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**Transculturation:
Mission and Modernity
in Africa**

Edited by Adam Jones

TRANSCULTURATION: MISSION AND MODERNITY IN AFRICA

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Most of the volumes in this series are guides to the material on Africa in selected German mission archives. They aim to make it easier for anthropologists, historians, linguists and others interested in Africa to find written or photographic material in a particular archive.

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THIS VOLUME

is a collection of papers dealing with cultural interaction between Europe and Africa resulting from missionary activity in Africa. The main focus is on the premises and impact of Protestant missionary work, both in Africa and in Europe, but one paper deals with similar processes in Islam.

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Photograph: "Umtata Station. A kind of divination vending machine (despite the inscription), imported from heathen Europe into heathen Tembuland".
Unitätsarchiv Herrnhut, (M) 9599, photographed by P. Theile, 11 Dec. 1933.
The inscription reads: "To tell you your fortune I do not pretend,
But I'll give you some fun if a penny you'll spend."

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CONTENTS

PART 1: RELIGION AND MODERNITY

ALBERT WIRZ ET AL. Transculturation - Mission and Modernity. A Manifesto	3
KLAUS HOCK Transculturation - Some Exploratory Remarks.....	25
ROMAN LOIMEIER 'Where Was This Worship of Coughing Invented?' Processes of Transculturation from an Islamic Perspective.....	33

PART 2: BIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDIES

SONIA ABUN-NASR An African Missionary: The Ambition of David Asante.....	41
RAINER ALSHEIMER Of Leopards in Caves, European Axes and Owls in Alcohol: The Imagination of a Hybrid World View by an African Missionary Assis- tant.....	53
HENRY C. JATTI BREDEKAMP Biographical Representations of Vehettge Tikkuie and Rosetta Klappmuts: Moravian Icons of Conversion in South Africa.....	59
ANDREA SCHULTZE Trail Blazers of Transculturation: Johannes Winter and his Family in South Africa (1873-1890).....	75
Abstracts	81
Authors' Addresses	84

PREFACE

Adam Jones

This volume constitutes one product of a dialogue on mission and modernity in Africa that has been conducted in Germany since 1999, hitherto focused mainly upon three universities – Leipzig, Rostock and the Humboldt University in Berlin – and three disciplines – religious studies, missiology /ecumenical studies and African history.

The initial impetus was provided by a paper written and circulated by Albert Wirz in 1999 and subsequently modified as a result of suggestions from others interested in the project. (An English summary was circulated in South Africa.) The revised German version was discussed at a symposium held at the University of Leipzig in 2001. It is published here for the first time. Among other things, it draws attention to the wealth of information on interactions between Africans and Europeans to be found in German mission archives and to its relevance for current debates, not least in cultural studies.

All the other papers in this volume were presented at the conference of the German Association of Africanists (*Vereinigung von Afrikanisten in Deutschland*) in Hamburg in 2002. In addition to Andrea Schultze and Klaus Hock, both of whom had participated in the working group from the outset, the authors include four 'newcomers': Rainer Alsheimer, a cultural anthropologist who, together with his students, has revealed the enormous potential of the archive of the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft, Sonia Abun-Nasr, whose dissertation on the nineteenth-century African missionary David Asante is due to appear shortly as a monograph, Henry (Jatti) Bredekamp, a South African historian who has published extensively on the early mission history of his country, and Roman Loimeier, an Islamicist with a historical interest in both West and East Africa. The papers by Alsheimer, Abun-Nasr and Wirz *et al.* were translated by me.

The framework has thus been extended to include a wide range of disciplines which normally have relatively little to say to one another. By publishing these papers we hope to challenge some of the assumptions that have divided us. By doing so in English we also aim to stimulate a discussion that reaches well beyond the German-speaking world and will in future include many African scholars.

Shortly before we were able to publish this volume, Albert Wirz died at the age of 59. We are grateful to him for helping us to look at mission, modernity and Africa in new ways.

Transculturation - Mission and Modernity in Africa. A Manifesto

*Albert Wirz et al.*¹

The project "Transculturation - Mission and Modernity in Africa"² aims to explore the cultural interactions between Europe and Africa that resulted from the activities of Protestant missionary societies in Africa. We are interested in the premises and impact of missionary activities not only within Africa but also at home; for at the centre stands the problem of transculturation. We use this term to describe the process of cultural translation that takes place in contact zones. This process is complex and multi-directional. It encompasses the translation, appropriation, remodelling and re-definition of cultural elements from the countries of origin of missionary activities by the population of the 'target areas', as well as the influence that this population had upon the bearers of the penetrating culture. The concept of transculturation poses questions concerning the meaning of contact experiences for the society, culture and history of the countries of origin. We take it for granted that culture is not something closed but is created and changed through discourse.

Our aim, therefore, is to reconstruct processes of **cultural transfer** between African and European societies and thereby to reveal the rudiments of a shared history. Thus our project belongs to the relatively new fields of transnational history and transfer history. It is interdisciplinary and depends upon the active collaboration of African researchers. We hope to stimulate discussion concerning one of the central challenges of our day - that of transcultural communication. With focus upon phenomena of current relevance our project reflects upon the interplay between understanding the Self and understanding the Other (cf. Krewer 1992). Transnational linkages continually produce new forms of construction, superimposition and the mixture of old and new.³

Mission is not a phenomenon limited to Christianity, nor did Christianity invent it. Its importance for the questions mentioned above has not received adequate attention. The spread of a religion through missionary activity is a complex process which involves the continuous creation of identities which cross existing boundaries and thereby make possible an exchange of cultural assets; yet at the same time these identities may serve to maintain or even create internal cultural divisions. As a factor within the context of transnational processes of creating identities, nowadays referred to as globalisation, mission is important, because it can look back upon more than 2,000 years of cultural boundary-crossing, in some cases of intercontinental dimensions and - for most of this period - polycentric. A history of the interaction of Buddhist, Judaic, Christian, Manichaean and Islamic mission (and, in more recent times, of other religions) remains largely unwritten (Feldtkeller 2000).

¹ This paper is based upon a draft originally written by Albert Wirz and circulated in 1999-2000. It was substantially revised to incorporate suggestions made by Jürgen Becher, Cilliers Breytenbach, Andreas Feldtkeller, Klaus Hock, Adam Jones, Annetjie Joubert, Peter Letsoaga, Kathrin Roller, Andrea Schultze and Ulrich van der Heyden. The version published here, which emerged after a symposium held in Leipzig in February 2001, has been translated by Adam Jones.

² The project, for which it is hoped to secure funding, involves cooperation between the Humboldt University (Berlin), the University of Leipzig and the University of Rostock.

³ For the importance of these questions in the context of globalisation and regionalisation see Lackner & Werner 1999.

Our project will focus upon a small segment of this topic, in order to demonstrate through one example how transculturation motivated by mission has contributed to the worldwide cultural linkages we know today. We will study the activities of Protestant missionary societies based in central and northern Germany.⁴ The main emphasis is upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although the Moravian Mission's work in South Africa dates back to 1737. The decision to concentrate upon these missionary societies and upon Africa south of the Sahara can be justified from several points of view:

(1) In the field of transculturation the history of European missionary societies in Africa offers remarkably rich material for investigation. The missionary project in Africa went far beyond the framework of religion and aimed at nothing less than a transformation of civilisation itself. Even if in many cases they recognised no difference between evangelisation, progress and Europeanisation, they remained dependent upon local assistance and thus became a part of Africa's history. At the same time they had a powerful impact upon the image of African culture that emerged in Europe. In short, they were cultural brokers *par excellence*.

(2) Relatively speaking, the history of German-speaking missions remains under-researched. This applies to their history both 'at home' and overseas, but above all to the question of transculturation. Hitherto research has dealt mainly with the relationship between mission and colonial expansion, the history of institutions and the problem of the export of European values, procedures and institutions or of the appropriation of these things by African societies. On the other hand, the question of the significance of the experience in Africa for people's actions and conception of themselves 'at home' has hardly been touched upon, although the debate on postcolonialism has drawn attention to the need to discuss this.

(3) Focussing upon central and northern Germany on the one hand and particular regions of Africa on the other facilitates a controlled comparison in which unity within diversity is maintained. We have deliberately chosen to concentrate upon Protestant missionary societies, because Catholic missionary orders were organised in a very different manner, every activity being in the last resort dependent upon the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, the supreme missionary authority in Rome. This circumstance is of importance not only for questions relating to the characteristics of 'German' missionary activity but also for the available source material: much of the archival material relating to Catholic missionary orders lies in France and Italy.

Of course it will be necessary in individual cases to draw comparisons that go beyond the field of study delimited here. For example, it seems likely that the experiences of the Moravian Mission in Central America and the Caribbean in the eighteenth century were crucial for the development of the missionaries' image of Africa. In other cases a comparison with missionary societies in other European countries will be desirable.

1. Questions and contemporary relevance of the topic

Our project is of relevance to four key debates in the cultural and social sciences:

⁴ In particular the Berlin Mission, Leipzig Mission, Moravian Mission (Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine), North German Mission, Hermannsburg Mission, Rhenish Mission and Bethel Mission, as well as their successor institutions.

1. transculturation and the production of difference in a culturally, socially and economically interdependent world
2. colonialism and modernity
3. the transnational history of transfer
4. the correlation of religion and culture.

1.1 The production of difference

Today the crossing of cultural frontiers is a normal part of everyday experience throughout the world. Increasingly, people who have been socialised in different cultures encounter one another and have at first only the values, norms and standards of their own culture by which to orient themselves. Such experiences pose increasing challenges to intercultural learning. The acquisition and cultivation of intercultural competence belong to the principal challenges that we must face in the context of globalisation (Thomas 1996). Nevertheless, in Germany and elsewhere such competence is acquired only with hesitation. The result is often an inability to deal with cultural difference, as manifested for example in overt or covert racism. Instead of an essentialist concept of cultures as firmly defined units we advocate a broader concept - oriented towards practice – which views culture as a social construct, the result of a complex exchange. Likewise cultural difference is not something given but something created through discourse, and consequently it has a history which can and must be studied – not least in order to understand present-day dynamics.⁵

The production of cultural difference is linked to processes of 'othering' within the framework of dialogical processes of exchange with numerous actors, some of whom can make themselves heard more easily than others, depending on place, time and status (Hall 1997). The result is always processes of learning for all involved, and this may equally mean consolidation of what has been handed down or opening, syncretism, creolisation and hybridisation.⁶ Such processes of interaction have also been discussed with reference to the encounter of different religions.⁷ But a transdisciplinary dialogue bringing together these debates with - for instance - those in cultural psychology - has yet to be achieved.⁸

It should be emphasised that we see this process of transculturation as essentially open, multi-directional and potentially positive, and that we hope to study not only interaction but also tendencies in the opposite direction. It is characteristic of historical processes that the consequences of people's actions are not always foreseeable and do not always match their intentions. Missionaries and the Africans who worked for them were by definition cultural frontier crossers. Their thoughts and deeds offer good insights into the conditions, problems and possibilities of transculturation.

We are not the first to talk of transculturation or to employ this term as a heuristic device. Nevertheless, it has the advantage of not yet being overwhelmed by theoretical debates. The term was coined in the 1940s by the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz, a pioneer of Afro-

⁵ Conrad and Kessel 1998, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Hardtwig and Wehler 1996, Haupt and Kocka 1996, Sundermeier 1991 and 1996, Wierlacher 1993, Wirz 1997.

⁶ Bhabha 1994, Gilroy 1995, Werbner and Modood 1997, Young 1995.

⁷ Sundermeier 1992, Feldtkeller 1992, Drehsen and Sparn 1996.

⁸ e.g. in the debate concerning 'cultural standards': cf. Thomas 1991, Eckensberger 1996.

Cuban studies, as an alternative to the 'acculturation' research of his day with its metropolitan bias. Subsequently the term found its way into the vocabulary of social anthropology, albeit in a highly unspecific form (Hirschberg 1999). Today it is employed mainly in psychology and educational science. Its roots, however, reach back to the Frederick Jackson Turner's nineteenth-century 'frontier' thesis. Turner (1893) argued that the 'American national character' had come into existence on the frontier, in the confrontation of the settlers with the Indians and the wilderness. The thesis was highly colonialist, but it drew attention away from the towns of the East Coast and towards the settler communities in the West of the continent, away from things that were static and established and towards that which was unpredictable and new. Postcolonial studies introduced the term to the cultural and social sciences: Mary Louise Pratt's book *Imperial Eyes* (1992) discussed transculturation in travel literature, showing that key values of western modernity originated in the 'contact zone' - an approach which has proved fruitful (cf. Cooper and Stoler 1997).

The particular qualities of the concept can best be shown by looking at how it differs from older approaches to phenomena of cultural exchange. The idea of transculturation stands in opposition to concepts which define culture as a clearly definable entity and place society and culture together, attributing to each society its own culture, inherent to itself. Such essentialist ideas are characteristic for many forms of nationalism and fundamentalism; but they may also be detected in terms such as 'clash of cultures', 'culture conflict' or 'culture contact', and even the term 'intercultural communication' is not free from this secondary meaning. All such terms tend to essentialise culture, turning it into a subject which stands outside time and space. By preferring the term transculturation we opt for an approach which puts the emphasis upon the actors and the context. Moreover, our focus is upon the problems of translation. Above all, the concept of transculturation leads us to examine the significance of local knowledge and the agency of local actors.

The question of power, of course, is always present; for the contact zone is not a space where power plays no role. In taking culture to be something constructed through discourse, we do not in any way wish to deny that under specific circumstances culture can become an autonomous political force.

1.2 Colonialism, mission and modernity

Christianity is a religion with a universal claim, from which European and North American missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries derived a strong impulse to cross cultural frontiers. At the same time, Christianity worldwide was being deeply influenced by European and North American history. An important consequence was the close link with colonialism and modernity - the twin project which has helped to shape modern history.

The missionary societies were also an answer to industrialisation and secularisation. Many missionaries were among the critics - or losers - of modernity.⁹ In particular they tended to be critical or overtly hostile with regard to modern industrial culture.

Overseas, however, they were modernisers, albeit with a tendency (typical for their age) to regard certain traditions as unchangeable. Most of them came to terms with the colonial system, but their impact was much wider: they founded churches, schools and hospitals, turned oral cultures into literate ones, opened new horizons of knowledge.

⁹ Jenkins 1980, Eiselen 1986.

There is much scope here for 'gendered history', since missionary service offered European women contradictory possibilities: conservation of the roles they had learnt in Europe or the chance of emancipation opened up by positions of responsibility which they could never have attained in Europe.¹⁰

A major reason for the historical importance of mission for colonialism and modernity is that missionaries were in much closer contact with the local population than were colonial officials. This was partly because their work took place far away from the centres of economic penetration, but mainly because it was designed to bring about a transformation of society and hence required intensive interaction in everyday life.¹¹ Missions influenced notions of space and time, changed the regime of the body, challenged existing sexual norms¹² and redefined the person as well as society; they helped to bring about a change in the gender roles they encountered in Africa; they drew new boundaries between the temporal-profane and the sacred. In short, they set in motion a wide-ranging process of change, in which indigenous Christian men and women, priests, evangelists, catechists and teachers played an active role.¹³

No matter how much they differed in detail, missionaries contributed (?) to a Europeanisation of the world and carried European beliefs, values and norms, modes of behaviour and forms of organisation to Africa. Yet despite their feeling of superiority and the dominant manner in which they sometimes behaved, they remained dependent on local help. They were never really autonomous in their actions: from the beginning they were entangled in complex local networks. On the one hand this made them into instruments of local politics; on the other into transmitters of local knowledge to the outside world. Missionaries and evangelists did not confine themselves to innovation and to destroying what was old: they also acted as spokesmen for local interests.

They also made a profound contribution to academic knowledge about African societies. For a long time this contribution was considered an embarrassment, as can be seen by the absence of missionary literature in the libraries of many ethnographic museums. Recently, however, anthropologists and historians have come to recognise just how significant this literature is.¹⁴

For their part, Africans were not merely influenced by missions: they also used them for their own purposes. It was not always the missionaries who acted as agents of change, nor were they always the first to proclaim the Gospel. On the contrary, in some cases Africans had begun to establish Christian communities before the arrival of a missionary and demanded change at a swifter pace than the missionaries themselves considered appropriate.

