one another, the main powers focused their raiding operations on smaller and politically less stable communities. Uukwanyama, Ondonga and Uukwambi carried out raids mainly against Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi, Evale, Ongandjera, Ombalantu and Ombandja.<sup>106</sup> Raiding between the Ovambo communities clearly abated following the great rinderpest epidemic.<sup>107</sup>

The increasing difficulty of inter-community raiding did not, however, decrease the demand for arms, ammunition and spirits. In order to finance their trading with Europeans, the Ovambo increased their raiding to the north of the Kunene from the first half of the 1890s on. Portuguese colonial officials could do nothing to prevent this raiding on the Angolan side of the border.<sup>108</sup>

Following the great rinderpest, Ovambo raiding north of the Kunene was stepped up even further. Raids were undertaken deep into Angola, as far as the regions of Ganguella and Caconda. Ovambo commandos not only raided Africans, but also European colonists and traders. Of the Ovambo communities, Uukwanyama and Ombandja carried out the most extensive raiding.<sup>109</sup> The extensive raiding north of the Kunene was

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<sup>106</sup> E.g. Roiha to Tötterman, Elim 26 March 1894, Eac:22, FMSA; MRD 15 March 1895, 3 May 1895, 27 June 1895, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 July 1899, Eac:25, FMSA; Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 21 March 1894, B/c I:45, UEMA; Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 12 January 1894, C/h:34, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 27 April 1897, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 3 February 1903, B/c II:54, UEMA; Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, A. 233, p. 143, NAW.

<sup>107</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 July 1899, Eac:25, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 7 June 1899, Eac:25, FMSA.

<sup>108</sup> E.g. Möller, 1974, pp. 84–85, 111; Rosenblad, 1924, p. 37; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 20 January 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA; Stahlhut to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 19 September 1896, B/c II:60, UEMA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua, Noah«, C/k:22, UEMA; BRMG 1897, pp. 40–46.

<sup>109</sup> E.g. Franke to Leutwein, Outjo 10 November 1899, ZBU Nr. 1008,

clear evidence of the growth of Ovambo political and military power in relation to the African communities living to the north.

The decline of big game populations forced the Ovambo into the vicious circle of a raiding economy, in which growing dependence on European goods motivated increased raiding. The main goal of raiding became to procure the means to purchase more effective equipment for new raids. Thus a new aspect of the institution of the raid was its commercialization, which only increased in significance with the decline of commercial hunting.

### 5.2.2.3. Households and the Growth of Trade: the Spread of Property and Person Seizure

The direct contact of households with European traders was restricted to minimal trading in foodstuffs. But indirectly households were affected by the growth of trade in many ways. First of all, households had to participate in royally organized hunting and raiding expeditions, the function of which became the financing of trade. Successful hunting and raiding expeditions benefitted households in the form of small rewards, but they also had to put up with being the constant target of raiding by neighboring communities.

Dependent as it was on commercial hunting and raiding, the financing of trade was extensively a matter of luck. Because trading on credit was not common in Ovamboland, unsuccessful hunting and raiding trips put the kings into financial difficulty.

The growth of trade with Europeans gave rise, in addition to commercial hunting and raiding, to another mode of financing trade: the forced seizure of property within the community. The kings solved their occasional trade financing problems by forcing households to give them cattle. Royal counselors, body guards and district headmen were in charge of cattle collection.<sup>110</sup>

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J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 7, NAW; AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., pp. 117—118, NAW; Gleim to Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Cassinga 27 November 1900, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.3., p. 46, NAW; Dorbritz to von Bülow, Humpata 12 August 1904, ZBU Nr. 20, A.I.h.2.Bd.1., p. 80, NAW; Wulfhorst, 1917, p. 76, C/i:20, UEMA.

<sup>110</sup> Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 26 November 1870, Eac:1, FMSEA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 15 September 1890; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukun-

According to Ovambo tradition, the spread of property seizure and the growth of trade with Europeans were linked together.<sup>111</sup> For example, in Uukwambi eight men were executed in 1870 for refusing to give up cattle. King Nujoma needed sixty head of cattle at that time for the purchase of a useless cannon.<sup>112</sup> On the basis of Finnish missionaries' observations, the seizure of property was rare up until the end of the 1880s.

The decline of big game populations and especially the diminishing productivity, and escalating violence, of raiding created pressure for the increase of property seizures within the communities at the end of the 1880s. In the early 1890s there was a sharp rise in the number of such seizures, and they became a significant mode of financing trade, alongside of raiding outside of the community.<sup>113</sup>

For households the arrival of traders to the community increased the threat of property confiscation, as related by the Kwanyaman Johannes Kaukungua in his description of the seizure of cattle:

If a trader comes to the king, and the king wants to buy something from him like alcohol, horses, guns, clothes, cloth, wagons and anything else he wants, and who demands cattle in payment, then the king sends his young men everywhere throughout the realm in search of cattle. One or two head of cattle leave [are taken] from every cattle-hold. When a large herd of animals are collected, only then are they driven to the court. Thieves have stolen many animals for themselves on the way, often more than are taken to the king.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, the most important purpose of property seizure was to gather cattle from households to pay for goods sold by Europeans. For example, in 1891, in a certain district of Ondonga, one such property seizure operation turned into an overt raid, leaving fifteen houses in desolation. Nor was the pillaging of whole districts a rare occurrence. According to the

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gua, Noah», «Haschipala», C/k:22, UEMA.

<sup>111</sup> ELC, pp. 842—843, 1166; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, «Kaukungua, Noah», «Haschipala», C/k:22, UEMA. Cf. J. von Moltke, A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland, p. 4, A. 100, NAW.

<sup>112</sup> Weikkolin to Sirelius, Uukwambi 26 November 1870, Eac:1, FMSA; Kurvinen to Sirelius, Otjimbingwe 27 February 1871, Eac:2, FMSA.

<sup>113</sup> E.g. Alen to Tötterman, Olukonda 25 May 1889, Eac:17, FMSA; APeD 22 July 1889, 14 October 1889, 20 December 1889, 21 July 1890, 22 April 1891, 18 January 1892, 10 January 1895, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; ASD vol. 1, 10 May 1894, PC; MRD 25 February 1894, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 113—115.

<sup>114</sup> ELC, pp. 842—843; also see ELC, p. 1166.

missionary Pettinen, in the beginning of the 1890s Ondonga's King Kambonde treated his community's households worse than prisoners of war.<sup>115</sup> As property seizures spread, households occasionally took up armed resistance against them. Such local defiance was usually a hopeless endeavor, because households rarely had access to firearms.<sup>116</sup>

The kings were content to limit themselves to the seizure of cattle until the end of the 1880s when, for the first time, they began to sell their own people, especially women, to the Portuguese in exchange for spirits. In the latter half of 1889 King Kambonde of Ondonga and Nehale, the headman of East Ondonga, for the first time sold, in exchange for spirits, community members who had not been accused of any crimes.<sup>117</sup> Trade in slaves as such was not previously entirely foreign to the Ndonga, but those sold were usually prisoners of war or community members accused of witchcraft.<sup>118</sup> As difficulties arose in the financing of long-distance trade, the sale of community members into slavery, as in the case of Ondonga, spread among the other communities.<sup>119</sup>

The spread of the slave trade was influenced by the increasing difficulty of raiding on the one hand and by pressure on the part of traders on the other. Sometimes Portuguese traders would only accept slaves in exchange for spirits.<sup>120</sup> According to the missionary Pettinen, property

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<sup>115</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 20 February 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 April 1891, Eac:19, FMSA. See also: Alen to Tötterman, Olukonda 25 May 1889, Eac:17, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Ondangwa 18 August 1890, Eac:18, FMSA; Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 5 January 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 14 January 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; MRD 8 August 1890, 15 February 1891, 18 January 1894, 25 February 1894, 12 March 1896, 18 March 1896, Hp XXVIII:2—3, FMSA.

<sup>116</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 April 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 3 July 1895, 12 March 1896, 18 March 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.

<sup>117</sup> APeD 24 September 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Rautanen to Hahn, Olukonda 20 May 1889, A. 335, NAW; MRD 16 December 1889, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; Alen to Tötterman, Olukonda 25 May 1889, Eac:17, FMSA.

<sup>118</sup> Rautanen to Hahn, Walvis Bay 28 July 1892, A. 335, NAW; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 3 September 1894. Nor was the sale of their own people as slaves common among the Kwanyama before the 1880s: Sckär, p. 29, UEMA.

<sup>119</sup> E.g. Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 1 September 1892, B/c I:45, UEMA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 8 August 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA; Stahlhut to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 19 September 1896, B/c II:60, UEMA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA; Wulfhorst, 1917, p. 27, C/i:20, UEMA.

<sup>120</sup> APeD 16 December 1889, 6 March 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

and person seizures became more frequent as alcohol stores ran dry.<sup>121</sup> In the 1890s the kings financed most of their alcohol purchases with slaves. Community members were commonly sold into slavery on grounds of fabricated accusations of witchcraft, but they were also increasingly being sold without being incriminated at all.<sup>122</sup>

The strengthening of the German colonial government's control over South West Africa was reflected in the territorial distribution of property and person seizures in Ovamboland. As European business activities in Ovamboland came, from the mid-1890s on, increasingly under Portuguese control and shifted northward, the amount of property and person seizures in southern Ovamboland diminished. In 1903 the missionary Savola commented that the situation in Ondonga became considerably more peaceful after the Portuguese ceased making trading trips there.<sup>123</sup>

The termination of Portuguese visits to southern Ovamboland did not, however, put an end to property and person seizures in Ondonga, because the Ndonga undertook trips to trade with the Portuguese in the Humbe region. The volume of trade between the Ndonga and the Portuguese clearly diminished following the rinderpest.<sup>124</sup> Portuguese traders were considerably more active in northern Ovamboland, where inner-community property and person seizures were therefore more common.<sup>125</sup>

Alongside of commercial hunting and raiding, inner-community property and person seizure became an important mode of financing trade with Europeans. The importance of this source of finance increased as the other sources became less accessible from the latter half of the 1880s on. For households royal trade with Europeans was not merely an economic burden, but was also psychologically oppressive, and property and person seizures only exacerbated the situation.

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<sup>121</sup> Pettinen, 1889—1895, 10 July 1890.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 April 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 3 February 1894, 12 March 1895, 18 March 1895, 29 May 1895, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA; Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 1 September 1892, B/c I:45, UEMA; Meisenholl to the Mission Director of the RMS, Ondjiva 17 August 1894, B/c I:45, UEMA.

<sup>123</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 19 October 1903, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>124</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 28 August 1906, Eac:24, FMSA; ASD vol. 2, 1 January 1898, PC.

<sup>125</sup> Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 30 August 1904, B/c II:54, UEMA; *Memoirs by William Chapman*, vol. 1, p. 145, A. 233, NAW.

## 5.3. The Effect of Trade on Social Relations

### 5.3.1. Trade and the Increase of Refugees

Ovambo society produced refugees before its engagement with European-led long-distance trade. In struggles over the inheritance of power, the fate of the loser was usually either death or exile. For example, following the death of King Nangolo in 1857, Shipanga emerged as king after winning the first round in the struggle for the inheritance of power. Shikongo, the loser of the struggle, lived in exile for a while before he succeeded, with the help of Jonker Afrikaner, in taking power from his brother; King Shipanga was killed during the coup.<sup>126</sup> Other reasons for exile, in addition to defeat in power struggles, were royal disfavor and accusation of witchcraft or crime. The accused could either flee, or face probable condemnation to death.<sup>127</sup> Exile in Ovambo society was traditionally linked to inter-personal relations.

The nature of exile in Ovambo tradition is very interesting. In Emil Liljeblad's collection there are no accounts of peaceful migration between communities: to be a migrant and to be a refugee were considered nearly identical.<sup>128</sup> The strong increase in the number of refugees from the end of the 1880s on probably influenced the accounts of migration and exile in Liljeblad's collection.

The sharp increase of property and person seizures from the latter half of the 1880s on changed the traditional pattern of exile among the Ovambo. With the spread of property and person seizures, households lived in continual fear of losing cattle, family members and their personal freedom. Resistance by households against property and person seizures failed almost without exception. Flight was therefore a concrete alternative to becoming the victim of property and person seizure.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> For a detailed description of the struggle over the inheritance of power in Ondongo after the death of King Nangolo in 1857, see section 4.2.1.

<sup>127</sup> MRD 24 July 1897, 602—91, NAF; Welsch to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omatemba 27 December 1907, C/h:31, UEMA. See also: Andersson, 1852, p. 17, SUL; MRD 21 September 1885, 9 March 1886, 602—91, NAF; Björklund, report for December 1878, Omandongo 31 December 1878, Eac:6, FMSA; Weikolin, report for May 1885, Omandongo 3 June 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>128</sup> E.g. ELC, pp. 756, 817.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. APeD 17 May 1892, 3 July 1895, 12 March 1896, 18 March 1896, Hp XXVIII:1, 3, FMSA.



For example, in the beginning of 1889 families fled with their cattle from Headman Nehale's East Ondonga to the domain of King Kamonde in order to avoid the loss of their property and personal freedom.<sup>130</sup> Households fleeing in fear of property and person seizure comprised the largest category of refugees in Ovamboland from the early 1890s on. The nature of exile had thus changed: whereas before refugees were mainly individuals fleeing for personal reasons, now they were part of families, and even whole districts, escaping collectively from their home region.<sup>131</sup> For example, in 1891 all of the inhabitants of an East Ondonga district fled with their cattle in face of a threatened mass seizure of property and persons.<sup>132</sup>

It became typical for families to flee to neighboring communities in fear of property and person seizures upon the arrival of Portuguese traders in their areas. For example, in August 1890 between twenty and thirty anchors of spirits were brought from Portuguese Angola to Ondonga. Upon the arrival of the alcohol dealers, a group of Ndonga immediately fled to Uukwambi.<sup>133</sup> People also fled from northern Ovamboland to the Nkhumbi communities north of the Kunene River.<sup>134</sup>

The growth of the number of refugees also caused tension within the communities. Households became increasingly interested in one another's affairs in order to be able to predict coming events, such as seizures. If, for example, a household boldly sold grain, then others assumed that it had gotten wind of a coming seizure operation, and was planning to flee the community. Often the mere spread of such rumors caused households to flee, even though flight had not been planned beforehand. This was because when the king or the district headman heard such rumors their reaction was to carry out seizures.<sup>135</sup> The increase of seizures and the number of refugees thus gave rise to mistrust between households.

The increase of insecurity caused households to take the possibility of flight into consideration in their economic planning. Households prepared

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<sup>130</sup> APeD 13 May 1889, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>131</sup> MRD 6 January 1890, 9 August 1890, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; APeD 15—16 February 1891, 18 January 1892, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 18 May 1892; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 18 July 1902, B/c II:54, UEMA; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA; Wulfhorst, 1917, p. 19, C/i:20, UEMA.

<sup>132</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 April 1891, Eac:19, FMSA.

<sup>133</sup> MRD 8 August 1890, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>134</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 79; also see Möller, 1974, p. 95.

<sup>135</sup> Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

for possible flight by transferring part of their cattle beforehand into the care of relatives in neighboring communities; if necessary, they themselves would then flee to their relatives.<sup>136</sup>

It is impossible to make a precise estimate of the number of refugees on the basis of existing written sources, since only scattered information is available on the different communities.<sup>137</sup> An estimated 2,000 Uukwanyaman refugees were said to have been residing in the Humbe region north of the Kunene 1896.<sup>138</sup> This is a large number in proportion to the total population of Uukwanyama.<sup>139</sup>

The growth of the number of refugees in the latter half of the 1880s was directly related to the expansion of trade with Europeans and the increase of seizures. A positive correlation can be observed between spread of seizures and the increase of refugees. The most active period of property and person seizure in the Ovambo communities, during which the number of refugees reached its height, was in the beginning of the 1890s. The decline in the number of seizures after the rinderpest was followed by a decrease in the number of refugees; this process was swifter in southern Ovamboland than in the north.

### 5.3.2. The Development of Relations between the Kings and the Power Elite

The birth of a notable refugee problem was a manifestation of households' loss of confidence in the king as distributor of justice and resources. How did the expansion of trade affect the relationship between the king and the power elite? The community power elite signifies those who worked in close cooperation with the king, such as royal counselors, district headmen, war commanders, body guards and priests.

Integration into European-led long-distance trade created new tasks for the power elite. One of its new responsibilities was to organize the funding of long-distance trade. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the power elite utilized the new technology procured from Europeans, i.e.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> For instance, in 1890 hundreds of households fled from East Ondonga to Uukwambi owing to fear of a seizure: APeD 9 August 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA.

<sup>138</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1979, p. 79; also see Möller, 1974, p. 95.

<sup>139</sup> See Table 1 on p. 42.

firearms and horses. Initially the kings firmly controlled the use of new technology. For example, at the end of the 1860s all firearms in Uukwambi were kept at the king's residence, whence they were entrusted mainly to the royal war commanders and body guards for the time required to carry out given assignments.<sup>140</sup>

The sharp growth in trade with Europeans led first to the commercialization of hunting and later of raiding. The kings succeeded in controlling commercial hunting during the whole period of study. This is demonstrated by the fact that, neither missionaries, nor traders mention having traded for ivory with anyone else but the kings.

Royal control over raiding met with more extensive problems. Unlike with hunting trips, the kings could not personally participate in raids, because they were not allowed to leave the community over which they ruled.<sup>141</sup> Responsibility for leading raids fell upon the war commander, who was chosen by the king. Before transmitting the spoils of raiding to the king, the war commander, exploiting his position, was able to take that part of it which he desired. According to tradition, it was an established custom for the raiders to divide part of the spoils among themselves, and then give the king his share, which was often smaller than what the raiders got.<sup>142</sup>

As raiding operations expanded, the elite's share of the spoils continually increased. An extreme example of this was a raid on Uukwanyama commissioned by East Ondonga's Headman Nehale in the beginning of 1889. Altogether about 2,000 head of cattle were captured on the raid, of which Nehale received only about fifty.<sup>143</sup> It became established practice for the king to receive no more than half the booty of raids.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, the same practice was followed in regard to property seizures within the community.<sup>145</sup>

It was the king's function to make decisions concerning the execution of raids and seizures. But from the 1890s on, royal counselors and district headmen began to make such decisions without consulting the

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<sup>140</sup> Een, 1872, p. 105. See also Rautanen to Sirelius, Ondonga 29 December 1870, Eac:1, FMSA.

<sup>141</sup> Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Kaukungua«, C/k:22, UEMA; Koivu, Memoirs II, HP XIII:1, FMSA; Huttunen, 1969, p. 25.

<sup>142</sup> E.g. ELC, pp. 868—878, 881—882, 955—957.

<sup>143</sup> MRD 14 January 1889, 20 January 1889, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA.

<sup>144</sup> Tönjes, 1911, pp. 114—115.

<sup>145</sup> APeD 15 February 1891, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; ELC, pp. 842—843, 1166; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Haschipala«, C/k:22, UEMA.

king.<sup>146</sup> Seizures were undertaken without royal permission more than raids.<sup>147</sup>

In addition to carrying out unauthorized raids and seizures, royal counselors sought to usurp the king's executive power over land use. Households paid the king land rent by participating in the cultivation of royal fields and delivering part of their harvest as a grain tax to the royal court. If a household neglected these duties, the king had the right to »shut down the house».<sup>148</sup>

It was only in the 1890s that missionaries noted the eviction of occupants from their homesteads in Ondonga.<sup>149</sup> This indicates a sharp increase at that time in the implementation of »shutting down the house». No longer were evictions carried out only by royal command. Royal counselors now »shut houses down» on their own initiative, and appropriated for themselves the funds collected for the redemption of homesteads. For example, in 1897 a band of royal body guards arrived in Oniipa, Ondonga, where they evicted families from their homesteads on the grounds that they had neglected their duties to the king. When the missionary Savola made inquiries about the affair, King Kambonde insured him that he had not authorized the evictions. It turned out that the leader of the operation was a certain royal counselor named Nevanga, who was consequently ordered to return the confiscated goods to their owners.<sup>150</sup>

The strong increase in the functions of the power elite in conjunction with integration into European-led long-distance trade obstructed the kings' ability to control their officials. This is evinced by the increase of the power elite's independent initiative regarding raiding, property seizure and land use. It must be emphasized, however, that in the analysis of the weakening of royal power, the Ovambo communities cannot be examined as a homogeneous group. The king's position within the community depended primarily on his personal attributes.