The complex interplay of opening, action and appropriation may be illustrated by one example: the reduction of local languages to writing, in which missions such as that of Berlin played a key role, was based upon the labour and knowledge of indigenous translators, preachers and teachers, but the linguistic criteria used to arrange the data were European.

¹⁰ See Bowie, Kirkwood & Ardener 1993, Lörcher 1996, David 1997.

¹¹ Jenkins 2002, Martin 2002.

¹² Alsheimer 2001; Erlank, Wells & Urban-Mead 2001.

¹³ Callaway 1987, Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, 1997, Cuthbertson 1998, Gaitskell 1988 and 1990, Tisane 1992, Walker 1990.

¹⁴ Hammond-Tooke 1997, Harries 1981, Peel 1995, 1996, 2001, van der Geest and Kirby 1992, van der Heyden 1991.

Subsequently the new written languages became a medium for artistic imagination, for sermons, school teaching and everyday communication. Moreover, they served as a means of mobilisation for the crystalization of ethnic identities which - especially in South Africa - were to gain paramount importance in politics (Harries 1981, 1988, 1989).

1.3 The history of transfer

Although colonial expansion did not lead to a Europeanisation of the world, it did have the effect that European and 'overseas' societies became tightly interlocked and have since shared a common history (Wolf 1982). This transnational aspect of our history, which will continue to gain importance in future, has hitherto received little attention, except in historical writing influenced by Marxism and by dependency theory.

This deficit is particularly apparent in German historiography, and it is our aim to correct this imbalance. True, Germany's colonies were not all that important and did not last for long.¹⁵ But this does not mean that colonialism was unimportant for German history. After all, to possess colonies and to practise colonialism are two different things. If, as recent research suggests, modernity is inconceivable without colonialism,¹⁶ it may be assumed that the latter was more important for Germany than has been generally assumed (Eckert and Wirz 2002).

Even more than in the case of the political history of colonialism the history of missionary activity shows that the multi-layered export of European civilisation to other continents was a transnational project from the very start. German missionary societies did not confine their activities to German colonies; and British, French and Swiss missionary societies recruited some of their personnel in Germany. These processes of interaction across the national borders and those of Europe itself deserve our attention. Moreover, we need to look at the meaning that colonial 'othering' had for constructions of identity at home - how it affected the way people saw themselves -, at the question of transfer between 'outer' and 'inner' mission (cf. Alsheimer 2000: 194) and at possible links between the colonisation of overseas societies and the imposition of discipline upon lower classes in the metropolis. After the First World War Germany itself became an important field of activity for returned missionaries, not least because from the point of view of the church the overthrow of the monarchy was linked to the danger of increasing secularism in state and society (Lehmann 2000).

In addition, the teachings of missionaries were appropriated by Africans and thus acquired a dynamic of their own, leading to new interpretations. The spread of a religion such as Christianity through mission involved on the one hand the emergence of a religious identity that transcended cultural and national frontiers, but on the other hand internal differentiation, marked by cultural factors and the interaction with other religions. In religious studies and theology these processes have been discussed under the heading "Globalisation versus Contextualisation".¹⁷

If today we can discern a tendency for Christianity in Europe - notably in northern and eastern Germany - to become a marginal factor, in the former mission fields it has become a

¹⁵ Gründer 1985, Wirz 1976.

¹⁶ Cooper and Stoler 1997, Ratansi 1994, Said 1978, 1994, Spivak 1985, 1992, Stoler 1995, Young 1990. Stuart Hall (1996) has called colonialism the "constitutive outside" of western capitalism.

¹⁷ Ahrens 1997, Beyer 1994.

vital force. The importance of Christianity can be seen in the rising numbers of adherents, in the wide variety of new churches that have recently been founded, in the influence of Christian organisations (trade unions, women's organisations, prayer unions etc.) upon African societies, in the intense theological debates that are conducted. Christianity has left its mark in artistic work, as well as in political thought and action.

All this inevitably affected the missionaries and the churches that sent them out. They were influenced by the ideas, norms and modes of behaviour of the people with whom they cooperated in Africa and elsewhere. We therefore need to study how much of this influence - in cultural and in theological terms - made its way back to Europe. In particular, we must look at links between mission work, the notion of solidarity and emancipation in the postcolonial period. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries editors in Europe have re-worked what missionaries had written in Africa, seeking to bridge the gulf between African reality as it was experienced and the imagination of the European readership.¹⁸ The same task confronts missionary societies today.

But it is not only the impact of missionary work upon the church and regional history of Germany that has been neglected. We also lack serious studies of the habitus and world view that missionaries derived from their upbringing and their training in missionary seminaries. This applies also to women who entered the service of a missionary society¹⁹ and to the role of missionary families. Research into these matters is necessary if we are to understand what happened in Africa; at the same time it can throw new light on church history, showing that missionaries experienced 'colonial' processes even before they went to Africa. Furthermore, while missionaries helped to shape Europe's image of Africa, they also - through their presence and actions - affected what Africans thought about Europe and European culture. Thus the process of 'othering' worked in more than one direction, and transfer history must take into account a variety of perspectives.

1.4. Religion and culture

Many scholars of religion treat it as an aspect of culture (Gladigow 1988). This European view does not do justice to the dynamics of missionary religions, which set transcultural processes in motion. We propose to view the relationship between religion and culture as a variable which takes different forms and must itself be the object of study. Like culture, religion cannot be described in essentialist terms.

One characteristic of the work of European missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the close link between Christian belief and European culture. The Christianity that was exported by missionaries to Africa was presented in a cultural form which at first was taken for granted. Religion and culture were so inextricably intertwined that for a long time Christianisation automatically meant Europeanisation. Moreover, the Christianity that came to Africa was the theological product of the revivalist movement. It is possible to see this Pietistic, anti-rationalist approach as an attempt to create in Africa the 'theocratic Paradise' that the missionaries could no longer find in the increasingly secularised world of European modernity.²⁰

¹⁸ Helly 1987, Jones 1991.

¹⁹ See, however, Kaufmann 1988 and Konrad 1997.

²⁰ Sundermeier 1991.

Yet it was precisely the uncritical export of Europe's own value system that brought about a deep crisis in western theology. This too was a form of transculturation. This transfer had two consequences. First, Christian witness was strengthened. The missionary societies had lost much of their persuasive power as a result of their competition with one another; a 'truth' which wore so many different garbs within a single geographical region weakened the credibility of mission. The churches responded by organising Conferences of World Mission, and from these the ecumenical movement emerged with the primal aim of strengthening unity within the faith and overcoming the theological issues of belief that separated the churches.

Secondly, the crisis encouraged people to look for African answers to the urgent problems of belief. In intensive processes of appropriation African theologians and charismatics developed their own, contextual theologies in reaction to the Christian (and Islamic) import of religion. Not only did this lead to the founding of African Indigenous Churches but also to a political theology which played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid and racism in southern Africa. Here we recognise a further aspect of transculturation: the colonisers tried to employ Christian doctrine to legitimise their own dominance, but the colonised (with the participation of a minority of missionaries) were able to use it for the struggle for liberty. In general mission left a profound mark on the thought and action of political elites in the former colonies.

This calling into question of established tenets had a major impact upon the former mission churches and, on a number of occasions in the course of the twentieth century, resulted in ecumenical discussions about the correlation of "Gospel and culture", most recently at the Conference of World Mission of the World Council of Churches in Salvador da Bahia.

2. The present state of research

In using missionary sources our project can build upon a long tradition of research devoted to mission history and mission studies. Much of this research, however, has been conducted in English-speaking countries on the basis of English-language sources. Research in German-language mission archives has on the whole lagged behind; indeed, we still await the publication of an overview of German mission history which satisfies the requirements of the cultural sciences.

As mentioned above, most research has concentrated upon asking what missions exported, without paying much attention to the complexities of cultural interaction. Moreover, most scholars have remained loyal to their own disciplinary discourses, although a few theologians have discovered that it is worthwhile to listen to what social anthropologists have to say.²¹ Gründer in 1982 noted the general lack of interest in mission among German historians, and two decades later the field still attracts far less interest than it does, for example, in Great Britain. This is despite the appearance of several case studies on the Hermannsburg, Rhenish and North German Missions²² and a great deal of research concerning the Basel Mission,

²¹ Balz 1984/1995, Luig 1997.

²² For the Hermannsburg Mission see Hasselhorn 1988, Mignon 1993 and Proske 1989; for the Rhenish Mission see Braun 1992, Dederling 1997 and 1998, Gewalt 2002 and Oermann 1999; for the North German Mission see Alsheimer 2000, Papst 1988, Schöck-Quinteros and Lenz 1986 and Ustorf 1986, 1986a, 1989. It should be remembered that Ustorf, who approaches the field from a theological perspective, teaches in Great Britain.

whose roots lie in Switzerland and in Southwest Germany.²³ The archival holdings of the Berlin Mission have been used in a number of studies, in some of which the work of the Mission was only one aspect among others.²⁴ Recent research indicates how fruitful detailed research on this Mission can be.²⁵ Yet as Ulrich van der Heyden has stated on numerous occasions, the rich holdings of the Berlin Mission still cry out for more research. On the work in Africa of the Leipzig Mission and Bethel Mission there have been few serious academic studies.²⁶

There are many reasons why the majority of recent historians have tended to neglect missionary sources written in German. For one thing, it was assumed for a long time that mission archives were places where only theologians conducted research, and the wealth of information they offered to other disciplines was overlooked. Secondly, foreign researchers have given priority to English-language sources, not least because of the difficulty of deciphering old German handwriting. A third factor in the case of the Berlin, Leipzig and Herrnhut mission archives was the situation in the German Democratic Republic, where research on missions was stigmatised and obstacles were placed in its path,²⁷ while scholars from West Germany or abroad had difficulty gaining permission to do such research, not to mention the prohibitive costs involved. Finally, German historians still tend to ignore mission history, largely because of their obsession with 'domestic' / 'internal' processes and questions.

Thus a wide, largely underused field is available for research. Just how fruitful this field can be is shown by Susan Zantop (1997) in her analysis of colonial fantasies in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German literature. Missions were important intermediaries between the church and the world or, one might equally say, between German society and the colonial tenets that laid the foundations for modern thought.

As far as academic theology is concerned, missionary studies and the writing of mission history has always been a peripheral discipline, although it dates back over a century to Gustav Warneck's appointment as professor in Halle in 1897. Yet today this discipline, usually taught in combination with religious studies and ecumenical science, represents more than does any other the key challenges faced by church and society. Missionary studies are a 'frontier science', conducting a dialogue between cultures, churches and religions – a dialogue in which intercultural hermeneutics play an ever-growing role. Academic theology is bound to gain new momentum from a more intensive exchange between systematic theology and those theological disciplines oriented towards relations with (?) the outside world. By writing

²³ Balz 1984/1995, Dah 1984, Fischer 1978 and 1991, Haas 1994, Haenger 1997, Halldén 1968, Hill 1963, Jenkins 1980, 1981, 1985, 1998, 2002, Jones 1991 and 1998, Miller 1994, Odamtten 1978, Osafo 1972, Prodoliet 1987, Rennstich 1985, Vogelsanger 1977, Wirz 1986 and 1994. It is worth mentioning here the pioneering work conducted by the Basel Mission in making its photographic archive accessible and useful to scholars: see Frey Näf 1990 and www.bmpix.org.

²⁴ Becher 1997, Delius 1984, Eggert 1970, Fiedler 1996, Gründer 1992, Höckner 1992, Niesel 1971, van der Heyden 1988, von Sicard 1970, Wright 1971.

²⁵ Becher 1998, Heese 1994, Kirkaldy 1998, Kirkaldy and Wirz 2000a, 2000b, Pakendorf 1994, Roller 2000, Schultze 1998, 1999, van der Heyden 1994, *idem* in print.

²⁶ For the Leipzig Mission see, however, Hasu 1999 and Lehmann 2003.

²⁷ Obst 1997. For examples of the kind of research that was encouraged see Loth 1963, 1985, 1987.

mission history in a manner which focuses upon processes of exchange, transfer and translation we can have an innovative impact upon other theological disciplines.²⁸

3. Aims and methods

This approach is intended to open new avenues within the study of both German history and African history (including church history). The rich holdings of German mission archives will make it possible to investigate the missionary societies from a wide range of perspectives, ranging from questions concerning the theological premises upon which mission rested to the concrete ways in which mission was practised locally. In contrast to most earlier approaches we propose to focus particularly upon social history and cultural (?) science, without neglecting the missionaries' origins and training or the way in which experiences 'in the field' had consequences for developments 'at home'. This is a field which leads to the centre of recent debates concerning the meaning, forms and outcome of colonialism.²⁹

Our aim is a transdisciplinary approach involving a conversation between various cultural (sub-)disciplines, including theology. It is important that all participants take an anthropologically broad understanding of culture as their starting-point and understand culture as something that is socially constructed, a process of exchange and appropriation, which can be analysed through interpretation. It is hoped to reconstruct cultural processes of transfer primarily through the systematic exploration and interpretation of hitherto largely neglected archival sources; but it will be essential to study additional local voices, using the methods of oral history.

Precisely because orality played such a dominant role in precolonial Africa, written sources are of particular importance for the study of the early colonial period. Missionaries were often the first men and women to leave behind written reports, and hence missionary sources are indispensable for any understanding of African history. Yet because German missionaries wrote in German, their records have remained virtually inaccessible to most African researchers. This explains why hardly any research has yet been done on those regions of South Africa where Berlin missionaries and their families were active, such as the Northern Province, in complete contrast to regions where British missionaries lived. This neglect of the German sources is all the more important when one considers the close links – in personal communication and in ideas – between German missions and the politics of apartheid.³⁰

One conclusion to be drawn is the need for critical scholarly editions of unpublished texts from the mission archives. Very few such editions exist.³¹ Merely to transcribe such handwritten texts – a task which, alas, lies beyond the ability of most final-year students – would make them available to a wider circle of potential users. It would be of considerable value to edit those texts that deal with the 'minor' aspects of everyday interaction between European and African societies that are so often overlooked in 'major' accounts of mission and colonial rule. The authors regarded themselves as intermediaries, and the tension between the different worlds they inhabited is articulated in their writings. We consider it vital to

²⁸ Becker 1997, Feldtkeller 1998.

²⁹ Cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 1991/1997 and Cooper & Stoler 1997.

³⁰ Dubow 1995, Gordon 1988, Hammond-Tooke 1997.

³¹ e.g. Träbing & Jensen 1989.

reproduce directly the 'voices' of such persons, not least with regard to the discourse they chose.

It is equally desirable that German missionary sources should not only be transcribed but also translated into English; for only then can they be taken into account by those without a command of German. Within Africa the need for such editions is widely recognised: in the case of many African peoples missionary writings are the only information that exists on the culture, way of life, language and history of their ancestors. If we take our responsibility in terms of a 'shared history' seriously, we have an obligation to give high priority to 'handing back' the knowledge contained in such texts.

3.1 The sources

The available sources consist both of published literature (missionary periodicals, monographs, articles) and of unpublished material (diaries, reports, correspondence etc.) to be found usually in the archive of the missionary society or – occasionally – in the national archives or the African state concerned. Hitherto most research has been based (with rare exceptions) upon published literature – and this applies also to secondary literature written by the missionaries themselves, for instance in 'official' histories published on the occasion of a jubilee. Our aim is to concentrate upon the unpublished material, which often offers an entirely different perspective. However, in many cases we do not yet know exactly what unpublished material there is. The situation with regard to reference guides has improved recently, but much remains to be done.³² This applies even more to the photographic material than it does to written records.

We may take the archive of the Berlin Mission as an example. It came into existence upon the basis of correspondence between Berlin and the mission fields over a period of 170 years. The result is more than 300 metres of handwritten correspondence and reports (records of mission stations, synods etc., administrative records kept at the headquarters in Berlin, minutes of committee meetings). These holdings are supplemented by a library with about 50,000 volumes and by the smaller collections of other missionary societies (e.g. the Lepsius Orient Mission). In addition there are several hundred printing blocks (?), over 3,000 photographs and a collection of maps. For research on regional church history and the social history of the Mission it is also possible to consult the records of the 'support societies' (Hilfsvereine) and the archives of individual parishes within what used to be the Church Province of Prussia.

In South Africa some material concerning the Berlin Mission, particularly the papers of individual missionaries, is to be found in state or university archives. Those in the state archives are voluminous but have never been systematically sorted. Other records lie in the archives of the Evangelical-Luthern Church of South Africa (ELCSA), which took over from the mission church. In Tanzania the Berlin Mission's activities are documented both in the National Archive of Tanzania and in the archive of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), both of them in Dar es Salaam.

What we have said here about the Berlin Mission is similar to the situation regarding other missionary societies. Particularly rich archival holdings are to be found in Herrnhut, since the Moravians were the very first missionary society to become active in South Africa. Material on the Rhenish Mission, which played a major role in what is now Namibia as well as in the

³² For a brief review of the situation four years ago see Jones & Mieke 1999: 2-4.

northwestern part of Cape Province, may be found not only in the mission archive in Wuppertal but also in Windhoek – both in the archive of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and in the National Archives, which possess a collection of photographs and the papers of several important missionaries.

3.2 Transdisciplinary dialogue and international cooperation

Although our starting-point is transdisciplinary, our goal is a transdisciplinary dialogue. Moreover, we envisage this dialogue (or 'polylogue') as involving cooperation between different universities and across national boundaries. In particular, we are interested in collaborating with colleagues in Africa, in order that the tradition of "researching on", with all the dangers of eurocentrism that it entails, may give way to "researching with", i.e. jointly searching for our shared history. This is all the more important because whilst globalisation means that the world is bound to grow closer and closer together, at the same time new gulfs that endanger dialogue are emerging. One reason for this is the economic crisis that African universities face; another is the increasingly divergent focus chosen in the South and the North, both with regard to teaching and to research. It is because African colleagues have so often approached us that we have felt encouraged to pursue this project. In the words of one South African colleague in response to our initiative, "it is imperative to further the discourse on intercultural communication at a time in history that is marked by inter-ethnic and/or inter-faith warfare; Or, as is the case in South Africa, a society that is trying to heal itself of the trauma of centuries of a racialised cultural domination on the one hand and marginalisation on the other hand."

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Transculturation - Some Exploratory Remarks

Klaus Hock

1. The Phenomenon of Transculturation: Processes of “Othering” in the Colonial Context

Transculturation is not a new phenomenon. It can be found throughout the history of mankind. Nevertheless, transcultural processes have become a salient feature in the colonial period. More so, transculturation was at the very heart of the encounter between Christianity and other cultures and religions. This can be traced back to very early stages of the colonial encounter between Europe and overseas cultures. For example, analyses of the cultural transformation in eastern Indonesia have shown how the once “alien” religion of the colonial intruders became an “Indonesian Traditional Religion”. In the 17th century the city of Larantuka/East Flores brought forth its “identity” in the interface of Asian (Florenese) and European (Portuguese) cultures by complex transculturation processes - an identity that to this day nurtures the *adat* (“tradition”, “custom”, “usage”, “traditional common law”) of its urban society. In the long run, Catholic Christianity in its Portuguese form became a “religion of the ancestors” which today has come under criticism from “modern” Christianity for being “syncretistic” or “superstitious”.³³ But transculturation had intensified during the “high tide” of the colonial endeavour, and the modern missionary movement was one of its major catalysts. Indeed: despite its universal claim, Christianity - being deeply marked by European and Northern American history - was part and parcel of the “twin project” of colonialism and modernisation. In this historical context, missionaries were important actors of transculturation: as critics or even losers of the modernization process at home, they were *suspicious* of modernization. But in the mission field in Africa and elsewhere they acted as *agents* of modernization.³⁴

The significance of mission as a crucial factor in the context of colonialism and modernization is evident in the missionaries’ close communication with the indigenous population, which made them the most important agents of “Western” modernity: On the one hand, missionaries remained faithful representatives of the European and Northern American worlds. On the other, they were dependent on “local” expertise and support, thereby being more and more tied into indigenous networks. Consequently, they became both agents of the European impact *and* agents of local interests, thereby imparting European knowledge to the indigenous population and communicating local knowledge to the outside world.

Conversely, the indigenous population made use of missionaries for its own purposes, and more often than not, indigenous people acted as agents of change: - three examples that come to mind are the missionary activities of indigenous evangelists, the utilisation of “Western” education by an indigenous population as a means of political mobilisation, or the congregations that were used as a means of enhancing new forms of solidarity.

³³Dietrich 1996; 1998.

³⁴For a case study see Jenkins 1980.

The last mentioned direction of transculturation processes is fairly well known. For example, the rôle of the intellectual elite which became the political avant-garde in national independence movements has been well documented and analysed. More often than not, the leaders of anti-colonial resistance had gone through mission schools, where they had been exposed to “Western” education, as has been shown by classical studies such as those of Ajayi and, Ayandele on Nigeria.³⁵ Transculturation processes the other way round, however, have attracted less attention. This may be partly due to the fact that there seemed to be something embarrassing about them - at least in the eyes of the Europeans who were involved in this complex interaction.

The well-known case of Andreas Riis may serve as an example: He was the first missionary to survive - out of nine pioneers sent by the Basel Mission between 1828 and 1840 to what today is Ghana, the “Gold Coast”. Riis himself came close to death, but thanks to treatment from an African doctor he survived.³⁶ Because he surrendered to the medical expertise of a specialist in “traditional” African healing, Andreas Riis was able to establish the Basel Mission’s work on the Gold Coast, with far-reaching consequences for the christianization of that area. We might go so far as to say that Riis survived by “converting” to an African religion: he had to abide by the techniques of healing practices that were deeply rooted in African “Traditional” Religion, and he had to leave “his” world of European Christianity for “the other”, African world. It is this world of herbs and demons, spirits and powers of healing that, ironically enough, layed the foundation for the expansion of Christianity in this area.

Still more striking is another example of a transculturation process - and even more embarrassing for the European agent involved: the nineteenth-century controversy between the Christian missionary Karl Gottlieb Pfander and the Muslim scholar al-Kairanawi on the truth of Holy Scriptures - the Bible and the Qur’an, respectively. While Pfander clung to a literalist view of the Bible, al-Kairanawi was very much aware of the debate on historical-critical exegesis in contemporary European theology. Consequently he could use the findings of modern historical research to back the traditional Muslim charge of *tahrîf* - that is, alteration or even falsification of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian tradition. For Pfander the controversy ended in disaster, but this was never mentioned in the reports he sent back to Europe. What is of significance here is that al-Kairanawi was able to attack Christianity “with the rival’s weapon”,³⁷ that is, with the insights of modern Christian theology. Ironically, this controversy was characterised by an encounter between al-Kairanawi’s “Christianized” criticism and Pfander’s literalist, almost “Islamized” understanding of Scripture. Important features of “the other’s” tradition were used for consolidating “one’s own” position. Against this background, it is evident that transculturation likewise may refer to and can include complex processes of radical differentiation.

Evidence of the importance of “non-Western” agents in processes of transculturation is provided by micro studies on biographies of (European) missionaries and - to a lesser degree - of (indigenous) evangelists. A striking example is the impact of Zara Schmelen on the formative period of Christianization in South West Africa:³⁸ Zara - a Nama born 1793 in the northwestern part of what is now South Africa - was baptized in 1814 by the German

³⁵Ajayi 1965; Ayandele 1961, 1965.

³⁶See Debrunner 1983.

³⁷This is the title of Schirmacher’s study on that controversy (1992).

³⁸See Trüper 2000, 2000a, 2000b.

missionary Johann Hinrich Schmelen, who married her some time later, and up to her death she served him as a faithful wife and as a mother to their children. Detailed analysis, however, reveals her eminent rôle as interpreter, evangelist and translator of the Gospels from Dutch into Khoikhoi. The specific significance of Zara Schmelen as a mediator between Europe and Africa has to be understood in the South West African historical context, in a period of rapid social change and cultural disintegration brought about by migration, by the untimely labours of state formation and nation-building, by the dynamics of reform movements, etc. In this situation, it was the Koikhoi who had taken the initiative: by inviting missionaries, they hoped to make use of them as mediators of European technology, international trade contacts, etc., i.e. as agents of modernity. On the other hand, the missionaries had their own agenda, hoping to control the course of events in accordance with their interests and expectations. For this end, again, they were dependent on indigenous agents whom they had to recruit as mediators of African expertise of various kinds. As evangelists, interpreters or teachers these African agents became actively involved in processes of Christianization, modernization, social, political and cultural change – in short, in what we refer to as transculturation. Consequently, these processes can no longer be conceived of as a unilateral transfer of religion and culture or as a one-sided relationship between culprits (missionaries) and victims (locals). Rather, we have to deal with multi-faceted processes of “translation” in which *all* were involved - (European) missionaries as well as (African) locals. However, we must take into account the fact that transculturation at that time was taking place in the context of a “colonial situation”.³⁹ Consequently, transcultural processes were far from being processes of communication between equals. Rather, they were discourses set into a framework of unequal power relations influencing, even determining the actual direction and tendencies of those discourses: in transculturation value judgements are unavoidable.

The transculturation paradigm has far-reaching consequences for the analysis of religious change and interreligious relations in the context of the modern missionary movement: Christian mission in the context of colonial history is a prominent example of multi-faceted processes perpetually transforming cultural and religious identities by destruction, change, and new formation. This transformation takes place in a situation where both missionaries and locals are crossing boundaries, thereby prompting dynamic exchange *and* differentiation. In the course of colonial and mission history the production of cultural/religious difference coupled with processes of “othering” has created discourses focussing on the radical otherness of non-Western cultures as opposed to Western modernity. Some of these discourses have been re-examined and dismantled by critical investigation - the “invention of tradition” is one case in point.⁴⁰ Others still need to be analysed - including those that talk about “Western modernity”, thereby denying the non-occidental world any share in the emergence of modernity.

The relevance of the “invention of tradition” for the study of discourses involved in processes of transculturation can be illustrated by looking at the transformation of gender concepts in the context of early South West African mission history: Sometimes it is argued that the equality of rights for men and women proclaimed in the Namibian constitution is at variance with age-old African traditions. In the light of closer scrutiny, however, this claim can be recognised as part of an essentialistic discourse on the rôle of women. In reality, this alleged “African tradition” was “invented” during the 19th century in the context of complex transculturation processes, and a key role was played by missionary discourses with their

³⁹Balandier 2001.

⁴⁰Hobsbawn/Ranger 1983.

propagation of a certain European concept of gender concept. The result was a growing marginalization of Namibian women; but here too, this must not be mistaken for something turning women into passive victims of missionary endeavours. Rather, it was just the general framework of mission activities that opened up new options for women in their efforts towards greater participation and appreciation in a situation of major social and cultural change.⁴¹

Discourses stressing the radical otherness of non-Western cultures as opposed to Western modernity are part of the complex that has been referred to as “orientalism” (Said 1978). These discourses too in a way represent something like an “invention of a tradition”, though mainly from an outsider’s perspective. The establishment of orientalist discourses is not at all restricted to “the Orient”. Rather, we can find similar complexes anywhere in the world where the context of the colonial impact has provided a conducive frame of reference for the rise of those discourses. It seems appropriate, therefore, not only to confine the term “orientalist” to discourses that deal with the contribution of “Western” Oriental studies or islamology⁴² but to extend it to those addressing Africa as a major subject.⁴³ Moreover, we cannot consider orientalist discourses just as an outsider’s product. Rather, we must deal with complex “inventions of tradition” where both outsiders and insiders - both in and beyond the colonial context - are involved in the “invention of tradition”.⁴⁴

The concept of transculturation, instead of dealing with categories of “otherness” or stressing the difference between Western modernity and non-western cultures, tries to re-discover the inter-relatedness of European and indigenous agencies and discourses, thereby highlighting the emergence not of “Western modernity” but of “entangled modernities”⁴⁵.

2. The *Concept* of Transculturation: Social Constructs and Open Processes

Needless to say, transculturation transcends concepts of cross-culturality and multi-culturality that cling to an understanding of cultures as homogeneous units. In a way, this is even the case with approaches dealing with inter-cultural processes: intercultural perspectives still take their point of departure from cultures as open and changing entities - but nevertheless: as entities. Furthermore, inter-cultural perspectives focus on processes “between” cultures, whereas transculturation deals with the dynamics between cultural processes, starting from

⁴¹Biographies like that of Zara Schmelen show that women could make use of the new options opened up by Christian (European) missions in the context of transculturation. See above, footnote 6.

⁴² According to Loimeier (forthcoming), apart from a short period between the late 19th and the early 20th centuries German speaking islamology showed little interest in African Islam until relatively recently.

⁴³This has been done expressly by Henk van Rinsum (forthcoming), who portrays the polemic of Okot p’Bitek (1931-1982) in his *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (1982) against Western (Christian) and African Christian scholars of African religions as an analysis of orientalist discourse in the manner of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* - long before this book was even thought of; cf. Rinsum 2001.

⁴⁴As an example, see Bergunder’s detailed analysis (2002) of the rise of orientalist discourse on the “Aryan immigration” into India. As he shows, both the “Aryan thesis” and its anti-thesis of a originally indigenous Indian culture bear the imprint of orientalism.

⁴⁵ I owe this term to Albert Wirz.

the observation that “culture” is a social construct created by the concurrence of multiple discourses.

So far, the concept of “transculturation” has not been strangled by theoretical debates. Its parameters and criteria still have to be worked out.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, we can distinguish various “threads” of discourse dealing with transculturation, which may occasionally interrelate. I will mention just a few.

1. There is transculturation as a generic term, as it is used, for instance, in mission discourse. An increasing number of mission projects and publications in one way or another deal with “transculturation”, which seems to have established itself as a keyword.⁴⁷ This is not surprising if we bear in mind that mission at its very heart has to do with communication and culture, with communication between and with cultures. From there it requires just a small step to adopt “transculturation” as a key category.⁴⁸ This is especially the case with evangelical missionary endeavours focussing on the “translation” of the Gospel - both in its literal and in its general meaning.⁴⁹ One may doubt, however, whether “transculturation” used in these contexts refers to “transculturation” in its academic usage as it has developed out of discourses associated with names like Ortiz, Pratt, and others. Rather, it seems that “transculturation” in the context of the evangelical missionary enterprise refers to an understanding of making the Gospel “fit” different cultures. Contrary to the understanding of transculturation as a concept basically critical of *any* essentialist categories, “transculturation” mainly seems to refer to the “adaptability” and “translatability” of the Gospel conceived in essentialist terms and its repercussion in a likewise essentialistically constituted “Christian faith”.

2. There is transculturation as a philosophical concept of culture, as it has been developed since the early nineties mainly by Wolfgang Welsch of the University of Jena.⁵⁰ His usage of “transculturation”/“transculturality” comes quite close to that of Ortiz and Pratt. The advantage of the concept as outlined by Welsch lies in its flexibility as against concepts like “globalization”, since it refers to both processes of amalgamation *and* processes of differentiation.⁵¹

3. There is transculturation as a synthetic-normative category taking effect in the framework of the globalization paradigm and serving as a means of integrating the ethical contributions of different cultural traditions into the design of global ethics, thereby providing orientation *beyond* cultural peculiarities. This seems to be one of the objectives of a newinterdisciplinary

⁴⁶This is true despite the fact that thousands of websites contain the keywords “transcultural”, “transculturation”, “transculturality”, etc. Over the last few years the number of such websites has increased significantly. So far, however, this has not resulted in a significant clarification of the concept of transculturation in academic discourse - a fact that may be seen as a disadvantage or as an advantage!

⁴⁷For instance, on the website of Fuller Theological Seminary “transculturation” is an important keyword alongside others, such as animism, anthropology, contextualization, baptism, blessing, gender, etc. (<http://www.fuller.edu/swm/abstracts/theomiss.html>).

⁴⁸To mention just one example, cf. Shaw 1988.

⁴⁹This is the case especially with institutions like the Summer Institute of Linguistics; as an example see Goerling 1996.

⁵⁰For example, see Welsch 1994/95; 1999.