Both Uukwanyama and Ondonga saw a change of ruler in the

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<sup>146</sup> Wulffhorst, 1917, p. 76, C/i:20, UEMA; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>147</sup> Wulffhorst, 1917, p. 73, C/i:20, UEMA; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 18 May 1892; Rautanen to Mustakallio, Olukonda 4 October 1900, Eac:24, FMSA. See also *Memoirs* by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 140, 145, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>148</sup> Rautanen, 1903, pp. 339, 343; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 1 April 1897, Eac:25, FMSA.

<sup>149</sup> ASD vol. 1, 2 August 1895, 4 November 1895, 20 October 1895, PC; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 1 April 1897, Eac:25, FMSA.

<sup>150</sup> ASD vol. 2, 26 March 1897, 31 March 1897, 1—2 April 1897, PC.

mid-1880s. In both cases the thrown was inherited by adolescent boys. Ueyulu jaHedimbi is thought to have been between twelve sixteen years old when he was crowned king of Uukwanyama.<sup>151</sup> In Ondonga the throne was inherited by the sixteen year old Kambonde kaMpingana. His parents acted as regents until he reached adulthood.<sup>152</sup>

In Ondonga conflicts over the inheritance of power caused the community to split in two. West Ondonga was controlled by King Kambonde kaMpingana. The eastern part of the community was taken over by his brother, Nehale IyaMpingana, who continually plotted coups.<sup>153</sup>

Nor did King Ueyulu succeed in becoming the unrivaled authority of Uukwanyama. His brother Nande schemed to take over power, even though the community was not as visibly divided in two as Ondonga.<sup>154</sup> According to the explorer Möller, King Ueyulu lacked the traditional firm hold on power and iron discipline characteristic of Ovambo kings. As he saw it, King Negumbo of Uukwambi, in the 1890s, was a good example of the traditional ruler who governed wisely and with an iron grip, requiring absolute obedience from all members of the community.<sup>155</sup> On the basis of observations by missionaries and traders, the power elite was not able to shake Negumbo's unrivaled position of authority at any time during his reign.<sup>156</sup>

Portuguese Angolan alcohol was another factor which contributed to the weakening of royal power. Because of the profuse consumption of alcohol, kings and their closest counselors became alcoholics, and were therefore at times unable to govern.<sup>157</sup> For example, Ondonga's King

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<sup>151</sup> Estermann, 1976, p. 122; Vorträge von Missionar Wulfhorst, »Schipepo und Schlange«, C/k:22, UEMA; MRD 10 June 1886, 602—91, NAF; Roiha to the Board of the FMS, Omandongo 21 July 1885, Eac:13, FMSA.

<sup>152</sup> MBC at Omandongo 12 November 1884, § 1, Hha:1, FMSA; MRD 14 August 1886, Hp XXVIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>153</sup> For more on the split of Ondonga, see Eirola, 1987, pp. 90—98. For the coups plotted by Headman Nehale, see: APeD 28 July 1890, 9 August 1890, 23—24 August 1890, 27 August 1890, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 March 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; section 5.2.2.2.

<sup>154</sup> Memoirs by William Chapman, vol. 1, pp. 140, 145, A. 233, NAW.

<sup>155</sup> Möller, 1974, pp. 113, 117.

<sup>156</sup> Negumbo IyaKandenge reigned over the Uukwambi community from 1875 to 1907: Peltola, 1958, p. 278.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. Skoglund, report for June 1876, Olukonda 30 June 1876, Eac:4, FMSA; Björklund, report for December 1878, Omandongo 31 December 1878, Eac:6, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 March 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 24 February 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman,

Kambonde kaMpingana was considered by traders and missionaries to be an alcoholic.<sup>158</sup>

In spite of the strengthening of the power elite's position, the basic structure of power was not jeopardized even in Ondonga or Uukwanyama. An important obstacle to the power elites' bid for domination was that its offices were not hereditary. This was highly evident in West Ondonga where, upon taking power, King Kambonde kaMpingana replaced the old royal counselors by younger ones. The most famous of those dismissed was the esteemed dignitary Amuomo, who had served as a royal counselor from the time of Shikongo shaKalulu on. Nehale controlled the East Ondongan power elite in a similar manner.<sup>159</sup>

The growth of trade with Europeans, and the new functions it created, enabled the elite to expand its power. As a homogeneous group, however, the elite's power was limited during the whole period under study. The power elite was composed of competing individuals, and was incapable of functioning as a united pressure group, because of the king's policy of reward and punishment which sustained the disagreement and mistrust within it. An individual who came into royal disfavor faced either flight or death. For example, in 1902 Headman Nehale had one of his counselors shot for carrying out unauthorized property seizures and for otherwise continually acting independently.<sup>160</sup>

The matrilineal order of inheritance also effectively prevented the decline of the kings' supreme economic and political executive power. It prevented the often considerable wealth of elite members from being inherited by a certain individual or family. In practice the order of inheritance was an effective system for the redistribution of accumulated wealth.<sup>161</sup>

In addition to affecting the personal attributes of kings, the growth of trade was a central cause of the change in the balance of power within

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Olukonda 5 January 1894, Eac:22, FMSA; Wulfhorst to the Mission Director of the RMS, Omupanda 8 August 1895, B/c II:54, UEMA; Wulfhorst, III. Quartalbericht 1899, Omupanda 25 September 1899, C/h:33, UEMA.

<sup>158</sup> Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 April 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 28 September 1891, Eac:19, FMSA. See also: Lehmann, 1956, pp. 272—273; Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 242.

<sup>159</sup> Weikkolin, report for May 1885, Omandongo 3 June 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; Rauntanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 27 August 1885, Eac:13, FMSA; Hannula to Tötterman, Olukonda 9 June 1888, Eac:16, FMSA.

<sup>160</sup> Glad to Mustakallio, Onajena 8 December 1902, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>161</sup> For more on the order of inheritance, see section 2.2.2.



the communities. Its central role in the administration of long-distance trade allowed the elite to use new technology to increase its power and strengthen the position of its individual members in relation to the king. The increase of the power elite's independence, especially in Ondonga and Uukwanyama, intensified uncertainty and insecurity among households. The growth of inner-community disunity appears to have been most extensive in the most active trading communities.

## 5.4. Long-Distance Trade and Household Living Conditions

### 5.4.1. Influences on the Structure of Production and Trade Relations

Increasing dependence on trade with Europeans led to dramatic changes in the living conditions of Herero households after the great rinderpest epidemic. European businessmen and colonists steered Herero headmen into unbearable debt in order to take their pastureland in payment. Pastureland was the Herero's most important means of production, and its loss meant the ruin of their system of production based on cattle breeding.<sup>162</sup> The economic development of Ovamboland differed from that of Hereroland, because it remained outside of the control of the German colonial government, its climate was more unhealthy than that of Hereroland and it was poor in minerals.

How then did the growth of trade affect the living conditions of Ovambo households? It is very difficult to thoroughly answer this question solely on the basis of written sources. The problem is complicated by the fact that the most important source producers — missionaries — operated among the Ovambo mainly with the community elite and the Christian congregation. Missionaries' knowledge of common household life was very superficial and they were clearly more interested in reporting, for example, on matters concerning the community elite. The thorough analysis of the effect of trade on households would require that oral tra-

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<sup>162</sup> Bley, 1971, p. 135. See also: Moorsom, 1973, pp. 52—53; Schrank, 1974, pp. 132—133.

dition be studied alongside of the other sources. The collection of oral material was not, however, possible within the framework of this study.

During the whole period under study the Ovambo made their living primarily by farming. The growth of trade did not, however, further the spread of agricultural innovations; the hoe remained the most important farming tool until the 1940s.<sup>163</sup>

Nor did trade bring new kinds of crops to Ovamboland.<sup>164</sup> The only actual effort to diversify agricultural production was made by Finnish missionaries, who experimented with cotton cultivation in the beginning of the 1890s. Their goal was to be able to produce European style clothes for the Christian congregation, because such clothes were considered the mark of a Christian. The project for cotton cultivation and the manufacture of clothing, directed by the missionary August Pettinen, did not, however, proceed further than the experimental stage.<sup>165</sup>

One reason for traders' disinterest in introducing innovations for the advancement of agricultural production was that the kings, with whom trade was mainly carried out, primarily desired arms, horses and status commodities in general. Another reason was that, in comparison to items such as weapons, cloth, beads and tobacco, farming tools were heavy and difficult to transport.

On the whole, trade between Europeans and households remained minimal. The colony of a few dozen Europeans and their servants did not substantially increase the demand for agricultural products.

Thus the growth in trade did not directly affect the conditions of agricultural and cattle production. Nevertheless, the indirect effects were considerable. The growing inner-community strain accompanying the spread of seizures caused farming and cattle raising to become more short-term and uncertain, which in turn furthered the spread of famine at the end of the period under study.

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<sup>163</sup> Koivu, 1925, pp. 61—62; MRD 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF; Möller, 1974, pp. 124—125. See also Elonheimo, 1967, pp. 105—106.