⁵¹Welsch 1999: 143.

postgraduate college at the University of Tübingen on “Global Challenges - Transnational and Transcultural Approaches”.⁵²

4. Finally, there is transculturation as an analytical descriptive category referring to synthesizing or concurring as well as pluralizing or contradicting, even mutually neutralizing processes of translation, adaptation, re-definition, and appropriation engendered by the encounter between people coming from different cultural and religious backgrounds. The aim here is to dissect both heterogeneous and homogenizing transformations, likewise taking into account aspects of diversity and particularity through its focus upon the dialectics of 'globalization versus particularization' and focussing on divergences - and it is in this perspective that I would like to pursue further endeavours in the study of transculturation.⁵³

So far, transcultural approaches have primarily been put to test on the level of micro studies, focussing on individual biographies of missionaries and/or indigenous evangelists as *loci* where processes of cultural transformation can be traced.⁵⁴ But transculturation may likewise provide a paradigm relevant to the analysis of processes beyond biographical case studies, and phenomena of transculturation may also be observed in other religions. Though we should be cautious about transferring notions such as “mission” to non-Christian contexts, the phenomenon of missionary expansion is not restricted to the history of Christianity. Consequently, we may find traces of transculturation in processes of Islamisation or in the spread of other religions.⁵⁵

As mentioned above, the concept of transculturation transcends discourses dealing with cross-cultural, multi-cultural, or inter-cultural dimensions by understanding culture as a social construct and as a result of multiple exchanges. Consequently, transculturation as an open and multidirectional process addresses correspondences as well as divergences, synthesis as well as contrasts, hybridization as well as closure - including “the virtues of mutual misunderstandings”, as Albert Wirz once put it. And it is along such lines that we hope one day to explore the potential scope and validity of “transculturation” as a concept in research on cultural change in Africa and beyond.

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⁵²For brief information on this project see <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/qvr/04/04s05-17.html>.

⁵³For more details on the third and fourth variants cf. Hock, forthcoming.

⁵⁴As examples see Alsheimer (ed.) 2001 or Alsheimer/Rohdenburg (eds.) 2001. Cf. also Alsheimer's contribution to this volume.

⁵⁵For processes of transculturation in the history of religions in general see Feldtkeller 2001. For transculturation in Islamic contexts, see the contribution of Loimeier in this volume.

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'Where Was This Worship of Coughing Invented?' Processes of Transculturation from an Islamic Perspective

Roman Loimeier

Although popular literature as well as the media tend to see Islam as a religion characterized by constant and often violent expansion, we find that this concept is not quite true when we take a closer look. In particular, we find that Muslims often tried even to discourage conversion. This unwillingness to accept conversion to Islam was connected, as in the case of the Umayyad caliphate in the 8th century, with questions of exclusive access to power or allegations of racial, linguistic or cultural superiority that were legitimated in religious terms, something we might call the "Chosen People syndrome". Alas, we encounter this unwillingness to accept conversion to Islam not only in historical times but also in more recent processes of conversion, as, for instance, on the East African coast in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the 19th century, East African coastal societies, indeed, experienced thorough processes of transformation and, subsequently, conversion, that were, first of all, connected with the rise and fall of the Sultanate of Masqat-'Uman as the paramount political power on the East African coast, as well as, later-on, the beginnings of European colonial rule. These processes led to the gradual political marginalization of East Africa's coastal elites. In addition, the evolution of a plantation-type economy on the East African coast exerted considerable economic pressure on the established families, as they were mostly unable to take part in the economic boom connected with the new plantations and were, in addition, marginalized in their long-distance trade enterprises that were increasingly dominated by Arab and Indian entrepreneurs.

Processes of political as well as economic change affected, however, not only established families, but also the local poor: they profited only in a marginal way from economic change. The rapid growth in number and size of the clove- and sugar-cane-plantations on the Mriima coast as well as on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba led to a strong influx of migrants and slaves from the East African interior. On the coast, these migrant populations competed with the local populations for work, employment and income.

Threatened from more than one side, the established communities on the coast reacted by emphasizing their "unique" social position as "noble *shirazi*" and refused to accept the integration of virtually hundreds of thousands of non-Muslim migrants and slaves that were despised as *Washenzi*, barbarians. Curiously enough, refusal of conversion and exclusion of converts from existing social structures were, thus, again connected with claims to cultural superiority: while the coastal populations regarded themselves as the harbingers of civilization, as *WaUngwana*, they saw outsiders as barbarians. These *WaShenzi* were again perceived as a threat to the established social order, in particular when they tried to convert to Islam, which was regarded by the *WaUngwana* as a major feature of their own allegedly unique culture.

Still, non-Muslim, non-coastal Africans did, in fact, convert to Islam, as they saw in their conversion to Islam a way to climb on the social ladder, to achieve emancipation as slaves or to gain, as migrants, access to a world of wonders which they regarded in many ways as superior with respect to their own life in the "bush" (*nyika*). As the converts were, however, excluded from coastal society, they tended to develop their own forms of Islamic ritual. Thus,

converts not only adopted features of local, purportedly "authentic", Islam, but, in addition, continued to practise pre-Islamic rituals such as the *ngoma* dance (cf. Ranger 1975) and subsequently mixed these pre-Islamic rituals with local Islamic customs. The resulting syncretisms were perceived, however, by the converts as being part of their new "Islamic" identity, while the local elites and local scholars resented, of course, these processes of re-interpretation of established concepts of "Islamic" culture as well as their transformation into "convert" concepts of Islam. Consequently, they attacked the new customs as "unislamic" innovations, as *bida`*. When looking at their critique, we often get the impression that there was a kind of consensus of the noble citizens of Lamu and Mombasa, of Zanzibar and Malindi, with respect to the converts, which said: Yes, they may call themselves Muslim, but what kind of Islam is this?

Yet slaves, migrants and marginalized persons soon gained support in their aspirations to achieve integration into local society from non-local religious scholars who had started to arrive on the East African coast since the 1870s. These scholars from the Southern Arabian region of Hadramaut as well as the Banadir coast of present-day Somalia, tried to establish themselves on the East African coast and to earn their living as scholars, as Qur'anic school teachers or Imams. The coastal elites experienced, thus, increasing pressure in the sphere of religion as well, and subsequently perceived the immigrant Hadrami and Banadir scholars as an additional threat to their established positions. Thus, a coalition of the marginalized and the excluded formed, that promised slaves and migrants a way to achieve social emancipation through conversion, while it provided the new scholars with a social basis. The new scholars consequently encouraged the conversion of slaves, migrants and non-Muslims to Islam in order to strengthen their own local influence with respect to the existing establishment.

The new scholars, however, were not only outsiders as such but also affiliated to Sufi brotherhoods such as the Shâdhiliyya, the `Alawiyya and the Qâdiriyya, which had not existed before on the East African coast. In addition, they started to introduce a whole range of new practices connected with specific religious as well as ritual concepts of their respective sufi traditions. These new rituals were now eagerly accepted by the converts, who regarded them as important features of their new status as Muslims. The affiliation with the scholars from Hadramaut and the Benadir coast indeed provided the converts with an important argument in local disputes, as the converts had actually acquired, through their affiliation with the new scholars, a much more direct link to the sources of Islam on the Arabian peninsula than local traditions of teaching could ever claim. The converts could, thus, also maintain that their interpretation of Islam, though recent to the coast, was in reality much more "authentic" than the existing contextualizations of Islam.

For many marginal groups of the coastal areas, as well as the considerable migrant populations, affiliation with the new sufi groups and participation in their religious and social activities thus came to mean an important avenue of social ascent, or, as Jonathon Glassman was able to point out:

The Sufi orders were of enormous importance in bringing newcomers to Islam; their egalitarian flavour posed a great appeal to the recent migrants, upcountry converts, slaves and ex-slaves who had been routinely excluded from power in patrician religious institutions. (Glassman 1995: 138)

In this social and historical context, one Islamic tradition of learning, the Qâdiriyya-Sufi-brotherhood, promoted a specific Sufi-ritual, the *dhikr*-meditation, in a particular way, namely, by propagating the practice of the *bandiri-dhikr*, a "loud *dhikr*" supported with *bandiri*-tambourine-drums, which structured the different recitations and litanies of the *dhikr*. According to Glassman,

zikri seemed to offer [Muslims with little formal learning] an avenue to spiritual fulfillment that did not depend on the refinements of literary accomplishment. The core ritual of Sufi worship thus had

an inherently egalitarian appeal to people who were newcomers to Islam and to other townspeople who had been relegated to the margins of established religious institutions. By the mid-1880s the Qadiri version of *zikri* was a popular form of worship at Zanzibar and on the Mrima, especially among slaves. Other Sufi orders may have predated the arrival of the Hadrami, Comoro and Somali teachers, but their adherents quickly went over to the more dynamic Qadiriyya, which by 1883 was instrumental in gaining new converts for Islam on the Mrima. (Glassman 1995: 140)

Under the impression of an increasing number of people joining the circles of the new scholars, it is not surprising that their activities were seen with particularly critical eyes by the coastal elites. Yet the ecstatic character of the new rituals soon started to attract the attention of the scholars of the Qâdiriyya themselves, particularly when they realized that African converts did not practise the *dhikr* in their own, solemn way, but rather in a way that reminded them of pre-Islamic African customs, such as the *ngoma* dances referred to above. In short, they realized that the *dhikr* of the Qâdiriyya was performed, by an increasing number of converts, as a sort of Islamic *ngoma* with similar ecstatic features.

Thus, in 1890, Shaykh `Abd al-`Azîz b. `Abd al-Ghânî b. Tâhir b. Nûr al-Amawî (1838-1896) started to attack these specific contextualizations of the *dhikr*. Shaykh al-Amawî was born in Brawa, where his family had occupied the office of the *khatîb* and also performed other legal procedures, such as marriages. Even before he came to Zanzibar as a young man, Shaykh `Abd al-`Azîz b. `Abd al-Ghânî al-Amawî had undergone extensive studies with, amongst others, Shaykh Abubakar Mihdar, who had also been the teacher of another famous Qâdiri scholar in central Somalia, namely Shaykh `Abd ar-Rahmân b. Ahmad az-Zaylâ'î. In addition, he studied with Shaykh `Alî b. `Abd ar-Rahmân as well as Shaykh Ahmad al-Maghribi, who also introduced him to sufism (ALA III: 15). In Zanzibar, Shaykh `Abd al-`Azîz b. `Abd al-Ghânî al-Amawî studied with Muhyi ad-Dîn al-Qahtânî until 1854, when, at the age of sixteen, he was appointed *qâdî* of Kilwa by Sultan Sayyid Sa`îd of Zanzibar. Later on, he was recalled to Zanzibar, where he continued to act as *Qâdî* until his death. He was succeeded by his son Shaykh Burhan b. `Abd al-Ghânî al-Amawî, who continued to act as *Qâdî* in Zanzibar between 1890 and 1931/32 (see ALA III). Shaykh `Abd al-`Azîz b. `Abd al-Ghânî al-Amawî was also active as a writer and wrote, amongst other works, a history of Zanzibar, as well as a number of treatises on *hadîth*, *tawhîd*, *fiqh* and medicine, as well as *tasawwuf*. (For his writings see al-Farsy 1982: 44ff.) Together with Shaykh Muhyi ad-Dîn al-Qahtânî he published a treatise in defence of Sufism and, in particular, of the incorporation of musical instruments into sufi practices.⁵⁶

Now, although al-Amawî was prepared to defend the *dhikr* in general, particularly against `Alawi scholars, who rejected the Qâdiri *dhikr*, he did criticize other forms of the *dhikr* that were connected with other branches of the Qâdiriyya and were characterized, as we have seen, by markedly ecstatic forms of ritual. In particular, Al-Amawî attacked the rhythmic movement of bodies and the conspicuous techniques of breathing during these forms of the *dhikr*, which he polemically described as "coughing". I quote from one of his poems:

He who speaks the name of God does not leap and cough
 It is not the religion of the Prophet; perhaps it is an innovation
 This requires questioning; the views of the ulama should be sought
 Where was this worship of coughing invented?
 I ask you for proof, even if it angers you
 Usually it is God we beseech, and his praises are numbered
 but today you are clapping and swaying your necks

⁵⁶ *tawdîh al-mubhamât fî hukm âlat al-malahî wa jawabâtîha wa-fî l-tatimmât li-l-shaykhayn al-ajillayn al-qamarayn al-shâfi`ayn al-qâdirayn as-sumaliyyayn al-barawiyyayn ash-shaykh `Abd al-`Azîz al-Amawî wa-l-shaykh al-qâdî Muhyi ad-Dîn b. `Abdallâh al-Qahtânî* (see ALA III and al-Farsy 1982: 44).

Where was this worship of coughing invented?
 I often see women carrying banners
 They drag their rosaries and agitate their breasts
 this religion is harmful, for it harms the chest
 Where was this worship of coughing invented?
 some of you shaykhs, open and study the texts,
 your *dhikr* is dancing: why is it only dancing?
 it might be Lelemama or Kinamvia
 Where was this worship of coughing invented?
 First it came from Shaikh Hussayn when it was brought here
 in his hands it was true religion, not merely a play like this
 but in your hands it is competition, noise and derision
 Where was this worship of coughin invented?
 ...Every time after prayer you must mention God
 by reciting the ninety-nine names and by praising him
 but now you exorcise these spirits and offer them food
 Where was this worship of coughing invented?
 (al-Farsy 1982: 45-6).

Although most local scholars as well as some scholars of the Qâdiriyya criticized these practices, others continued to support the new form of the *dhikr*, despite the fact that the new *dhikr* practices had acquired an ecstatic character. This competing tradition of sufi thought and practice was connected with the school of Shaykh Uways al-Barawî (1847-1909). Shaykh Uways was a member of the sedentary black Somaal clan of the Tunni and grew up in Brawa. His father, al-Hâjj Muhammad b. Bashîr, was a religious scholar. After he had passed through the standard education of a religious scholar, having studied the Qur'ân and *Tafsîr*, he went, upon the advice of his teacher, Muhammad Tayînî as-Shashî, who had also acquainted him with some sufi teachings, to Baghdad, where he was properly initiated into the Qâdiriyya sufi brotherhood by his teacher Shaykh Mustafâ' ibn as-Sayyid Salman al-Jilânî. In 1873 he went on a pilgrimage and, after some more years of studies, returned, in 1880, via the Hijâz, Yemen and the coastal towns of the Benadir coast to Brawa, arriving in 1883. During his journey home he had also visited the tomb of a recently deceased Qâdiri scholar and saint, Shaykh `Abd ar-Rahmân az-Zaylâ'î in Qulunqul in the Ogaden area and had received, on account of this visit to the saint's tomb, a "symbolic" *ijâza* of this highly venerated sufi saint (Samatar 1992: 52).

On account of his great scholarship and his direct connections with the centre of the Qâdiriyya sufi brotherhood in Baghdad he claimed, after his return home, to be entitled to take on a leading role in the local scholarly establishment. His claim was, however, rejected.⁵⁷ Between 1883 and 1900 he undertook numerous journeys making Zanzibar, apart from Brawa, after 1884, a major center for his activities. With a number of Sultans of Zanzibar, in particular Bargash, Khalifa b. Sa`id and Hamid b. Thuwayni b. Sa`id, he managed to entertain excellent relations. He also became responsible for the establishment of the Qâdiriyya in Zanzibar and its subsequent spread among networks of scholars and traders and their clientele in the coastal areas (Le Guennec-Coppens 1991: 51). He is said to have appointed 520 of his disciples to become local representatives, *Khalifas*, in East Africa. In the early 1880s, he had, thus, started to teach his way (*tariqa*), and this was, as we have seen, connected with the practice of the *bandiri-dhikr*. Yet, by a curious coincidence, Shaykh Uways also seems to have been a personal enemy of Shaykh al-Amawî, and family feuds between the Uways

⁵⁷ See Martin 1976: 161-2 and Samatar 1992: 53.

branch as well as the Amawi branch of the Qâdiriyya seem to have strongly influenced the development of both schools of thought.⁵⁸

Whilst Shaykh Amawi attacked the *bandiri-dhikr* as an innovation, the *bandiri-dhikr* was, in fact, nothing new to Shaykh Uways, who had witnessed this form of the *dhikr* when he was studying in Baghdad, the centre of the Qâdiriyya, where the *bandiri-dhikr* was part of an old tradition of Sufi practices. The perception of the *bandiri-dhikr* as an "unislamic innovation" or its interpretation as an African "contextualisation" of the *dhikr* must, therefore, be interpreted as a perception that was connected with specific local dynamics. While the Amawi branch of the Qâdiriyya depicted the *bandiri-dhikr*, in the context of their competition with other scholars of the Qâdiriyya, as a "deformation" of the *dhikr* into an allegedly "African" form of ritual, the *bandiri-dhikr* was perceived by scholars of the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya as an absolutely normal form of practice that could be regarded as even more authentic "Qâdiri", since it was practised in Baghdad, the place where the brotherhood had originated in the twelfth century.

The growing religious and social influence of the scholars connected with the Qâdirîya and, in particular, the Uways branch, soon became apparent in the context of the so-called "Abushiri rising" in 1888/9, as well as the Maji-Maji-rebellion of 1905, when Qâdiri scholars played an important role as links between the different local rebel groups (Nimtz 1980: 13). Processes of conversion to Islam intensified after the defeat of these anti-colonial rebellions, and subsequent processes of conversion were again connected with the activities of religious scholars of the Qâdiriyya and rituals such as the *bandiri-dhikr*. In fact, areas most affected by the Maji-Maji rising also experienced the most significant increase in festivities and religious activities connected with the ecstatic *dhikr* of the Qâdirîya (see Iliffe 1979: 211ff). This movement of conversion resulted in a considerable growth in Tanganyika's Muslim population: Whereas only 3 per cent of the population of the territory was Muslim in 1914, the proportion of Muslims had risen to 25 per cent by 1924 (Nimtz 1980: 14).

As a consequence, the new forms of the *dhikr*, as defended and propagated by the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya, became a major feature of conversion to Islam as well as of Islam itself, on the coast as well as in the East African hinterland in the 20th century, as the majority of converts became affiliated with the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya. And as scholars of the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya continued to defend both their interpretation of the *dhikr* and the way in which the *dhikr* was performed, they were actually able to consolidate their social influence in postcolonial times as well.

Thus, strategies of exclusion may work, at least for some time, when there is a consensus of the local community to reject conversion, to exclude converts and to condemn their unsophisticated conceptions of "Islam", of "local civilization" or of "good Kiswahili". Alas, as we have seen, there were religious scholars on the East African coast who willingly accepted these converts and supported their integration into coastal society, even if their interpretation of Islamic practice may have contradicted local values or established conceptions of what is "authentic Islam".

It is interesting to note that the willingness of religious scholars of the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya to support seemingly unislamic forms of ritual was not connected with specific religious convictions, such as certain sufi interpretations of Islamic ritual that were subsequently legitimized with respective texts, although texts in defence of the *bandiri-dhikr* were, of course, written. The willingness of scholars of the Uways branch of the Qâdiriyya to adopt, support, defend and even appropriate these customs - and, by the way, other seemingly "un-islamic" practices, such as spiritual healing, *uganga*, was rather connected with the

⁵⁸ Valerie Hoffman, personal communication, 22 May 2002.

realization that these practices formed an essential aspect of Muslim communal life. By defending these practices as important features of communal life and by legitimizing them in Islamic terms, scholars of the Qâdiriyya were subsequently able to consolidate their position in society with respect to other, competing groups and thus to strengthen their role as political brokers with respect to competing scholars who continued to criticize these practices.

Indeed, the social influence of the Qâdiriyya grew in the colonial period to such an extent that Qâdiri scholars were able, in the the 1960s and 1970s, to dominate the sphere of "political Islam" in Tanzania, in particular with respect to the policy of Julius Nyerere's TANU party. In the end their connection with TANU and later with CCM policies became so strong that in the 1980s many Muslims started to attack the scholars of the Qâdiriyya as "stooges and lackeys of Nyerere's government of Christian mission boys". Still, the support of the Qâdiriyya for TANU and later for the CCM had become so important that the Tanzanian government in the 1990s officially recognized the Qâdiriyya (under the leadership of Shaykh Muhammad `Abd ar-Rahman Dedes) as an "official *tarîqa*". At the same time, the government tried to marginalize oppositional reformist and Islamist groups, refusing to grant them an official status and the corresponding privileges. In addition, the Qâdiriyya was recognized in Tanganyika as well as Zanzibar as a "*jumuiya*", i.e. an "association", with the status of an NGO, and thus became entitled to construct, with government support, mosques and schools (Grandin 1998: 337-8). We could, of course, interpret this further transformation of the Qâdiriyya into a "non-governmental organization" as another feature of transculturation, linked with the transfer and subsequent contextualization of specific structures of modern forms of organization into a Sufi-Muslim setting. But that is another story.

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An African Missionary: The Ambition of David Asante

Sonia Abun-Nasr

If by 'transculturation' we mean the "translation, appropriation, re-shaping, and redefinition" of cultural elements,⁵⁹ we implicitly make two assumptions: first, that the boundaries between cultures are fluid and surmountable, and second, that cultures constitute distinct and specific units.⁶⁰ Indeed, the need for cultural translation can only be explained in terms of an imagined or real separation between different cultures. In contrast to this view I propose to interpret transculturation not as a process which requires the crossing of frontiers, but as the option of discovering the structurally familiar in an alien cultural environment. In doing so I emphasise that every established social environment has elements which are 'comprehensible' to members of other cultures.

The man whose life history is described here was capable of appropriating 'alien' cultural elements with great ease and as a matter of course. His life and writings reveal the remarkable fact that this African missionary comprehended aspects of European culture, including European institutions and social structures, not in terms of the forms they had, nor of their origin, but in terms of their significance as determining elements in the life of a person or a social community. David Asante was born on the Gold Coast in West Africa in the 1830s, went to a school run by Basel missionaries, was trained in Switzerland and then worked as a missionary until his death in 1892.⁶¹ I propose to show that in the period of early European influence on the Gold Coast his position as the son of a chief made him appreciate the prospects of a career in the Basel Mission. I maintain that Asante was willing and able to conform to missionary standards of behaviour – keen to learn, obedient, yet at the same time ambitious and competitive – because his experiences in the African society enabled him to recognise the opportunities of social mobility the Mission offered. His capacity to act in a transcultural manner consisted of the ability to interpret elements of a foreign culture in terms of their social functions and to bring them into relation with elements of his own culture. In order to elaborate this point I describe the preconditions of Asante's career, namely the growth of European influence on the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century and certain aspects of the social structure of his native town and country; for both of these factors played a part in determining the radius in which it was possible for him to act. I then describe his training and employment in the Basel Mission, focusing upon the manner in which he performed and interpreted his role as a missionary. My interest does not lie in the spiritual content of his work but in his behaviour within an African context. In this way it will be possible to draw conclusions regarding Asante's ability to deal flexibly with elements of both African and European culture.

⁵⁹ This was part of the definition that served as a basis for the meeting in Hamburg in 2002.

⁶⁰ The pluralisation of the term 'culture' may be traced back to Herder and posits the existence of a "variety of specific forms of life" (Eagleton 2001: 21). Similarly, North American cultural anthropology and European historical anthropology use the term in the plural, because it is assumed that "every culture always has its own unique history and form of expression" (Dressel 1996: 173).

⁶¹ For all biographical data see my dissertation (University of Freiburg i.Br., 2000), which describes Asante's life history. It will be published by P. Schlettwein Publishing (Basel) under the title "Afrikaner und Missionar: Die Lebensgeschichte von David Asante".

I

David Asante was born in about 1834 in the forest zone of West Africa. He grew up in Akuapem, a community in southern Ghana, about 50 km north of Accra, which to this day constitutes the area of influence of a 'traditional ruler'.⁶² Asante belonged to the ethnically defined ruling caste of Akuapem, whose right it was to occupy the kingship.⁶³ His father Owusu Akyem was a respected chief, but not the ruler of the Akuapem state. In the 1840s Owusu Akyem supported the foundation of a mission station and a school by the Basel missionaries in Akuapem, apparently expecting certain political advantages in doing so.

Akuapem had been under European influence for a long time. Since the late eighteenth century the small polity had attracted the attention of Danish traders and colonial officials. Living in Fort Christiansborg near Accra, the Danes regarded Akuapem as part of their sphere of interest in the eastern Gold Coast. In the 1830s and 1840s they openly sought, through the presents and money they handed out, to influence the political life of Akuapem, and as a result destabilised it.⁶⁴ Meanwhile the British, who were likewise involved in commerce on the Gold Coast, alternated in their policy between weakness and resolution. They directed their military strength against the Asante empire, whose domination over the coastal region and Akuapem they were able to end in 1826. The competition between them and the Danes over Akuapem came to an end in 1850, when the latter withdrew from the Gold Coast. A quarter of a century later, in 1874, the British defeated the Asante empire, turned the coastal region into a crown colony, and proclaimed a protectorate over what had formerly been southern Asante territories. Finally, at the beginning of the twentieth century, these territories were incorporated in the Gold Coast Colony, which by this time extended far into the interior.

As early as the first half of the nineteenth century it had become clear to chiefs in Akuapem and its surroundings that the presence of European traders and governors on the Gold Coast was a political factor which affected their scope of action. David Asante was born before the establishment of colonial structures, and thus in a situation, in which the dealings of Africans and Europeans had not yet been defined by institutionalised political structures. The interests of the two sides were partly commercial as their trading activities in gold, slaves, weapons and palm oil show, but also, depending upon the time and region, determined by varying aspects of power politics. It would be wrong to speak in this context of 'culture contact'⁶⁵, for the Europeans in this time acted mainly as individuals, as traders, missionaries and political envoys, and thus as the bearers of seemingly isolated cultural elements having no recognisable links between them. Inevitably the Africans judged the role of Europeans in the early colonial context not by the goals they pursued, but by the significance their behaviour had in a given African context.

It is generally agreed that Africans equated the arrival of missionaries with the arrival of European soldiers and colonial officials, because they associated the presence of all three groups with the gradual extension of European power.⁶⁶ The perception of missionaries as representatives of European colonial interests is evident also from the records of the Basel Mission: for example, when David Asante and two German missionaries appeared in Kwawu in 1875, they were greeted by a local chief as "envoys of Queen Victoria".⁶⁷ In this case the

⁶² For Akuapem's political structure see Gilbert 1992 and Middleton 1979.

⁶³ Gilbert 1997: 501-07; Kwamena-Poh 1973: 45-59; Middleton 1983: 2.

⁶⁴ Kwamena-Poh 1973: 60-64, 96-110; Nørregård 1966: 174, 206-13.

⁶⁵ Cf. Bitterli 1991: 95.

⁶⁶ See, for instance, Welbourn 1971: 310f and Gründer 1992: 569f.

⁶⁷ Basel Mission Archive (hereafter 'BM'), D-1,27, Doc. 247: D. Asante, Kyebi, 29 April 1875, p. 7.

chief confused not only the duties of a missionary with those of a political envoy, but also did not take notice of the differences between European nations. Missionaries sent from Basel to the Gold Coast often came from rural areas of Württemberg (in Germany), and their superiors in Basel by no means shared British colonial interests, even if they collaborated with the British on the Gold Coast. The warm welcome given to the missionaries in Kwawu in 1875 resulted from the fact that the region had recently become independent of Asante rule and wished to declare its loyalty to Great Britain.⁶⁸ To the chief concerned, being included in the British sphere of influence was a means of achieving emancipation from Asante control, an aspect of power politics which determined his perception of all Europeans.

The 'African' perception of Europeans was also influenced by cultural factors. Europeans in general were regarded as the bearers of three 'achievements' – literacy, Christianity and maritime trade, which either reached Africa at the same time or were seen in the early colonial period as being closely linked. After all, the missionaries brought not only the Scripture but also the script. In missionary schools Africans learnt to read, write,⁶⁹ and also to speak English. In the ideal case they could read and understand the Bible. If they did not achieve this missionary aim, they at least acquired skills that enabled them to find employment in the European trading forts or to work as interpreter or intermediary for European merchants.⁷⁰ It is not surprising that one member of the Basel Mission's African staff in 1857 referred to Christianity as one of "the European innovations",⁷¹ thereby expressing the widely held view that the Christian faith was intertwined with literacy, trade, and in general with a way of life perceived as being European and modern.

It was in this context that David Asante's father Owusu Akyem attempted to make his voice heard in Akuapem politics in the 1840s. He sought to replace *Okuapemhene* Adum Tokori as ruler of Akuapem, through collaboration with Basel missionaries who started building a mission station near the capital, Akuropon, as from 1843. The missionaries often treated Owusu Akyem rather than the *Okuapemhene* as their political partner, through seeking his support for instance in the foundation of a school, while at the same time consciously weakening the position of Adum Tokori, whose political incapacity, real or supposed, they described again and again to the Danish Governor of Christiansborg.

Owusu Akyem's collaboration with the missionaries clearly had political aims, but he also showed an interest in European culture which reflected a vague notion of future conditions of life. In the context of the domestic and external situation in which Akuapem found itself in the 1840s, the decision to support the opening of a mission school constituted a clear political signal. It indicated the willingness of Owusu Akyem and his supporters to accept new cultural influences which, in view of their spatial proximity to Europeans living on the coast, they no doubt considered opportune. Indeed, when he grew up, David Asante claimed that it was his father who had persuaded the elders of Akuropon to promote the founding of the mission school, saying "in time the school will be of use".⁷² The council of elders for its part requested the missionaries to teach at the school in English and not in "the vernacular", i.e. Twi; for, as one missionary wrote, they were of the opinion that "if they learn the language of

⁶⁸ For the political situation of Kwawu in this period see Haenger 1989 (here: p. 42).

⁶⁹ Often in their own languages, which through the linguistic activity of missionaries acquired a written form. Cf. Wendt 1998.

⁷⁰ The reports of Basel missionaries mention many individuals who performed such a role and acted as cultural brokers.

⁷¹ BM, D-10.34,5, Christian Obobi, Odumase, 29 Dec. 1857, p. 5.

⁷² BM, B.V. 516, farewell speech of Missionary David Asante, p. 2.

the Whites, they will come closer to them or, as they put it, they are more likely to have something to eat".⁷³

Owusu Akyem failed in his attempt to become the ruler of Akuapem. In November 1844 the political confrontation with Adum Tokori escalated into a violent conflict, in which Owusu Akyem, the ambitious chief who had profited from the support of the missionaries, was killed.⁷⁴ But before this had happened Owusu Akyem had sent four of his sons, including Asante, to the new mission school. This step can be explained as a reaction on Owusu Akyem's part to the gradual spread of European influence on the Gold Coast as well as to the political conflicts within Akuapem. As an additional explanation one must add to these macro- and microhistorical factors a social constellation specific to the Akan. In the ethnically defined ruling group of Akuapem, consisting of matrilineally organised Akan, political rights were derived through one's mother.⁷⁵ Unlike his father, Asante had in his home town no chance to achieve a position that matched the elitist view he had of himself as a member of the ruling group; for he could not lay any claim based on inheritance to the office of a chief, let alone to that of the *Okuapemhene*. He shared this socially determined fate with all the so-called Akan 'princes', the chiefs' sons who themselves never attained high office or grandeur. It is widely accepted that many of these nineteenth-century 'princes' were among the first to show an interest in Christianity and European education,⁷⁶ thereby opening up new perspectives for themselves and at the same time acquiring the skills and knowledge which, as British colonial rule spread, could be of value to the societies in which they lived.

II

In accordance with his father's wishes, Asante joined the mission school in Akuropon in 1843. The education the missionaries offered aimed primarily at training the pupils as Christians, while giving them rudimentary skills in reading and writing. The headmaster of the boys' school, Johann Christian Dieterle, reported to Basel in 1847 that he was trying to give the children "a firm basis in God's Word and to prevent them from desiring baptism too early, before they have a solid foundation".⁷⁷ In practical terms this meant that he had the boys learn by heart 'Bible sayings', the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Creed, and the pupils in the senior classes also read the English Bible. Besides being provided with religious instruction the boys were taught English spelling and arithmetic, initially with the help of an interpreter.⁷⁸

Asante was baptised David at Christmas 1847, and in the following July he and four other youths joined the newly founded seminary, which was to train teachers and missionary assistants. From this time onwards the young men lived in the mission station in a house reserved for the students of the seminary, where they were constantly supervised by Dieterle.⁷⁹ However, teaching in the seminary did not go much beyond what was taught in the ordinary school: the curriculum consisted of 'reading the English Bible', 'translating from

⁷³ BM, D-1,2, J. G. Widmann, Akuropon, 6 Nov. 1843 (Doc. 11), p. 10.