<sup>164</sup> For instance, in the Karagwe Kingdom of north western Tanzania integration into the long-distance trade meant a revolution in agriculture. New food and cash crops were introduced. These included mangoes, sweet bananas, perhaps maize, all types of pepper, pawpaw, and all kinds of fruits, tomatoes, guavas, onions, eggplant, etc.: Katoke, 1975, p. 79. Cf. also Austen, 1987, p. 71.

<sup>165</sup> E.g. Pettinen to Tötterman, Olukonda 6 May 1892, Eac:20, FMSA; MMC at Olukonda 18 October 1893, § 3, Hha:3, FMSA; MMC at Olukonda 3 January 1894, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:3, FMSA; MMC at Oniipa 21 January 1902, annex 13 of the minutes, Hha:4, FMSA.

All in all, the spread of famine was the result of numerous causes. Because of erratic weather conditions and, after 1891, regular locust attacks, famines were more common than usual at the end of the 1890s and the beginning of the next decade. The decline in the supply of milk products and meat likewise weakened Ovambo nutrition. One important cause of nutritional problems was population growth, which had led to the settlement of harsher and more vulnerable regions.<sup>166</sup>

The expansion of trading connections did not undermine the position of the handicraft profession in Ovambo society, because most of the consumer goods sold to the Ovambo were concentrated in the hands of the king and the power elite. Goods obtained by households, such as beads, jewelry and iron wire, did not displace locally produced items, such as jewelry, which were of ritualistic value.<sup>167</sup> Thus the growth of trade neither supplanted traditional occupations, nor gave rise to new ones, but rather led to the commercialization of hunting and raiding, and to the spread of seizures.

The most notable influence of the expansion of trading connections on the Ovambo system of exchange was the birth of two separate markets. Alongside of the traditional system of exchange between Africans, there arose a sector of trade between the kings, who maintained firm control over it, and Europeans. During the whole period under study, one of the most important functions of inter-African local and regional trade was the procurement of special goods, the most important of which were salt, iron and copper products, as well as a variety of baskets, clay pots and so forth. For example, at the end of July 1891 a party of about fifty people left Ondonga for Uukwanyama to exchange salt for iron hoes and hatchets.<sup>168</sup>

European-led long-distance trade did not put pressure for change on local and regional markets, because during the period under study items — such as salt and factory-made iron hoes — which could have undermined the value of local products and the position of craftsmen in the

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<sup>166</sup> Savola, 1905, pp. 129—131. For more on the locust attacks in the 1890s: MRD 25 January 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; MMC at Oniipa 21 January 1902, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:4, FMSA; Rautanen to Tötterman, Olukonda 7 May 1893, Eac:21, FMSA; Koivu, *Memoirs II*, Hp XIII:1, FMSA.

<sup>167</sup> E.g. APeD 15 January 1895, Hp XXIV:1, FMSA; J. von Moltke, *A Trader's Adventure in Ovamboland*, p. 5, A. 100, NAW; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 26 February 1901, Eac:26, FMSA. See also Bruwer, 1961, pp. 99—102.

<sup>168</sup> Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 1 October 1891, Eac:19, FMSA.

community were not brought into Ovamboland.<sup>169</sup>

The most visible influence of European-led long-distance trade on regional trade was the spread of retail trading in certain goods supplied by Europeans. Such goods, which included tobacco, beads and jewelry, were traded only when more appropriate exchange goods were unavailable.<sup>170</sup>

Foodstuffs had a central position in local and regional exchange. Trade in foodstuffs was used to help prevent harvest catastrophes from leading to famine. Local catastrophes which were limited to a small area became more common in the 1890s, when locusts again began to invade Ovamboland after a break of about twenty years.<sup>171</sup> For example, Ondonga was afflicted by famine in 1897—1898 and in 1901. Efforts were made to ward off hunger at those times by purchasing grain from Uukwanyama, where the harvest was above average.<sup>172</sup>

The Ovambo had an extensive network of trading connections outside of their country before they began trading with Europeans. Traditionally their most important trading partners were the Herero and the San of Otavi in the south, and the Nkhumbi and Nyaneka to the north of the Kunene.

The demand for Ovambo goods in Hereroland and southern Angola was not, however, diminished by the growth of European trade in those areas, because Europeans traded there, as in Ovamboland, mainly with rulers and the community elites. The customers of the Ovambo trading caravans were households.

Trade between Ovamboland and Hereroland remained active up until the end of the period under study. The items traded were, as at mid-century, iron and copper handicrafts and other such goods, which were exchanged with the Herero mainly for cattle and ostrich eggshells.<sup>173</sup> For

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<sup>169</sup> Hannula to Tötterman, Oniipa 1 October 1891, Eac:19, FMSA; MRD 14 July 1910, 29 May 1914, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>170</sup> E.g. Pettinen to Tötterman, Oniipa 6 March 1890, Eac:18, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 26 February 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 8 November 1901, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>171</sup> MRD 25 January 1893, Hp XXVIII:2, FMSA; MMC at Oniipa 21 January 1902, annex 3 of the minutes, Hha:4, FMSA.

<sup>172</sup> E.g. MRD 23 July 1897, 29 July 1897, 2 August 1897, 602—91, NAF; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 11 December 1897, Eac:25, FMSA; Pettinen to Mustakallio, Ondangwa 8 November 1901, Eac:26, FMSA; MBC at Ondangwa 3 May 1901, § 1, Hha:4, FMSA.

<sup>173</sup> Reijonen to Tötterman, Omulonga 3 May 1879, Eac:7, FMSA; MRD 9 April 1895,

example, in the beginning of 1896, the explorer Möller travelled from Ovamboland to Hereroland with a small Uukwambian trading caravan.<sup>174</sup> To the Nkhumbi and the Nyaneka the Ovambo sold iron products and salt, in exchange for cattle and tobacco.<sup>175</sup>

A new development in Herero-Ovambo trade was the retail business in goods procured from Europeans, which came under royal control. The rise of the retail business was a result of tightened control over arms and ammunition trade by colonial officials, which hindered European commerce in South West Africa from the beginning of the 1890s on.

Already at the outbreak of the Nama-Herero War (1880) the Ovambo were accused of smuggling and re-selling weapons to the Herero, but the accusation could not be proved at that time.<sup>176</sup> In the 1890s, however, trading in arms and ammunition between the Ovambo and the Herero was no longer rare, as German colonial administrators realized. Depending on the circumstances of supply and demand, arms and ammunition flowed sometimes from Hereroland to Ovamboland and sometimes the other way around.<sup>177</sup>

From the turn of the century on, the flow of arms and ammunition was mainly from Ovamboland to Hereroland. At the outbreak of the Herero uprising German colonial officials accused the Ovambo of supplying weapons to the warring Herero, but the accusation was shown to have been based on an extreme exaggeration of the extent of arms smuggling.<sup>178</sup>

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Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; ASD vol. 1, 23 October 1895, PC; von Goldammer to Nels, Otjimbingwe 8 August 1896, RKA 10.01, Nr. 2079, p. 23, ZStA; Gibson, 1968, p. 621.

<sup>174</sup> Möller, 1974, pp. 124, 143—144.

<sup>175</sup> Möller, 1974, pp. 90—91, 126; Schinz, 1891, pp. 299—300; Baum, 1903, p. 26.

<sup>176</sup> E.g. Piirainen to Tötterman, Omaruru 1 August 1881, Eac:9, FMSA; Weikkolin, report for July, August and September 1882, Omandongo 30 September 1882, Eac:10, FMSA; Report of the Select Committee appointed to Consider and Report on Damaraland Affairs, 1881, pp. 25/11, 25/20, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1838, ZStA.

<sup>177</sup> E.g. Volkmann to Leutwein, Omaruru 24 January 1895, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1 pp. 6—7, NAW; Volkmann to Leutwein, 19 December 1895, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.1, pp. 38—39, NAW; von Estorff to Leutwein, Outjo 21 April 1898, ZBU, Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2, pp. 21—22, NAW. See also: Rogers to the South West Africa Company, Limited, Tsumeb 20 March 1894, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1482, p. 1/137, ZStA; Jürn to Governor's Council, Okahandja 22 April 1902, ZBU Nr. 809, G.VI.e.2.Bd.2., pp. 76—78, NAW; ASD vol. 1, 23 October 1895, 19 November 1895, 15—16 December 1895, PC; MRD 24 April 1899, 26 March 1900, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>178</sup> Westfälische Zeitung 8 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 168, ZStA; Hamburger

The expansion of trade did not sever trading relations with the Kwan-gari, who dwelt on the Okavango River, or with the Ovatjimba of the Kaokoveld. Volume-wise this trade remained minimal, and the selection of products involved remained much the same as in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>179</sup>

The direct effect of the expansion of trade on the household structure of production and on trade relations was, on the whole, minimal. Indirectly the growth of trade, with the accompanying increase in raiding and seizures, made it more difficult for households to make a living, and it increased the atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty within the communities.

#### 5.4.2. Trade and the Development of Migrant Labor

In the area now called Namibia, migrant labor has been one of the mainstays of labor policy during this whole century. The Ovambo communities of Namibia have been one of the most important sources for labor recruitment.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, migrant labor has been one of the most researched topics in social science and historical studies concerning Namibia.

In these studies, migrant labor signifies a phenomenon in which workers leave their permanent residences to work in the public or private sectors, or in the service of private individuals for a designated period of time somewhere further away. The migrant laborers' residence at their job locations is temporary, and they go there alone while their family members remain at home.<sup>181</sup>

Wage labor in the European sense was unknown to the Ovambo before their contact with Europeans, but work away from home was not new to them. The Ovambo were in continual contact with the world outside of their communities through trading, hunting and raiding expedi-

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Zeitung 2 June 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, p. 175, ZStA. Cf. von Trotha, *Ab-schrift, Ovikorero* 28 August 1904, RKA 10.01, Nr. 1841, pp. 194—195, ZStA.

<sup>179</sup> E.g. Volkmann, 1901, pp. 866—868; Vedder to von Zastrow, Gaub 1 September 1914, ZBU Nr. 1011, J.XIII.b.5.Bd.2., pp. 123—125, NAW; Schultze to Governor's Council, Outjo 8 November 1912, ZBU Nr. 1011, J.XIII.b.5.Bd.2., pp. 100—101, NAW.