⁷⁴ Kwamena-Poh 1973: 66f.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Fortes 1950: 264.

⁷⁶ Arnold 1996: 260; Middleton 1983: 4; Wilks 1975: 203-5.

⁷⁷ BM, D-1,2, J. Chr. Dieterle, Akuropon 2 Aug. 1847 (Doc. 12), p. 3.

⁷⁸ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter 4.1.

⁷⁹ op. cit.

English into Odji [Twi]', English grammar and spelling, as well as writing, arithmetic, geography and singing.⁸⁰

Through his early contact with the Mission Asante underwent a process of accommodation to the way of life of the Basel missionaries, and this process was of a kind that probably accorded with his father's notion of a European education. Not only did he learn to dress in a European manner and use European furniture, he also adopted the Mission's principles of time and orderliness, organising his life in the manner required by the daily and weekly routine of a growing Christian community with regular instruction, evening prayers, and Sunday services. In everything he did at school and later at the seminary he showed himself to be interested, gifted and, above all, ambitious and keen to excel. His teachers at the seminary praised him and used him as interpreter when they preached or visited the town of Akuropon, but they could not overlook the fact that in his home town Asante was not particularly popular. The records of the Basel Mission indicate that Asante gained a reputation among the missionaries for moral superiority: he made a show of his piety, chastity, seriousness and industriousness. At the same time he criticised his fellow pupils for disobeying the community regulations and even reported their misbehaviour to the teachers, thus causing, in the worst cases, the exclusion of a seminarist from the Christian community. Whereas the missionaries interpreted Asante's behaviour as evidence of his unspoilt faith, the inhabitants of Akuropon could see in it nothing but unfair competition in the struggle for access to European schooling.⁸¹ Asante's mother suffered as a result of the consequent stigmatisation of her son and herself. As Dieterle reported in 1852, "she says she is harassed by the people, because David is always the one who brings others away from the Mission."⁸²

Asante's actions clearly reflected his rivalry with the sons of other 'royal' families from Akuropon. In the 1840s and 1850s most of the seminarists came from the Akan dynastic lineages which in turn – and in constant competition with one another – provided Akwapem with its *Okuapemhene*.⁸³ These young men saw education at the seminary as a prestigious complement to their elevated social status and made no attempt to conceal their self-confidence. For instance, the missionary-linguist Johann Gottlieb Christaller noted in 1853 that as a "member of the royal family" a seminarist named William Hoffmann was not willing to "work, for example on his uncle's plantation ... no matter how strong and well-built his body is".⁸⁴ Four years earlier another missionary wrote of the first five seminarists that they considered it beneath their dignity to perform manual work.⁸⁵ Asante saw himself in the same light and was later to write in his autobiographical account: "During my stay in school I behaved very proudly, owing to my state as a son of a chief."⁸⁶

Asante's industriousness and ambition enabled him to reach the Basel Mission Seminary, to which he was sent in 1857 to continue his training. Once again he was integrated in a community shaped by social pressure, pedagogical control, and a marked sense of hierarchy. The Basel Mission House recruited the majority of its teachers and pupils from pietist circles in southern Germany that supported the Mission's work. In this environment the missionary society functioned as a vehicle of upward social mobility: for many of the students

⁸⁰ BM, D-1,2: J. G. Widmann, Akuropon, Jan. 1849 (Doc. 27), p. 3.

⁸¹ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter 4.1.

⁸² BM, D-1,4a: J. Chr. Dieterle, Akuropon, 30 Sept. 1852 (Doc. 69), p. 4.

⁸³ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter 4.1.

⁸⁴ BM, D-1,4a, J. G. Christaller, Akuropon, 25 May 1853 (Doc. 98), p. 3.

⁸⁵ BM, D-1,3: J. G. Widmann, Akuropon, 1849, posted from Kornthal in April 1850 (Doc. 7), p. 7.

⁸⁶ Original in English. BM, B.V. 516: farewell speech of Missionary David Asante, p. 3.

participation in the mission offered a unique opportunity to attain higher education and find an occupation other than in agriculture or the handicrafts.⁸⁷ The pietist milieu from which the majority of the missionaries originated had an influence upon the educational principles of the seminary, which aimed to instil in the students obedience, discipline, a withdrawn piety, and constant moral self-questioning.⁸⁸ But the social origins of the teachers and missionaries stood in contrast to the position of the 'Committee' at the head of the Mission, which was made up of city dignitaries, most of whom were either pastors or merchants.⁸⁹ In supporting the Mission these people were following in the tradition of the German Society for Christianity (*Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft*), which likewise had its headquarters in Basel and patronised mainly the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Great Britain by founding supporters' associations (*Hilfsvereine*) in Switzerland, Alsace and southwestern Germany. The Basel Missionary Society was founded in 1815 also in order to help the CMS; and it consisted initially solely of a school at which missionaries were trained for the CMS and other foreign organisations. From 1820, however, the Basel Mission itself began to send out missionaries – at first, without success, to the Caucasus and Liberia, and then – from 1828 onwards – to the Gold Coast and later also to southern India, China and Cameroun.⁹⁰

In the strict atmosphere that prevailed in the Mission House, Asante and his European fellow-students received instruction in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, Mathematics, in addition to Bible Knowledge, Biblical History, Catechising and Preaching. His teachers reported that Asante was loved and respected by his fellow-students,⁹¹ and it was also noted that he heeded the "discipline of the spirit"⁹² and led a life that was "beyond reproach".⁹³ Surprisingly, even in the European environment of the Mission House Asante's elitist origins were not ignored. His teachers accepted the pride and status consciousness of an African as something positive, remarking that in comparison with other pupils from the Gold Coast he was "a king's son with a more solid character and a more noble nature".⁹⁴ In a paradoxical form of racism, perceptible 'nobility' seemed to compensate for the inferiority of an African, whereas any other kind of pride based on social prestige was looked down upon in the Mission House. Although Asante's achievements in the seminary were not all that good, upon his return home in 1862 he possessed European education of a level that was highly unusual for an African of his day. He was the first African clergyman to work for the Basel Mission, and he remained the only one ever to be ordained in Basel and, as a member of the assembly of missionaries on the Gold Coast, to be at least formally placed on equal terms with his European colleagues.

After his return home Asante's duties were those of any missionary responsible for 'preaching to the heathen' and thus for proclaiming and spreading the Christian faith. However, Asante not only preached in the direct neighbourhood of already existing Christian communities but was also sent again and again by the Committee on expeditions into the hinterland of the Gold Coast in order to prepare the way for the founding of new mission

⁸⁷ Eiselen 1986; Miller 1990: 44-46 and 1994: 42-46.

⁸⁸ Eiselen 1986: 68-70.

⁸⁹ Jenkins 1989: 10; Miller 1990: 37-39.

⁹⁰ Schlatter 1916: 1-27; Jenkins 1989: 3-8.

⁹¹ BM, KP, Vol. 31: Report of Class 4, Dec. 1859, p. 43 and Vol. 32, Report of Class 3, Feb. 1861, p. 36.

⁹² BM, KP, Vol. 29, Report of the 'Voranstalt', Jan.-June 1858, p. 174.

⁹³ BM, KP, Vol. 31, Report of Class 4, Dec. 1859, p. 43 and Vol. 32, Report of Class 3, 1861, p. 36.

⁹⁴ BM, KP, Vol. 29, p. 8.

stations.⁹⁵ After the defeat of Kumase in 1874 the Mission adopted a more active policy of exploration with the aim of extending its influence to the territory hitherto occupied by the Asante and, if possible, of maintaining also a presence in Kumase itself.⁹⁶ It was in this period of optimism that David Asante and his two colleagues conducted the journey to Kwawu mentioned above. His intensive travelling in the 1870s and 1880s was an expression of the role entrusted to him by the Mission as an intercultural go-between. Presumably those in charge of formulating mission policy considered that no one was better suited than he to the task of negotiating with chiefs of different peoples and states and convincing them of the advantages of allowing the foundation of Basel Mission stations.

Besides his activities as a missionary, Asante took up the perhaps more important everyday work of a pastor. As a deacon under whose care African Christians were placed,⁹⁷ he wielded a considerable amount of 'quasi-European' authority. For he acted, on the one hand, as the representative of a European institution – the Basel Mission – and, on the other hand, his duties in the Christian communities for which he was responsible were not confined to religious functions such as baptism, confirmation or the holding of services. He was also supposed to watch over the everyday life of their members, such as marital relations and the upbringing of children, and to ensure that European-Christian norms were upheld in these fields.⁹⁸ In all such matters Asante was bound to follow the Mission's regulations for the daily life of African Christians (set out in the *Gemeindeordnung*) and the instructions sent by the Committee in Basel, which supervised the activities of all 'brethren' on the Gold Coast with the help of a highly organised system of reporting.

In addition to the tasks assigned to him by the Mission, Asante had a certain amount of freedom to develop his role as pastor according to his own norms and ideas. This freedom he had partly because of the distance between himself and the mission authorities, and partly because his ability to act competently in the African social environment enabled him to expand his powers in the supervision and management of the Christian communities for which he was responsible. The manner in which evangelisation was conducted made it easier for him to do this. For the Christian communities, which established themselves as 'Christian villages',⁹⁹ competed with neighbouring towns and villages for new members and with regard to lifestyles. In a 'Christian' village there lived men and women who had more or less withdrawn their labour from the community into which they had been born and submitted to the instructions and regulations of the Mission. This inevitably meant that to a certain extent they were no longer subject to the authority of chiefs and indigenous priests and could no longer be supervised completely by them in the conduct of their life. Equally inevitably, David Asante grew into the position of leader of the Christians, whose duties went far beyond those of a pastor. In Larteh, for example, where Asante was responsible for the Christian community from 1864 to 1872, he often had to represent its interests vis-à-vis the indigenous authorities, thus assuming the role of a political representative of the Christians in their 'external' relations.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, in 1866, after a military campaign waged by the Akuapem army against the Asante empire, David Asante went to the Volta valley to retrieve a Christian who had been stranded there during the conflict. In this case he provided succour in a manner

⁹⁵ See Abun-Nasr forthcoming, Chapter 5.2.

⁹⁶ loc. cit.

⁹⁷ For an account of the fields of activity of missionaries and pastors see Schlatter 1916 III: 158-9.

⁹⁸ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.1.

⁹⁹ For the notion of a 'Christian village' as the ideal Christian community see Jenkins 1985.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.1.

that evidently accorded with local notions of patron-client relations.¹⁰¹ In his report on this expedition he wrote that the "whole army" of Akuapem was surrounded by the enemy and that the Christians within each unit had collaborated so closely with one another that in this crisis they sought help only from fellow-believers.¹⁰² Thus in wartime too the Christian community of Larteh headed by Asante was able to manage its own affairs. This became even more apparent in 1869, when Asante accompanied and supervised the men of the community on another campaign.¹⁰³

It should thus have become clear that the social and political aspects of evangelisation gave Asante an important role as leader of Christian communities. But he also displayed a zeal for power. In 1877, for example, he waged a political campaign against the ruler of Akyem Abuakwa, the *Okyenhene* Amoako Atta.¹⁰⁴ This ruler accused Asante, who had been stationed at the capital Kyebi since 1874, of recruiting slaves from his court. The conflict, which obliged Asante to appear before a British colonial court, has been seen by historians as part of the destructive missionary and colonial influences that contributed to the political disintegration of Akyem Abuakwa.¹⁰⁵

It can indeed be shown that in 1875, i.e. after the proclamation of the British protectorate and, coupled with this, the emancipation of slaves¹⁰⁶, Asante seriously weakened the position of the *Okyenhene*. He converted slaves of this ruler, including important court functionaries, and enticed them to leave the court and join the Christian village near Kyebi. He also indirectly intervened in Amokao Atta's judicial work, giving advice to those who were prosecuted, helping those who were convicted, and taking decisions of the *Okyenhene* to the District Commissioner's court in Accra for appeal. Finally, Asante forbade the teachers at the missionary school in Kyebi to write letters for the *Okyenhene*, thus rendering it difficult for him to correspond with the colonial administration in Accra.¹⁰⁷ Asante's behaviour was not typical for a missionary: rather, it followed from his own interpretation of the role allocated to a pastor by the Mission.¹⁰⁸ It is clear that he had built up the Christian community at the Akyem Abuakwa capital as a personal power base in competition with the *Okyenhene* and acted to some extent as a quasi-traditional chief of a Christian clientele.

III

Asante's conduct in Kyebi shows that he interpreted his position there in terms of African notions of leadership with which he was familiar, and that he sought to reconcile his understanding of his responsibilities as a pastor with his original elitist convictions. Four decades after he first came into contact with the Mission and fifteen years after he completed

¹⁰¹ loc. cit.

¹⁰² BM, D-1,18a, D. Asante, Larteh, 5 July 1866 (Doc. 89), p. 2.

¹⁰³ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.1.

¹⁰⁴ The interpretation that follows rests upon an analysis of court records in the Ghana National Archive (Accra): SCT 2/4/12, Civil Record Book 4B, David Assanti vs. Crown Prince & others.

¹⁰⁵ Addo-Fening 1980; Rathbone 1993: 22-7.

¹⁰⁶ See Haenger 2000, Chapter 4.1.

¹⁰⁷ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.3.

¹⁰⁸ Here I disagree with Addo-Fening, who views Asante's behaviour as an expression of a generally destructive policy of the Basel Mission in Akyem Abuakwa. This interpretation rests upon an unjustified equation of Asante's interests with those of the Mission and is not supported by the missionary sources or the verdict of the British court in 1877.

his training in Basel, the status-consciousness and ambition which he had inherited from his family were clearly articulated, not least in his dealings with the mission authorities. This brings us back to the concept of transculturation. If we take into account the processes of appropriation and reinterpretation of cultural elements that I have described in David Asante's life, it becomes clear, on the one hand, that Asante identified with the key tasks of a missionary. For, as his reports to the Mission in Basel show, he believed in the proclamation of the Gospel with all his heart. On the other hand, he transposed the ambition he derived from his position in the Akan society into the missionary world and utilised the Mission Society as a vehicle of his personal ascent. His ability to act effectively within the Mission rested upon his strong personal motivation and an understanding of hierarchical social structures he drew from the Akuapem environment. His career in the Mission required him to accept what was new, but it was also furthered by the similar nature of the social mechanisms operative in Akuapem and in the Mission's European and African contexts. His capacity for transcultural action can thus be described as a process of transfer of African notions of social rank to a realm of life defined by Europeans. Like his father, Asante was willing to exploit the available possibilities of expanding his power, no matter whether they belonged to an African or a European context. This willingness grew out of a historical situation in which the population of the Gold Coast associated European influence with modernity, i.e. with a vague picture of future conditions of life.

In his conflict with the *Okyenhene*, Asante confronted the ruler with a claim to power which combined African and European concepts of leadership. As the son of a chief, as an educated Christian, and 'leader' of a Christian community, he sought to gain influence within Akyem Abuakwa of a kind which, in the African context would not have been his due on the grounds of his birth. The quarrel with Amoako Atta can therefore best be described as one between old and new claims to leadership, and as a conflict between two Africans to whom their personal biographies assigned different spheres of action: those of the 'traditional' and the future-oriented, one might even say 'modern', way of life.

Nevertheless David Asante failed to gain the position of leadership to which he aspired. Following the lawsuit of 1877 referred to above he was transferred to an unimportant mission station, where he had only limited possibilities of exercising influence.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, from the 1870s onwards the hierarchical structure of the Basel Mission was organised in a manner which allowed Africans only the role of pastors under the supervision of European missionaries.¹¹⁰ The establishment of a ranking system based on racist criteria considerably restricted the Africans' scope of action in a way unknown in the period when Asante had been the Mission's sole indigenous clergyman on the Gold Coast. Asante had to adapt his expectations to the new situation because his career had led him too far into the sphere of European influence to allow him the freedom to shape his life according to notions of his own.