<sup>180</sup> Gordon, 1978, pp. 261—294; also see Moorsom, 1977a, pp. 52—87.

<sup>181</sup> Banghart, 1969, p. 1.



tions, the duration of which varied from a few days to many weeks. The Ovambo smiths' travels were the most extensive. For example, they travelled from cattle post to cattle post in Hereroland making goods desired by the locals, such as knives, arrowheads, beads, etc., from the iron and copper which they brought with them. After one or two years of such work, the smiths returned home with the cattle earned through their work.<sup>182</sup> The work of traveling smiths, however, is better characterized as independent enterprise than as migrant labor.

The spread of wage labor was caused by the European economic sector's dependence on African workers. Already the earliest explorers, traders, hunters and missionaries needed African servants. The expansion of the European economic sector in Hereroland and in Angola's Mosamedes Province increased the demand there for wage laborers.<sup>183</sup> Some of the most important work sites in German South West Africa in the 1890s were the copper mining project of the South West Africa Company in Tsumeb, the Swakopmund-Windhoek railway project and the Swakopmund Harbor project.<sup>184</sup>

Wage labor was, however, very limited in Ovamboland. Wage labor was introduced in the Ovambo communities in the 1880s, when private individuals voluntarily sought work on European plantations and on colonial government work sites.<sup>185</sup> The slaves supplied to Portuguese traders by the Ovambo are not classified as migrant laborers.

At the beginning of the twentieth century labor began to be recruited, mainly for work in the public sector. In the beginning of 1899 the District Commander of Swakopmund notified the missionary Martti Rautanen that he had sent a man to recruit labor in Ovamboland.<sup>186</sup> Before the outbreak of the Herero uprising most recruited workers were Herero, most of whom worked in the public sector.<sup>187</sup> Ovambo labor was also recruited for the plantations of the Huilla and Bié regions in Angola, and for construction of the railway from Benguela Harbor to the interi-

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<sup>182</sup> McKiernan, 1954, p. 74.

<sup>183</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 282; Moorsom, 1977, p. 36; Gordon, 1978, p. 261. Cf. Tönjes, 1911, p. 88.

<sup>184</sup> Moorsom, 1977, p. 36; Stals, 1969, p. 323. See also: MRD 3 September 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Hartmann, 1905, p. 22.

<sup>185</sup> MRD 3 September 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 282; Moorsom, 1977, p. 36.

<sup>186</sup> MRD 17 May 1899, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>187</sup> Bley, 1971, pp. 127—128; Moorsom, 1973, p. 56.

or, which got started in 1903.<sup>188</sup> Likewise, the directors of the Witwatersrand gold mine were interested in the recruitment of Ovambo labor at the beginning of the century.<sup>189</sup>

The significance of African workers was well displayed in relation to colonial government labor policy in the 1890s. In 1891 the Germans forbid the recruitment of labor in the South West African region extending to present day South Africa.<sup>190</sup> In practice the law could not be effectively enforced, as demonstrated by the activities of the recruiters from the Witwatersrand gold mine in Ovamboland in the beginning of the 1900s. The recruitment of labor in Portuguese Angola by outsiders was likewise forbidden; but that did not prevent representatives from the above mentioned sites from recruiting labor there too.<sup>191</sup>

Ovambo immigration remained low until the end of the 1890s. The amount of immigrants was confined to a few hundred per year. At the turn of the century the recruitment of labor increased, but the annual number of migrant workers did not surpass 1,700 before 1908.<sup>192</sup>

The Herero and Nama uprising (1904—1907) stimulated vigorous investment activity in the public sector. During the uprisings conditions were highly favorable for railway construction. At the outbreak of the Herero uprising there was only 382 kilometers of track, but by 1907 there were already about 1,288 kilometers of railways.<sup>193</sup> The expansion of the railway network provided a foundation for the growth of the European economic sector, making it possible, for example, to re-open the rich copper mine of Tsumeb in 1906. The Tsumeb copper mine was originally opened in 1890, but it was shut down after the great rinderpest, due to the lack of wagon oxen and high transport prices. The Lüderitz diamond

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<sup>188</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 283—284.

<sup>189</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 10 November 1903, Eac:26, FMSA; Tuominen to Mustakallio, Oniipa 12 November 1903, Eac:26, FMSA; Gibson, 1905, vol. 2, p. 122.

<sup>190</sup> Stals, 1969, p. 321.

<sup>191</sup> Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 284—285; Gibson, 1905, vol. 2, p. 122.

<sup>192</sup> Nitsche, 1913, p. 133; Streitwolf, 1911, p. 976. See also: Mueller to Leutwein, Windhoek 15 November 1900, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3, p. 82, NAW; Gordon, 1978, p. 261; Volkmann, Jahresbericht des Distrikts Grootfontein im Jahre 1900/01, Grootfontein 1 June 1901, ZBU Nr. 149, A.VI.a.3.Bd.6., pp. 33—34, NAW; von Wangenheim, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1904/05, Outjo 5 May 1905, ZBU Nr. 152, A.VI.a.3.Bd.11., p. 91, NAW; Savola, 1905, pp. 129—131.

<sup>193</sup> Quiring, 1911, pp. 9, 12.

fields, found in 1908, also needed plenty of workers. Moreover, growing German settlement increased the need for agricultural laborers.<sup>194</sup>

The continuity of the favorable economic conditions in German South West Africa following the uprisings depended on the solution to the labor problem, because the German's destructive repression of the uprisings dramatically decreased the local supply of labor in Hereroland and Namaland. By 1910 an estimated 85% of the male African population of the police zone were working as wage laborers. In spite of this there was a serious shortage of labor in the area.<sup>195</sup>

Fulfillment of the strongly increased demand for labor required the development of a labor induction system in Ovamboland, which was the most important recruitment area. The extensive organized recruitment of migrant labor in Ovamboland was actually implemented only after the great uprisings.<sup>196</sup>

In 1908—1909 about 4,000 laborers were recruited from the Ovambo communities to work at sites in the German South West African police zone; in 1910 the number of recruits rose to 9,253. During the years 1910—1914 the number of workers recruited leveled off at about 10,000 per year.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, Ovambo labor was recruited for work in Portuguese Angola, although on a considerably lower scale, with the annual rate remaining lower than 2,000 individuals.<sup>198</sup>

The Ovambo had experience as migrant labor before the creation of the extensive organized contract labor system after the great uprisings. Why then did the Ovambo, first of their own initiative, and then as induced by recruiters, work as migrant laborers in Hereroland and southern Angola?

Taxation was one of the most effective and most used means of indirect forcible procurement of labor for the colonial government, enterprises and colonists. By demanding the payment of taxes in cash, colonial officials forced households into either working for Europeans, or starting to farm commercially.<sup>199</sup> The system of migrant labor in Ovamboland was not, however, created through the force of taxation or other

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<sup>194</sup> Stals, 1969, pp. 323—324.

<sup>195</sup> Gordon, 1978, p. 263.

<sup>196</sup> Kouvalainen, 1980, pp. 79—100.

<sup>197</sup> Nitsche, 1913, p. 133; Stals, 1969, p. 333; Gordon, 1978, p. 261.

<sup>198</sup> Clarence-Smith, Moorsom, 1975, p. 377.

<sup>199</sup> E.g. Siiskonen, 1982, pp. 141—148.

means of governmental pressure before the great uprisings.<sup>200</sup>

For the kings the growing demand for labor in the European sector provided a partial solution to economic problems. The kings controlled migrant labor like they did the other activities of households, and profited from the gifts which returning laborers brought them.<sup>201</sup> In the long term, migrant labor was more worthwhile to the kings than the selling of their own people into slavery. In the 1890s King Negumbo of Uukwambi sent unmarried men to work as migrant laborers north of the Kunene. Upon return home the men were to give the king a cow.<sup>202</sup>

Alongside of the gifts they received from returning workers, the kings obtained valuable presents from labor recruiters. For example, in 1903 the recruiter from the Witwatersrand gold mine presented King Kambonde plenty of alcohol and two rifles, the import of which was forbidden by German South West African law.<sup>203</sup> In 1909 the Otavi Minen und Eisenbahn Gesellschaft company gave King Nande of Uukwanyama fifty marks for providing migrant labor for the Tsumeb mines.<sup>204</sup> With the decline of raiding, migrant labor provided the kings with a new source of income, allowing them to maintain the level of consumption which they had become accustomed to.

The allowance of migrant labor, especially in the service of the German colonial government, which was considered a threat to sovereignty, was proof of the kings' financial dilemma. The kings otherwise adopted a very negative attitude toward the northward expansion of German colonial power. Except in certain cases, the kings generally did not present any extreme opposition to migrant labor during the period under study, as clearly demonstrated by the fact that they allowed European recruiters to operate in their communities.<sup>205</sup> For example, the trader

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<sup>200</sup> Taxation had the added advantage of signifying the reality and permanence of the colonial power to the Africans. Hut tax was officially reintroduced in Angola in 1906, and in 1907 a cautious start was made in the south. In Mossamedes province the native African population was very small and mainly nomadic, so the hut tax brought in negligible amounts of money. In practice many African communities of the Mossamedes province, such as the Kwanyama, refused to pay hut tax, see Clarence-Smith, 1975, pp. 319–320.

<sup>201</sup> Rohrbach, 1907, p. 132–133; Clarence-Smith, Moorsom, 1977, p. 107.

<sup>202</sup> Möller, 1974, p. 117.

<sup>203</sup> Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 10 November 1903, Eac:26, FMSA.

<sup>204</sup> Wulfhorst to Warneck, Omupanda 1 April 1909, C/h:33, UEMA.