¹⁰⁹ Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.3.

¹¹⁰ Schlatter 1916 III: 158-9; Abun-Nasr, forthcoming, Chapter V.3.

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**Of Leopards in Caves, European Axes and Owls in Alcohol:
The Imagination of a Hybrid World View
by an African Missionary Assistant**

Rainer Alsheimer

Elsewhere I have described the still relatively little known archive of the Norddeutsche Mission in Bremen (Alsheimer 2000). The microhistory of this non-governmental organisation will be studied, documented and described by Edem Dzun and Sonja Sawitzki in a project sponsored by the Stiftung Volkswagenwerk, entitled "Transculturations".

Recently Ulrike Sill (2002) has discussed the system by which German-speaking missionaries sent reports from overseas. It is because the European headquarters of the mission - in our case, the Mission Inspector in Bremen - required missionaries to send information about themselves and the Other that we possess a large corpus of qualitative and individual biographical texts, and it is upon one of these that I propose to draw here.

At the end of the nineteenth century Inspector Zahn requested several reports about Wilhelm Lemgo¹¹¹, who had been an African assistant and catechist in the early years of the North German mission to West Africa. Three European missionaries and one missionary's wife, headmistress of a girls' school, sent him lengthy replies (Staatsarchiv Bremen, 7/1025, Konvolut 29/5). At least one of these people, Karl Ties, seems to have persuaded Lemgo to recount his life history, part of which reads as follows:

"I do not know where I was born; but I remember very clearly how I was sold in 1861 and how the trader, a man from Anyako, carried me on his head, because I was not yet able to walk far, being still young. I was about 9 years old, when I was redeemed by the missionaries in Anyako. I had to go to school immediately. Herr Brutschin kept a good eye on us and gave us many fishes for our meals. We must have been about 50 boys. In the dry season we suffered terrible thirst; there was hardly any drinking water. At noon, if we were safe, we often went to the goats' trough and quenched our thirst there. Once a famine broke out, and it was impossible to get anything to eat. Then rice and apples arrived from Europe, and for a long time these were our daily diet. Soon we did not like this food any more; yet there was nothing else. We made friends with a few Anyako boys, to whom we gave some of our European food, and as a result several of them attended school.

Marta Setu (now a heathen) was our cook. From the missionaries she received every day the necessary food, which she then prepared for us in large iron cooking-pots. Later she received 3/- [cowries] per boy and had to buy the food herself. But from that time onwards the food was bad: she bought cheap and poor-quality foodstuffs and thereby became rich, whilst we had to be content with what she placed in front of us." (29/4: Fies)

From other sources we know that in the early years of this station food was a subject of continuous friction: the free schoolboys pressed to be allowed to eat in the neighbouring village, but for the redeemed Lemgo this was out of the question. The problem was not just the contrast between European rice pudding with apple sauce and African dietary habits, but also one of regional variants. One boy in Peki

¹¹¹ Unusually, Lemgo was named after a town in Westphalia, whose missionary society had paid the sum necessary to redeem him from slavery.

"was simply not prepared to eat the *agblé* that was served up every evening for the boys. He had never eaten it at home, he said: yams and fufu were the only things that tasted good to him." (Sawitzki 2002: 74)

According to Spieth, *agblé* or *akplé* is "a thick, pudding-like maize porridge. The flour used is obtained from roast maize" (Spieth 1906: 320). The missionaries punished refusal to eat with flogging and withdrawal of food (Sawitzki 2002: 72-75), and in the end everybody was brought to cross the boundaries of taste that they had brought with them.

Flogging seems to have been a form of punishment used excessively on the mission station - not only by the Europeans, but also by the African teachers:

"At the end of every half-year we had to show our clothes. Anyone who had badly torn his clothes was beaten. Some of the teachers who came from the Ga area beat us hard and often mishandled us, calling us "slaves" and treating us accordingly. If blows could kill a person, or if one could die when one is beaten, I would have died long ago." (29/5: Fies)

Yet these remembered fragments also indicate that not all Africans were equal: the ex-slaves occupied the lowest position, then came the children of bondmen (such people, who worked in the mission for liquidation of their debts), finally the free schoolboy and schoolgirls. Indeed, for some pupils the language of instruction was incomprehensible:

"It is reported that the children must suffer at the hands of the teacher. I do not know whether this was because he despised them or on account of practical jokes. Some teachers were prone to fall into a rage among the schoolboys. Learning must have been difficult, because most of the boys did not understand Ewhe." (29/5: Freyburger)

For Lemgo school ended after nine years. His school record was mediocre: only in singing was he the best. During his time at school he had to undertake various tasks:

"In his free time he had to do this and that, for instance go with Brother Schlegel to the lagoon and catch little fish as fodder for the Mission's chickens." (29/5: Freyburger)

After leaving school he took on various unskilled jobs:

"When I had attended school for nine years, I was supposed to learn a craft, since I was not gifted enough for the seminary. So I left school and first of all became a digger in Anyako. Soon afterwards Missionary Tolch arrived from Germany; I was to learn masonry and carpentry from him in Keta. I helped to build the Wuta house, but when the walls were finished, Missionary Merz sent for me to come to Waya. There I did plantation work for Missionary Merz. I now received a monthly wage of 6/- [cowries]. Hereupon I came to Missionary Illg in Waya and was put in charge of the chickens, sheep and goats. When Missionary Müller came to Waya, I was to make bricks for him and learnt masonry from him. We built the chapel there; but every time I see the crooked walls today, I feel ashamed and am angry with myself for having been one of those who built the walls so out of line. My wages had risen to 8/- [cowries]." (Konvolut 29/5: Fies)

Again and again we read of beatings:

"When he began to attend school, he made a mark as a disobedient boy. Once he quarreled with the son of the man who was then my teacher. This man beat Wilhelm. The matter came before Missionary Bratehin, who punished the teacher's boy with the cane. After doing this the teacher summoned Wilhelm to him - without Missionary Bratehin - and gave him a sound of flogging" (29/5: Fies)

We encounter the head of the station, Merz, whose sadism is apparent from reports sent to the inspector:

“For example, when he ran after the women from Ho who work here, throwing stones at them because they were too noisy for him; and how people were afraid to work at the mission station, because of his hammer and sickle actions. [...] The same applied to the other workers: they had not need to accept Merz’s methods: although they were only Negroes they had the same sense of honour and justice as a European workman. Merz boasted, 'I have now lived in Africa for 10 years and know how we must deal with our workers', yet to hit them with 3-pound masons' hammers and attack them with sickles is a fine method. I wish to know nothing of such tyranny." (Quoted in Sawitzki 2002: 106).

Or:

"Merz treated one of Aylila's boys, Salomon, very cruelly in a confirmation lesson; [...] then he seized Salomon, who was sitting near the wall, and knocked his head repeatedly against the wall. Afterwards he beat him on the ground with a shoe, so that the boy became ill and had to miss lessons." (Sawitzki 2002: 106 sq.)

Merz was also the reason why Lemgo left the mission for a period, because Merz dealt with him unfairly and severely in a matter relating to a theft. Yet Lemgo continued to live near the mission station:

"If he [Lemgo] did not work for the mission as a mason or on the plantation - work which he did well -, he went and traded. He sold cloth, tobacco, salt, beads, cotton etc." (29/5: Freyburger)

Finally came the kowtow:

"In order to gain access to Holy Communion, I later went to Waya and asked Missionary Merz for forgiveness." (29/5)

The remainder of Lemgo's curriculum vitae reads as follows:

"His wife was baptised in 1880. [...] She too was a slave. A [...] Christian had bought her in Peki, in order to marry her. But he was old, and so she absolutely did not want to stay with him. One day she went to church and from that day on she stayed with the missionary. Whether he too bought her, I do not know. Wilhelm asked for her and obtained her. They were married [...]. From the marriage 6 children were born. Five nice, strong, healthy children are still alive." (29/5: Freyburger).

Or, as he recalled in greater detail:

"One Sunday Missionary Merz had me come to his room after the sermon and said to me: 'You are a child of the mission and I do not want you to be forgotten. I have been waiting a long time for you to ask us for a girl; why haven't you done so hitherto?' I answered that three reasons had hindered me from doing so: 1) I believed that I was still too young; 2) I did not have the money necessary to marry; 3) I was afraid that the girls would respond to my proposal by saying 'He isn't beautiful' and would turn me down. Hereupon Missionary Merz said that he had three girls and that I should think the matter over and tell him the following morning which of them I liked best. I consulted William Akude in Ahliha, and he recommended my Christina. So the following morning I requested the girl who is now my wife, i.e. I told Missionary Merz and got Ana Oktavio to ask Christina for me. My thoughts were in full agreement with those of Missionary Merz, and Christina accepted my proposal.

At that time my wife had not yet been baptised. She had been bought by a man from Peki, who sold her to a Christian in Ahliha, i.e. she was redeemed by the latter. Christian – that was his name – wanted to marry her later. But when she learnt this, she told him frankly that she would never do this: for her he was a father, and if he took her as a wife, she would no longer have a father; she would be happy to marry another man, but not him. When he refused to

give up his intention, she fled to the mission station and besought the missionaries to take her into their care. She was redeemed by Missionary Merz on behalf of the mission.

When Missionary Merz went to Europe, my bride was handed over to Missionary Zimmer, and when he too had to leave the mission station on account of illness, she came to Missionary Binetsch. She then attended baptismal instruction. The day of her baptism was also that of our wedding, namely 11 July 1880 [...]. We dwelled in Ahliha, where the Lord granted us five children, the youngest of whom was born in Adaklu. Our Matias died in Ahliha, Auguste is at the girls' school in Ho, Beate is at Samuel Newell's house in Wodze; Monkia, Karl and Emil are with us in Abuadi." (Konvolut 29/5: Fies)

In this manner Lemgo had once and for all become an African Christian; he had found his position 'betwixt and between': between the Ewe, who themselves had been constructed as a (church) people via their language, and the European Christians, who continued to observe critically the 'converted heathen' and 'Negro' and his family life:

"His wife Christine now runs her household quietly and kindly. I have heard people say that this was not always the case. In the first years of their marriage she behaved as badly as many others uneducated Negro women, in whose heart there has never been the slightest notion of the happiness they can give their husband and themselves if they meet him in warm love and kind loving care and conduct their work in an industrious and orderly manner. In such marriages it might sometimes happen that the husband came home tired and hungry from the day's labour, but there was no bathwater ready and no food had been cooked. 'Do it yourself, if you want it', the wife would say in an unkind tone: 'I haven't the time' – she had spent the time gossiping or had fallen asleep. No wonder that the husband then became angry and, like others in a similar situation, angrily scolded and beat his wife, while she screamed and cursed." (29/5: A. Knüsli)

Or:

"Concerning the rearing of children Negro parents normally know nothing whatever. They have never grasped that it requires understanding love and a firm will on their part. 'The child wants it', or 'it doesn't want it', says the mother, without refusing when such a small child in its ignorance desires or does something that it should not. Lies and disobedience are allowed to pass, until at some point it becomes uncomfortable or a slight damage is done; and then the father or mother may turn very angry and beat the child out of all measure in blind fury." (29/5: Knüsli)

And yet – and this Lemgo perceived as the high point of his life – as the member of a 'world in between' he experienced in a dream an awakening, whose images reflected his hybrid individuality:

"It was on 4 October 1894. I was then living in the centre of the town Abuadi. The mission house was on the mission's land outside the town, not yet built. At night I dreamt of an old, gnarled tree-trunk which lay in front of the house in which I was living. With a heavy European axe I wanted to split it. I began to split it at one end, which was very gnarled. But lo and behold! A host of large ants ran out of the wood and made off in one direction. Then I tried to start at the other end. But suddenly a large number of lizards came out of the wood and wanted to run into my house. Thereupon someone called out: 'Look! An owl!' This bird came out of the tree-trunk. Then another person shouted: 'Come and look!' I went and saw a nest of young owls in the tree-trunk! A missionary was there; he put the young owls into a glass with alcohol and sent them to Europe.¹¹² – I awoke, thought about the dream and soon found how to interpret it: the tree-trunk means the hearts of the people of Adaklu, which are

¹¹² I am grateful to Birgit Meyer for pointing out that the owls probably signified 'fetishes'.

full of rubbish and sin. The axe is God's word; to proclaim it is my task. This word will surely triumph and the news will one day reach as far as Europe that the Adaklu people have converted." (29/5: Fies)

However, Lemgo, the catechist in Abuadi on Mount Adaklu, was evidently not always taken seriously by his fellow residents:

"The people on Mount Adaklu made a law among themselves that no-one was to listen any more when Wilhelm preached; but this fact did not prevent him from speaking up. One day he came to Kodiabe. The people were at home, but did not come to the street sermon and remained quiet in their houses. Then, with a strong voice he called out: 'Ye people of Kodiabe, listen! I am sent by almighty God to proclaim the Good News to you. But since you shut up your hearts and ears to this message, let it be known that you are thereby summoning God's just court to pass judgement upon you!'"

The inhabitants of Abuadi evidently did not know what they should make of him: Was he perhaps at the same time an African and a man who had found the ear of the German emperor?

"Wilhelm preaches untiringly against the three main sins of the people of Adaklu: whoredom, drinking schnapps and shooting at funerals. Then, when the price of gunpowder on the coast rose very high about two years ago, the people thought that their teacher was to blame. He, they supposed, had written a letter to the German emperor and accused them of shooting too much, and that was why gunpowder had become so expensive."

In Lemgo's sermons images from the Bible overlie the images from his African home:

"In Feseto he is said to have awoken the princely sleepers (chiefs of six towns) by speaking so loudly and to have said the following: 'In a hole was a leopard. People warned everybody not to enter. Yet he himself had gone inside and taken from there a light which could not be extinguished, by means of which he had overcome and killed the leopard. Do you know who the inextinguishable light is? It is our Lord Jesus Christ, and with him the victory is ours. Amen.'"

As a colleague from Togo confirmed to me, there are no leopards living in holes there, and there never have been. But in the Bible there is indeed a lion's den, and in Togo both missionaries and indigenous inhabitants knew of 'heathen' female sorceresses, who practised magic in holes.¹¹³ All of this can be combined to create a hybrid new production, and this is where Lemgo begins to construct his new world:

"The concept of polyphone and hybrid cultures allows us to go beyond the utopia of cultural diversity, in which the other culture is still always an object of possible knowledge and conclusive understanding." (Bronfen / Marius 1997: 12)

The reports about Lemgo end with the outbreak of the First World War, which brought to an abrupt end not only Germany's adventure in Africa but also Afro-German and German-African dreams concerning European axes, African lizards and ants, owl-fetishes preserved in alcohol, botanising missionaries and leopards in holes.

As a person Wilhelm Lemgo is part of the history of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana: a church building in Ho bears his name.

¹¹³ For historical evidence see the photograph in Alsheimer 2000, Plate 8.

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Biographical Representations of Vehettge Tikkuie and Rosetta Klapmuts: Moravian Icons of Conversion in South Africa

Henry C. Jatti BREDEKAMP

The religious life histories of the two Khoekhoe women, Mother Lena of Genadendal and Benigna of Mamre, are not unknown to most people familiar with the collective memory of South African Moravians. The first-mentioned, known by her indigenous name as Vehettge Tikkuie, became converted to mission Christianity towards the end of the first half of the 18th century – before modernity came into focus on the European continent where the German missionaries came from. The other Herrnhut icon in South Africa, Rosetta Klapmuts, converted to the Moravian faith in the early 19th century – when forms of modernity was about to start taking shape in Europe. Their conversion from heathenism to Moravianism has for many decades been presented in missionary diaries and other Herrnhut-inspired printed and translated sources as most defining moments in not only their own lives but also the founding histories of the Cape of Good Hope-based mission stations they are so closely associated with today. Representations of their life histories have however thus far fallen short in situating their biographies adequately in the context of the transculturation phenomenon and the modernity discourse of recent decades.