<sup>205</sup> E.g. Wulfhorst, Was können wir tun für die zum Hereroland ziehenden Ovambojünglinge u. Männer, insbesondere für unsere Gemeindeglieder? Namakunde

Hans Haag, who recruited labor for Damara- und Namaqua-Handelsgesellschaft, reported to the colonial authorities that he had made agreements with Ondonga's King Kambonde and Uukwanyama's King Nande, giving his company exclusive rights to recruit labor in their communities.<sup>206</sup>

It is of central importance to consider the interests of households in the examination of the development of migrant labor. The position of the individual household has been almost totally neglected in research concerning migrant labor. The dependence of long-distance trade on funding through raiding and seizures from the end of the 1880s on was a great economic burden for households. The situation culminated in the great rinderpest, which swiftly impoverished even the rich, as the missionary Martti Rautanen commented after the rinderpest.<sup>207</sup> The cattle population of Ovamboland did indeed revive faster than that of Hereroland, but it was still unable to increase to its pre-rinderpest level during the period under study.

The diminishment of cattle wealth and the increasing difficulty of raiding weakened the employment of young men; but it did not as such make migrant work necessary, since agriculture was the household's fundamental means of living. The diminishment of cattle wealth was primarily a matter of status; it affected young men most seriously, because they were dependent on the possession of cattle for becoming independent and establishing a family. According to Ovambo values, the number of wives and cattle a man had reflected his status in society.<sup>208</sup>

The man was often engaged to his future wife when she was still a child, and was married after the girl was initiated into adulthood through the Ohango ceremonies. Upon being married for the first time, the young man's wife usually still lived with her parents, but went to work in her husband's household. The young couple lived with their respective fam-

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2 October 1905, C/k:7, UEMA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 10 November 1903, Eac:26, FMSA; Tuominen to Mustakallio, Oniipa 12 November 1903, Eac:26, FMSA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 21 August 1904, Eac:28, FMSA; Savola to Mustakallio, Oniipa 26 August 1904, Eac:28, FMSA.

<sup>206</sup> Bericht Hans Haags über die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse im Ovamboland, Windhoek 17 December 1905, ZBU Nr. 2038, W.II.k.2.Bd.1., pp. 213—224, NAW.

<sup>207</sup> Rautanen to Mustakallio, Caledon 2 March 1898, Eac:24, FMSA.

<sup>208</sup> E.g. Tönjes, 1911, pp. 132—133; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; Mustakallio, 1904, pp. 86—87; Savola, 1924, p. 73.

ilies until the man had collected a large enough herd of cattle to purchase his own plot and begin raising livestock.<sup>209</sup>

The decline of the profitability of raiding, the spread of seizures and the great rinderpest complicated the process of becoming independent for young men among the Ovambo. It was difficult, sometimes even impossible, for them to collect sufficient cattle to establish a family. This created pressure for them to seek independence through migrant labor. During the early stages of migrant labor it was typically young men without families who took up migrant work.<sup>210</sup>

For example, the aim of many of those who went to work in Angola was to procure a rifle. Young men thought that the possession of firearms improved their positions in royally organized raiding, thus improving their possibilities for accumulating wealth in cattle and founding families. After working for a half year to a year on an Angolan plantation, migrant workers received a technically outdated rifle in payment.<sup>211</sup> The majority of those who departed with great expectations of enrichment ended in frustration. Workers usually spent their meager earnings on spirits, clothes and various trinkets.<sup>212</sup>

In its early stages migrant labor was not involved with the basic ways of making a living. Migrant workers improved their communities' conditions in regard to necessities only in that they were not present to consume them during the period they were away. Nor did migrant labor provide a new source of foodstuffs or technology for the improvement of agriculture.

Furthermore, migrant labor did not solve the social problem of cattleless young men, but instead gave rise among them to pressure for the rejection of old values. A clear indication of this inner-community turmoil was the swift growth, for example in Ondonga, of the Christian

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<sup>209</sup> E.g. Schinz, 1891, pp. 311—312; Rautanen, 1903, pp. 329—330, 333; Pettinen, 1889—1895, 27 October 1890; Tönjes, 1911, pp. 132—144; Bruwer, 1961, pp. 120—124.

<sup>210</sup> Wulfhorst, Was können wir tun für die zum Hereroland ziehenden Ovambojünglinge u. Männer, insbesondere für unsere Gemeindeglieder? Namakunde 2 October 1905, C/k:7, UEMA; MRD 3 September 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA; MRD 14 July 1910, 602—91, NAF.

<sup>211</sup> AAKA to Leutwein, Berlin 29 May 1901, Bericht des Kaiserlichen Konsuls Dr. Gleim über den südlichen Theil von Angola, ZBU Nr. 1008, J.XIII.b.3.Bd.3., p. 123, NAW. See also Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 285.

<sup>212</sup> Tönjes, 1911, p. 88. For more on expectations of migrant workers, see MRD 3 September 1896, Hp XXVIII:3, FMSA.



congregation during the first decade of the present century.<sup>213</sup> Conversion to Christianity required the rejection of central elements of the traditional value system, such as polygamy. The member of the Christian congregation also had to use European style clothes, which in turn encouraged migrant labor. According to the missionary Rautanen, in the beginning of the 1910s the most important motive for the Christian to do migrant labor was to procure clothing.<sup>214</sup> Thus the Christian converts replaced the central elements of the Ovambo value system with Christian values. The number of Christians among the total population of Ovamboland stayed very small for the remainder of the period under study.

The socioeconomic and political situation within the Ovambo communities combined with external conditions proved favorable for the development of migrant labor, from the points of view of both kings and households after the turn of the twentieth century. For kings, migrant labor provided a means for financing trade with Europeans and for maintaining their level of consumption. For households, the motives for engaging in migrant labor were primarily social. For the increasing number of cattleless men migrant labor did not, however, provide a means for traditional status attainment, which put pressure on the existing system of values. On the other hand migrant labor provided a means for easing the open conflict within the communities between households and the elite, which had continually escalated with the spread of seizures.

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<sup>213</sup> Peltola, 1958, p. 163.

<sup>214</sup> MRD 18 January 1912, 602—91, NAF.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Great political, economic and social questions face the government of independent Namibia. White and foreign control of economic resources has led to distortions in the national economy, the unbalanced provision of services and the extremes of wealth and poverty. The aim of this study has been to help understand the economic and social problems which await solution in present day Namibia by examining their historical origins.

One of the most important catalysts of economic, political and social change, and causes of new kinds of problems in the territory now called Namibia was European-led long-distance trade, through which African communities were integrated into the world market during the nineteenth century. For the Ovambo this integration commenced in the mid-nineteenth century, when they first made contact with European explorers and traders.

In the mid-nineteenth century the Ovambo communities formed an ecologically, economically and politically unified society, which could be distinguished from neighboring societies. Their economy was based on farming and livestock raising, which were poorly coordinated with one another.

Alongside of these fundamental means of living, the Ovambo carried on the active production of handicrafts. Moreover, there was distinct specialization within the handicraft field. This was most visible in connection with products whose constituent raw materials — such as iron and copper ore, salt and clay — were not available everywhere or whose production required special technical skill. Specialization was closely interlinked with the production of goods for sale.

Communities and individual households did not even aim at complete self-sufficiency in the production of goods other than grain. Exchange

was therefore an organic part of the economic structure of Ovambo society. Within the economic unit of Ovamboland, active trade was carried on both within and between communities.

Households, which functioned as units of production, were responsible for trade. Trading, which was pure barter by nature, was not carried on at established market places. Trading occurred during the dry season, when handicraft production was at its height and movement was easy. The selection of products supplied in local and regional trade consisted primarily of necessities, and secondarily of status commodities such as jewelry.

The Ovambo had trade relations with their closest African neighbors, among whom they were known as traders of copper and iron products and salt. The primary aim of long-distance trade was to procure status commodities. In relation to the other peoples of South West Africa the position of the Ovambo was politically stable and economically strong in the mid-nineteenth century.

The dynamism and adaptability of Ovambo political and economic structures was, however, challenged in the mid-nineteenth century. The economic and political transformation which was initiated in South West Africa in the first part of the century did not affect the Ovambo until the end of the 1850s.

Central causes of the acceleration of political and economic transformation in South West Africa were the migration of the Oorlam from the Cape to the region north of the Orange River at the beginning of the 1800s, and the spread of European trading operations in the interior regions of southern Angola and South West Africa from the 1840s on.

The small bands of Oorlam which migrated from the Cape emerged as the leading political power in Namaland and Hereroland in the beginning of the early 1800s. In a short time they subjected the Nama and Herero communities to their control through a policy of force and alliance. The success of the Oorlam was based on their superiority in arms technology, which they had attained through trade with Europeans, and their organization into small commando groups.

In mid-century the Afrikaners, who were part of the Oorlam, planned to bring the Ovambo under their hegemony. The two extensive Afrikaner cattle raids — which were also politically motivated — on Ovamboland at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s concretely demonstrated to the Ovambo kings how backward their arms technology was in relation to that of their closest neighbors.

Having experienced the lack of firearms as a threat to political auton-

omy, and knowing that their own level of technology was insufficient to produce them, the Ovambo sought to procure them through direct trading with Europeans from the beginning of 1860s on. The Ovambo's great need for firearms at that time is demonstrated by the fact that they began to sell their prisoners of war as slaves to Europeans, something which the kings still firmly refused to do at the end of the previous decade.

The interest of Europeans and the Ovambo in one another arose almost simultaneously. The decline of big game populations along the trade routes leading to the harbors of Walvis Bay and Mossamedes induced traders and hunters to travel to poorly accessible Ovamboland. Trade with Europeans and their middlemen became common in the 1860s, and reached its height in the latter half of the 1870s. Initially the main articles of trade were ivory, ostrich feathers and cattle, which were exchanged primarily for arms, ammunition, horses, ox-wagons, spirits, clothes and other consumer goods. In the beginning of the 1880s, with the decline of big game populations, cattle and slaves became the most important items of trade.

European-led long-distance trade was primarily channelled along the routes leading to the harbors of Mossamedes and Walvis Bay. Trade along the routes leading to Mossamedes was controlled by Portuguese traders and their middlemen. Their position on the Ovamboland market became stronger from the first half of the 1880s on, when the Nama-Herero War severed trade connections with Walvis Bay and big game populations declined in the Etosha Pan flood plain. The Walvis Bay trading community, which controlled the Ovamboland market in the 1870s, was composed of numerous different nationalities, with Englishmen, Swedes and Americans in the majority.

The route opened in 1884 by the trading company of the Swede Eriksson, leading from Ovamboland to the Transvaal and the Kimberley mines, was intended to circumvent Portuguese Angola's protectionist customs policies and prohibition of the import of modern firearms. Traffic along this route was terminated ten years later by the prohibition of the arms trade in the Transvaal.

Although it was defined in 1886, the border between Angola and German South West Africa did not arouse the interest of German and Portuguese colonial administrators until the 1890s. During the period under study only the Portuguese undertook concrete measures to subject the Ovambo living in the border region. Already from the first half of the 1890s on, however, an effort was made to control trading by Europeans among the Ovambo. The Germans restricted the sale of arms and am-

munition to Africans from 1890 on, but the system for controlling the arms trade with the Ovambo became more effective only on the eve of the great rinderpest epidemic. Portuguese measures for the restriction of the arms trade were ineffective.

Up until the great rinderpest of 1897 European trade among the Ovambo was governed primarily by traders' own interests and the political conditions along the trade routes leading to Ovamboland. Colonial policy became a major determinant of trade with the Ovambo only in the beginning of the 1900s. The most notable measure on the part of colonial administrators for the control of trade was the establishment of the Ovamboland Reservation by the German colonial government in 1906. The Ovamboland Act forbid Europeans from visiting the Ovambo communities without permission from colonial administrators. In practice this severed trade between Ovamboland and the south. Because Ovambo kings had become dependent on goods supplied by Europeans, one of the main goals of the Ovamboland Act was, through the severance of trade, to improve conditions for recruiting migrant labor.

The strategy of the Ovambo kings in trading with Europeans was to work in cooperation with the traders without endangering the political autonomy of their communities. Firstly, this was facilitated by the fact that European commerce was conducted by small traders. The disperse community of small traders did not form a unified economic or political pressure group. Nor was it able to take a leading role in politics, as the community of traders and missionaries of Hereroland and Namaland did in the 1860s.

Secondly, the preservation of political decision making power in the hands of the kings supported the centralized system of government, of which the strong system for the control of trade was an organic part. The activities of European traders were strictly controlled and had to adhere to the kings' guidelines. The kings were, however, ever ready to cooperate with traders, who focused on business matters, but they systematically opposed the representatives of colonial power, whom they experienced as a threat to autonomy.

Thirdly, Ovamboland's dearth of minerals, its lack of other resources of interest to Europeans and its unhealthy climate did not attract mining, or other, companies. The fourth factor contributing to the preservation of the Ovambo communities' political autonomy was their remote location in relation to the coastal harbors. This isolation from the coastal harbors and from Europeans was experienced as a drawback in the mid-1800s, but in the beginning of the 1900s the kings came to value it.

A comparison of the external political position of the Ovambo communities with that of, for example, the Herero, Nkhumbi and Nyaneke communities at the end of the period under study shows that the Ovambo communities survived the economic and political transformation of the latter part of the nineteenth century remarkably better than their nearby neighbors.

The military superiority of the Ovambo in relation to their neighbors was indisputable at the beginning of the 1900s. Ovambo military strength was well demonstrated by the bitter defeat met by the Portuguese in their attempt to conquer Ombandja in 1904. It was the heaviest defeat for the Portuguese in decades.

Political autonomy did not, however, guarantee economic autonomy for the Ovambo: dependence on European traders and the goods they supplied continually increased. The greatest dependency was on arms and ammunition, and spirits and horses. The kings' dependency on goods of European manufacture, combined with the meager supply of such goods, provided European traders a means by which to direct trade according to their own will. Consequently, to cite extreme examples, the sale of prisoners of war, beginning in the 1860s, and of fellow community members, beginning at the end of the 1880s, as slaves became common.

An examination of the effect of the expansion of trade on Ovambo society shows that integration into European-led long-distance trade did not directly put significant pressure for change on the household system of production and exchange. This was because the kings' virtually monopolized trade with Europeans. Household trade with Europeans was restricted to the exchange of foodstuffs for tobacco, glass beads, iron wire, cloth and other such goods.

Europeans' interest in trading with households was minimal, because, with the exception of missionaries, they wanted goods, such as ivory, which were royal property. As with the Ovambo communities, European trading with African communities throughout South West Africa and southern Angola was carried on primarily above the household level. Consequently, during the early stages of integration into the world market, the household system of production and exchange met with only minimal pressure for change.

Thus, two separate markets could be distinguished from one another in the Ovambo communities in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Trade with Europeans, which was firmly controlled by the kings, consisted primarily of goods, such as ivory, ostrich feathers and war captives, which had no market value among the Ovambo before the coming



of Europeans. The other sphere of exchange consisted of trade between African households, which was based primarily on goods produced by Africans themselves.

Although the direct effect of trade with Europeans on economic structures was minimal, the growth of trade created indirect pressure for economic, political and social change within the communities. There existed a distinct correlation between the increase of pressure for socio-economic and political change and the decrease of resources of interest to Europeans in Ovamboland.

In its initial stage the expansion of trade relations led to the commercialization of the hunting of big game, which was a royal monopoly. This increased the time households had to spend yearly in hunting, but it had no notable effect on their way of living.

The devastation of big game populations spurred the commercialization of the traditional institution of the raid in the beginning of the 1880s. Stolen cattle and slaves became the primary means of financing long-distance trade from the first half of the 1880s on. It was households, forced as they were to participate in royally organized raids, which felt the repercussions of the commercialization of raiding most tangibly. Moreover, households were continually the target of raids carried out by neighboring communities.

The spread of firearms and horses, along with the decline of cattle wealth, hindered raiding and diminished its profitability. As raiding increased in violence with the spread of firearms, the militarily strongest communities — Ondonga, Uukwambi, and Uukwanyama — began to avoid confrontation with one another. In the face of weakening capacity to finance trade, the kings increased the internal seizure of cattle and the sale of their own communities' members into slavery.

The spread of property and person seizure indicated that the king's problems in financing long-distance trade had reached the crisis point. Seizures spawned insecurity among households, and caused mass flight. There was a clear correlation between the weakening capacity to finance long-distance trade and the increase of seizures.

Household insecurity was further increased by the power struggle which took place between the kings and the community elites. The growth of trade with Europeans made it increasingly difficult for kings to control the activities of their officials. Officials planned and carried out raids and inner-community seizures without informing the king, which increased insecurity among households. The elite did not, however, permanently usurp the executive power of the king, because official posi-

tions did not become hereditary and the matrilineal order of inheritance effectively restricted the accumulation of wealth.

The scarcer the resources which interested Europeans became, the more tangibly and oppressively long-distance trade affected households. The decline of cattle wealth due to the great rinderpest and the increase of seizures created a class of young men without cattle and families of their own.

The lack of cattle prevented young men from establishing families, which in turn increased the pressure to engage in migrant labor at work sites established in the beginning of the 1900s in Hereroland, Namaland and southern Angola. The majority of those who left with great hopes for attaining wealth ended in disillusion. Engagement in migrant labor did not solve the identity crises of young men, but instead caused them to question their whole system of values, particularly the values associated with ownership, the family and work. The increase of refugees and the growth of migrant labor were conspicuous outward signs of the destructive influence which trade with Europeans had on the internal unity of the Ovambo communities. Indeed, the growth of disunity among the Ovambo appears to have been most extreme in those communities which most actively engaged in trade with Europeans.

The unequal distribution of trade with Europeans also influenced the relation of Ovambo communities with one another. Ondonga, Uukwambi and Uukwanyama, the Europeans' most active trading partners, emerged as the region's economic and military powers. Ongandjera, which was a leading center of power in the mid-1800s, declined in economic and political authority. The kings of Uukwambi intentionally sought to isolate Ongandjera from European influences by restricting European trading trips thereto. This policy of isolation led to the dependence of Ongandjera on Uukwambi in regard to the administration of external affairs. European-led long-distance trade thus further bolstered the positions of the strongest centers of power.

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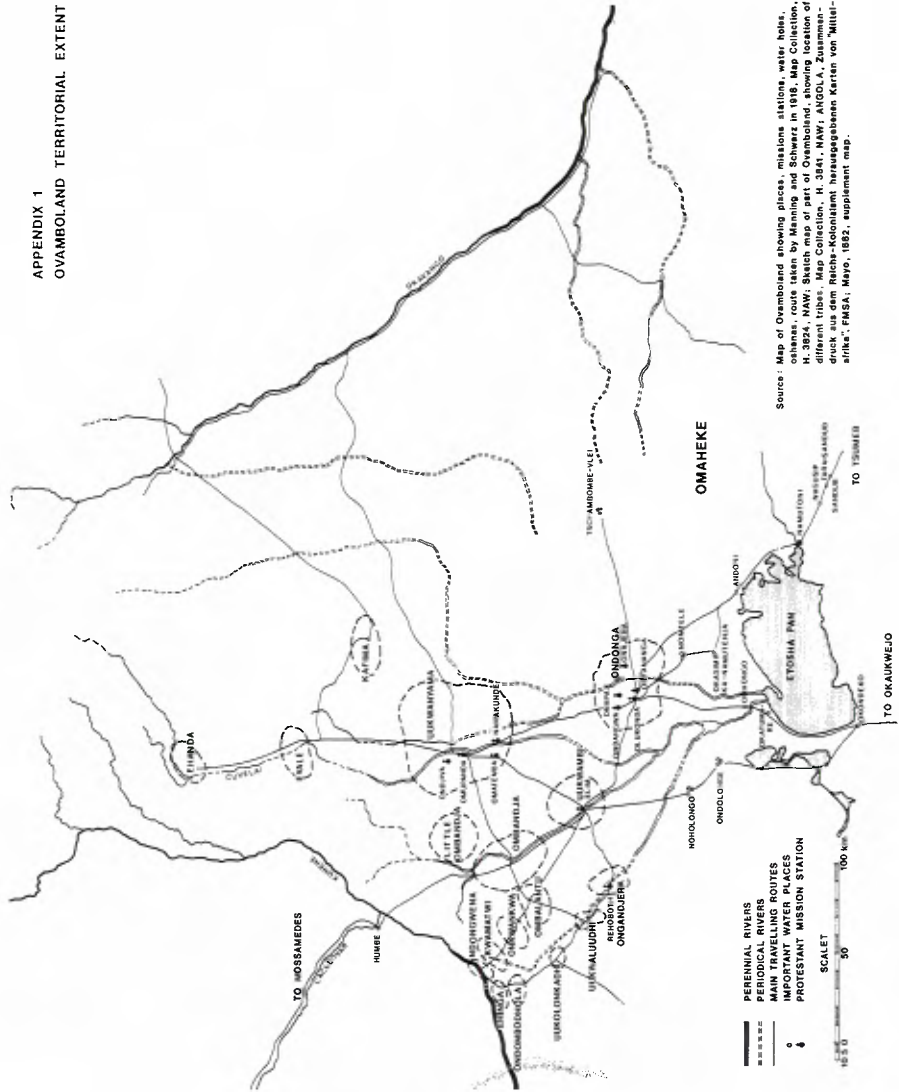
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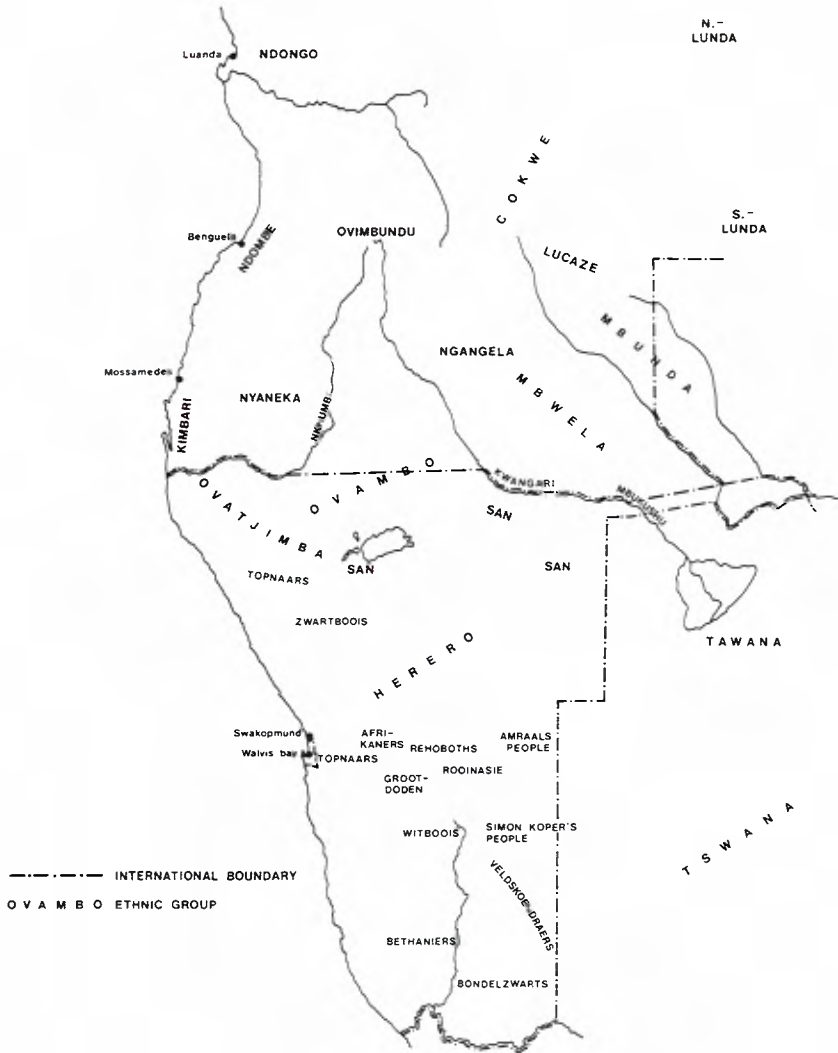
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APPENDIX 1  
OVAMBOLAND TERRITORIAL EXTENT



Source: Map of Ovamboland showing places, missions stations, water holes, oshanas, route taken by Manning and Schwarz in 1895. Map Collection, H. 3824, NAM; Sketch map of part of Ovamboland, showing location of Etosha Pan, 1895. Map Collection, H. 3824, NAM; "Die Ovambos in der Gegend von Etosha", in: "Mittheilungen der FMSA, Mayo, 1892, supplement map.

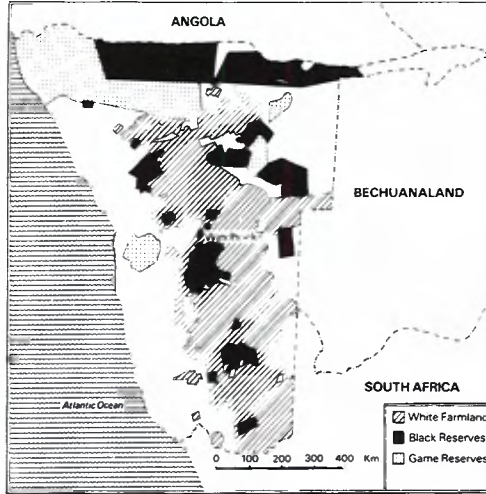
**APPENDIX 2**  
**SOUTHWESTERN AFRICA – ETHNIC GROUPS**



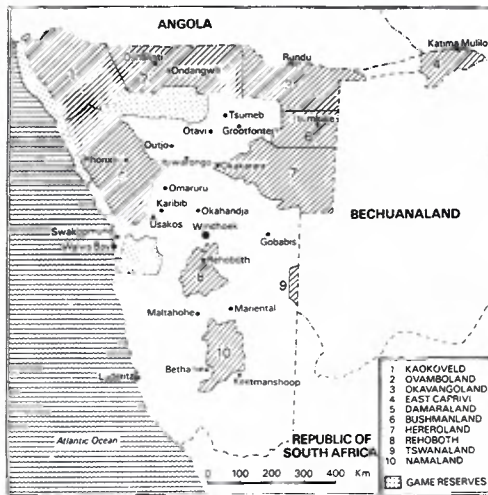
Source : van der Merwe, 1983, map 30; Baumann, 1975, p. 474; Hirschberg, 1975, p. 387; Birmingham, 1966, p. XVIII.

APPENDIX 3

SETTLEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION



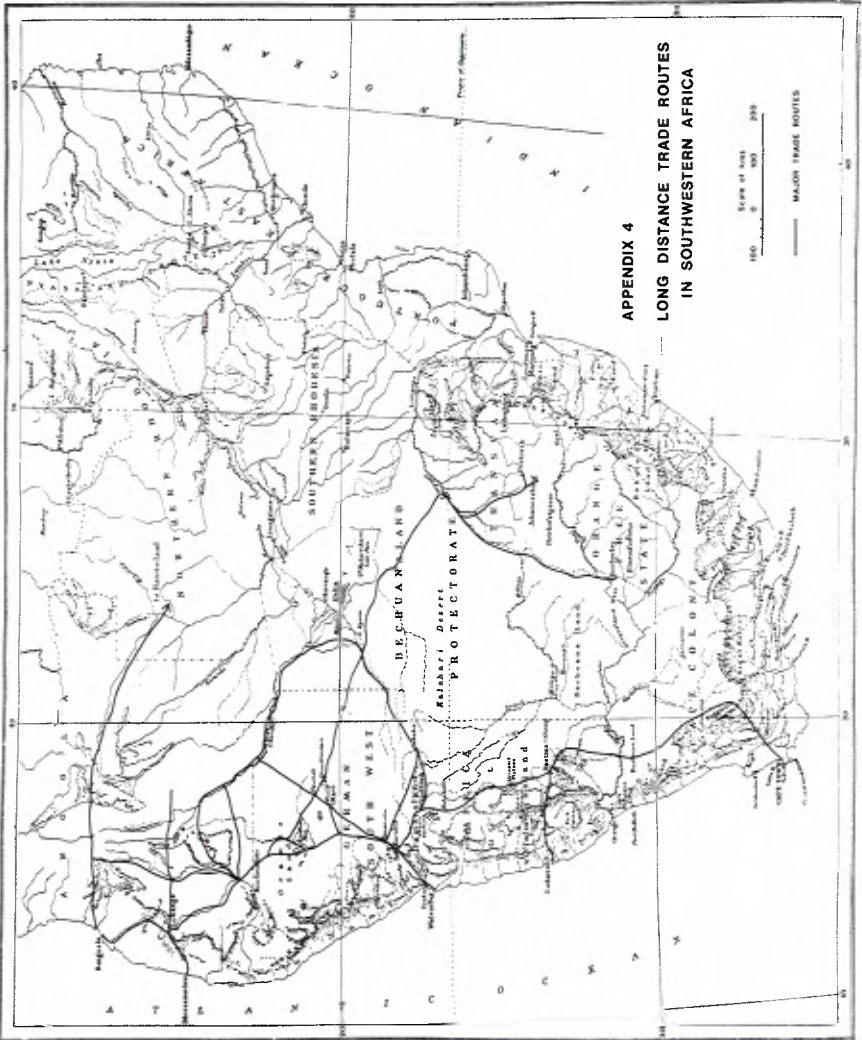
Settlement, 1937



Settlement proposed under the Odendaal Plan

Source: Katjavivi, 1988, pp. XXI, XXIII





Source: Wearnean, 1955, p. 8; Schinz, 1891, supplement map; Mayo, 1892, supplement map; Schutz & Hammer, 1897, supplement map; Clarence-Smith, 1975, p. 35; Schapera, 1965, supplement map.

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