Following from the above, this paper wishes to open a discussion located in a discourse about the relationship between the Herrnhut missionary campaign in colonial Cape of Good Hope and the transculturation process at a time when Europeans were embracing on their continent the project of modernity. The thrust of the paper will however focus on biographical representations of the two Moravian icons, at the time blissfully unaware of the human emancipatory phenomenon of modernity. In this regard the paper looks at the life experiences of two Khoekhoe women attracted to a Herrnhut oriented colonial environment that promised (to borrow from M. Berman's definition of modernity with some stylistic adaptation in a related context) to be for them:

[a] body of experience [of] adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of [themselves] and the world – and, at the same time, that threaten[ed] to destroy everything [they had], everything [they knew], everything [they were].¹¹⁴

Their experience of this process of transculturation has up to now been transmitted to adherents of the Moravian faith within the context of a particular Herrnhut-centric paradigm.¹¹⁵ As alluded to above, this paper wishes to explore and build upon the underdeveloped discourse in South Africa of the history of the Moravian Church locally as

¹¹⁴ Cited in Harvey 1990: 10-11.

¹¹⁵ See particularly *Periodical Accounts relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren established among the Heathen* (London, 1790 et seq.); *Benigna van Groenekloof of Mamre: Een verhaal van Christen Kleurlingen van Zuid-Afrika door een hunner Leeraars* (Genadendal, 1873); B. Krüger, *The Pear Tree Blossoms: The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa 1737-1869* (Genadendal: Moravian Church, 1966); *Dagboek en Briewe van George Schmidt (1737-1744)* edited by H.C. Bredekamp & J.L. Hattingh (Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1981); *The Genadendal Diaries: Diaries of the Herrnhut Missionaries H. Marsveld, D. Schwinn and J.C. Kühnel* 2vols. (1792-1796) edited by H.C. Bredekamp & H.E.F. Plüddemann (Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1992 & 1999)

represented in biographical texts of the two Khoekhoe women of the Cape Overberg and the Swartland respectively.

The encounter of Tikkuie and Klapmuts, from the late 1730s and early 1810s respectively, with a Herrnhut-inspired transculturation process in the Cape Overberg and West Coast Swartland, followed from Count Zinzendorf's eighteenth-century vision of a spiritual unity of all mankind in Europe and abroad under the banner *Vicit Agnus Noster Eum Sequamur*: "The Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him." Guided by the Spirit of this Lamb, he sent out from Saxony via the Netherlands one of his humble followers to the Dutch East India Company outpost, the Cape of Good Hope, in 1737, to proselytize the so-called Hottentots. It was on this mission to "Darkest" Africa that Georg Schmidt's brief stay in the Overberg changed the life history of an indigenous African woman destined to become a remarkable icon of Khoekhoe conversion, still revered up to this day among those descendants of the Khoekhoen and slaves with an affinity to their Moravian heritage in democratic South Africa.

1. Representations of Vehettge Tikkuie's cultural transformation in eighteenth-century Overberg

The earliest reference in a publication to Old Lena of Genadendal's life was some years after Schmidt's mission had collapsed in the early 1740s. This was by the Linnaean emissary and naturalist, Anders Sparrman of Sweden, who produced "the first full-length personal account of travels in the far interior of Southern Africa"¹¹⁶ in the 1780s¹¹⁷. In the description of his journey from Warm Bath (modern Caledon) to Swellendam in August 1775, Sparrman devoted a twenty-five-page ethnographic description of Khoekhoe culture - partly as a critique of Peter Kolbe's pre-modernity description of the Khoekhoen¹¹⁸ - followed by an account of the memory of his informers about Georg Schmidt's transcultural impact, particularly on

an old female Hottentot [who] was living, and used to perform her devotions every morning on her bare knees, by the side of a spring situated near this spot. It was said, she had a German Bible, which she often read and treated with the greatest veneration; and that her behaviour throughout life was decent and quiet.¹¹⁹

After his return to Sweden Sparrman discovered during his research the spring mentioned to be "*Serjeant-river*, a small branch of the *Rivier Zonder-end*, or the river near which lived the converted Hottentot woman".¹²⁰

Mother Lena started gaining prominence in Moravian religious narrative only after her dramatic encounter with the three pioneer missionaries that were sent to revive Schmidt's work half a century after he had to abandon the mystic Zinzendorf's project at the Cape. Thus, after the re-establishment of the Genadendal mission community in 1792 her religious life

¹¹⁶ V.S. Forbes 1992: 50.

¹¹⁷ *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope ...* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1975) It was first published in Swedish in 1783, followed by a German translation in 1784 and four editions in English from 1785. Dutch and French translations appeared in 1787.

¹¹⁸ Pratt 1992: 52-3.

¹¹⁹ Sparrman 1975: 206.

¹²⁰ *ibid*, p. 207.

served as testimony in a wide range of popular prints of the success of the Moravian Christian campaign in South Africa.¹²¹

From these representations an interesting image of her cultural transformation as a member of an indigenous society in cultural crisis can be constructed. The most reliable primary sources of Vehettge Tikuie's early life history, the diary and letters of Georg Schmidt, does not give a hint of the year of her birth. An informed guess would place her date of birth, nonetheless, at any month and year after colonial Cape of Good Hope was struck by the smallpox epidemic of 1713 and the indigenous people of the Overberg started absorbing at a slow pace lower class cultural markers of colonial European identity. Adoption of the dominant colonial Germanic culture at underclass level emerged from the Dutch East India Company's (VOC) colonial project of *Trekboer* territorial expansion after 1708.¹²² Coincidentally this was also the year of the VOC trading expedition of Jan Hartogh, who came across a Hessequa kraal near modern Genadendal, a more traditional Chainoqua grazing range;¹²³ and also represents the time when her Chainoqua-Hessequa clansmen began to encounter increasingly European colonial culture in the Overberg contact zone. Although we do not have exact statistics on the size of their population, one could accept Richard Elphick's rough estimate for them of not more than 25 000 in the latter half of the 17th century as a useful figure.¹²⁴

Peculiar to the traveling culture of Vehettge's Khoekhoe people, her tribe or clan had no strict geographical boundaries. The clan she might have belonged to would therefore easily move kraal for relatively short periods into the grazing ranges of other clans with whom they did not have immediate kinship ties. This Hessequa-Chainoqua pattern of transhumance¹²⁵ was disturbed with the granting of grazing permits to loan farmers, the Trekboers, in the Overberg from 1706 and the posting of about thirteen soldiers at the company's cattle posts Het Zieken Huis, Zoetemelksvlei and Tygerhoek from 1726.¹²⁶

The young Vehettge would by this time have gone through at least one of her Khoekhoe crises associated with transition rites, known in her mother tongue as *!nâu* and in Afrikaans, the language adopted by her descendents, as *Die Groot Anders-Maak*; a ceremony Kolbe referred to as "*andersmachen*".¹²⁷ As with all Khoekhoe girls, her first ceremonial crisis would have been when she menstruated or *kharu* for the first time at about the age of between thirteen and fifteen. When it happened, Vehettge had to tell either her girl friends or some older female relative who, as intermediary, informed her mother accordingly. Vehettge's mother would then have called her young daughter's married sisters and sisters-in-law "to make a little mat enclosure, *kharu oms*, inside at the back of the family hut, on the left hand side."¹²⁸ While the *kharu oms* was being prepared, her mother had to go and find a woman past childbearing age that had "been renowned for her former fertility" and would carry

¹²¹ See, in addition to sources listed in note 1 above, also *De Bode* and *Die Huisvriend*. The work of the missionaries and their Herrnhut church was however as a rule presented as central to the transformation that occurred in the life of Lena and other heathen.

¹²² Prins 1979: 25-9.

¹²³ Cape State Archives depot C661: Dagregister gehouden op de Landtogt en Veeuilen door de Baas Thuijnier Jan Hartogh, 5 Nov. 1708, p.5.

¹²⁴ Elphick 1977: 23n.

¹²⁵ Compare Smith 1992: 193-200.

¹²⁶ Sleight 1993: 539-70.

¹²⁷ See note 1 in Schapera 1930: 256.

¹²⁸ *ibid*, p. 273.

Vehettge "on her back (whence she is known by the name *aba tarás*) [...] into the *kharu oms*" and care for her till the ceremony of between two days and up to a month has ended. Wrapped in her sheepskin *kaross*¹²⁹ she had to lie still in the *kharu oms*, with its own little opening at the back of the hut, and could only leave through it in her period of seclusion at night "with one woman behind her and one in front to screen her from view." In that period Vehettge would have been conscious of the taboo not to touch cold water on any pretence. In her menstruation period there would also have been a *!nâu* restriction to cooking on the hearth fire in the outer hut¹³⁰ where she was lying. No pregnant or menstruating or sterile woman was allowed near her by the *aba tarás* to avoid any misfortune befalling her. She could however enjoy visits by her older girl friends, who brought along crushed sweet-smelling leaves which they would strew abundantly over her. Meanwhile, her relatives would celebrate the *!nâu* of attainment of puberty with the menstruation killing, known as *kharu †ap*, of a heifer and other female animals. Primarily *kharu †ap* was the great feast for the women, particularly those "who have already passed through the puberty rites".¹³¹ For the young, playing and doing the reed dance round the hut to which she was confined, would have been an equally significant part of the set of rituals associated with her *kharu*.

For Vehettge's *aba tarás* the series of purification rites she had to administer towards the end of the young maid's *kharu* were perhaps of much greater importance. On the last day of her period the *aba tarás* had to cleanse her of all her child dirt: *axa /uip*. Salve, "melted butter and moist cowdung", was smeared all over her body, and after it had dried slightly the *aba tarás* rolled it off again with the palm of her hand. After having completed the ritual she collected it carefully before hiding it in some hole without anybody seeing her. The old woman would then have provided her with new attire and taken away the discarded one. Thereafter the *aba tarás* led her by the hand out of the little mat enclosure to perform her first task after her first period: preparing a meal for the other women assembled to meet her.¹³² In the course of the ritual she would have been "made free to cook and prepare a meal once more",¹³³ and the fire lit for the occasion was no longer *!nâu*.

After milking a cow together with the *aba tarás* as part of a ritual signifying the conclusion of her *kharu*, she could drink of the milk as no longer being *!nâu*. - but only after it had been drunk by the old woman herself or other older folk. From then on Vehettge could again milk any cow as she wished; she had by now become a young marriageable woman with a well-greased skin and a body scented all over with *buchu*.¹³⁴

Other daily tasks she would also have been reintroduced to by the *aba tarás*, like gathering wood and water and collecting roots and berries together in the veld of the Overberg. Once the old woman of the kraal had performed her ritual of rubbing mud on the girl's legs and splashing water over her while holding a branch in her hand, the restriction of free use of water was lifted for Vehettge and, perhaps, paved the way for Schmidt's baptismal ceremony some years later.

Schmidt's diary indicates that Vehettge had already been married in accordance with Western Cape Khoekhoe customs to Jaktie Tikkuie by 1 February 1739. His diary, however, gives no account of the marriage customs practised by the Overberg Khoekhoen prior to his

¹²⁹ See Sparrman 1975: 187.

¹³⁰ On Sparrman's Enlightenment views on the fire-place in a Khoekhoe hut, see *ibid*, p.192.

¹³¹ Schapera 1930: 274.

¹³² *ibid*.

¹³³ *ibid*, p.275.

¹³⁴ See Sparrman 1975: 184.

formation of a mission community near the Serjeants River. On the strength of colonial travellers' accounts and ethnographic observation of others one could assume it to be unlikely that the two belonged to the same clan. Vehettge would first have had to give her formal consent to marriage before Jaktie could have approached the mother and father of his bride-to-be, while they were in a state of betrothal characterized by prolonged mutual avoidances. In this period, communication between them occurred only through an intermediary. All this culminated in a marriage feast of slaughtered cows provided by the bridegroom and his people¹³⁵ and would, perhaps, conclude as described by the ethnographer Isaac Schapera:

After the feast dagga is smoked, a pipe being passed round out of which every person inhales a few times before handling it on. This smoking bout, which owing to the nature of the herb soon degenerates into a noisy and drunken orgy, is kept up till late at night, when they are all tired and stupefied, and turn in to sleep. The bridegroom now sleeps for the first time with his wife. The festivities are continued on the following day, as long as there is still anything to eat.¹³⁶

Vehettge's married life seems not to have been a blissfully happy one. Her husband might have adapted surprisingly well to a colonial agrarian culture as required of indigenes by the VOC social order, but in the missionary's representation of their marital life Jaktie seems not to have shared his wife's keenness for Moravian mission culture. Jaktie visited Schmidt's evening services at times with his wife but never attended Schmidt's formal religious classes. His heart and soul were seemingly more at either the Khoekhoe camps between the mission and VOC military posts of Het Zieken Huis and Zoetemelks Vlei or with the men at these military *cum* cattle posts. Between December 1739 and February 1742, for instance, he left Vehettge at least six times alone with her religious soul mates at the mission to accompany as wagon driver the Company's men at these posts to Cape Town. His absence from her would then be from two weeks up to a full month.¹³⁷

The exposure of Vehettge's husband to the fruit of the vine in the VOC's contact zone between Cape Town and the cattle posts caused Jaktie to develop a weakness for European spirits and liquor, which to the dismay of Schmidt found its way on one occasion to the mission station. This led to an agreement between the missionary and the overseer of the post depriving Vehettge's husband of the privilege of ever traveling in VOC company to Cape Town. Perhaps partly due to utter frustration Jaktie got involved in an extra-marital relationship on the mission, which resulted in the following entry in Schmidt's diary:

*Nachmittags schlug sich die Vehethgien mit einer andern Frau von den Kralen, um dass sie dieselbe mit ihrem Mann in Verdacht hatte. Ich ging aber und jagte sie auseinander.*¹³⁸

This embarrassing incident was indeed not the only sign of tension in their marriage. She was a woman with a personality that overshadowed her husband, which made of her the icon she is remembered for. He nonetheless must have had a great affection for her; thus, whenever she walked out on him lonesomeness drove him to go and search for her against the advice of the missionary, who suggested once that he should not try to win her back.¹³⁹

It is evident from his representation of her religious life in the diaries and letters to Zinzendorf that Schmidt displayed lack of insight into the painful process of transculturation to which Vehettge was subjected from 1739 to 1743 in the contact zone of the Overberg.

¹³⁵ Schapera 1930: 246.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p.250.

¹³⁷ Bredekamp 1987: 135.

¹³⁸ Bredekamp & Hattingh 1981: 210.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 92.

Against all odds she had by then progressed from being able to recognize words in the Dutch ABC book to reading the New Testament. This achievement made her probably the first literate Overberg-born female person of 18th century South Africa. Her newly acquired reading skills and knowledge of the Scriptures seem to have been envied by other prospective converts at the mission, which drove her almost to madness: "*Ich kann hier nicht mehr bleiben. [...] alles Volk ist gegen mich*", she confessed to her spiritual father on 1st February 1739. His unsympathetic response, blaming Vehettge for her dilemma of interpersonal relations with others, confused her even more and prompted her immediately to give him back her copy of the New Testament in Dutch, after which she left the mission station. However, after six days of contrition she re-appeared, expressing her wish to resume her studies in the Scriptures,¹⁴⁰ which ultimately led to her christening on 4 April 1742.

The path leading to that day and beyond was strewn with many thistles and thorns. Unlike popular representations in Moravian narratives the unexpected baptismal ritual did not bring everlasting relief to the mystified mind of a meditative Vehettge. Schmidt's reference in passing to Khoekhoe belief in *Ticqua* [*Tsuni-//Goam*] and *//Gaunab* gives us reason to believe that prior to her experience of transculturation in a Herrnhut-inspired sense of the word, Lena of Genadendal must have had some fading memory of her ancestors' religious beliefs. Against this, the missionary's main objective was to transform the memory of Vehettge and his other followers about the struggle between *Tsuni-//Goam* and *//Gaunab* into a Herrnhut-like collective consciousness of the victory of Christ over death. Khoekhoe cosmic understanding of evil and how it could be circumvented differed fundamentally from Schmidt's belief. For Vehettge *Tsuni-//Goam* was the Supreme Being and *//Gaunab* the representative of evil. The former was also represented in thunder and rain, thus in the forces of nature that provided the rain for the Khoekhoen as a pastoral people. Their Supreme Being was also associated with creation and sustaining health and prosperity, though constantly in conflict with the supreme power of evil: *//Gaunab*. The latter was held responsible for all those destructive powers causing death and frightful natural phenomena such as whirlwinds, eclipses and the rainbow.¹⁴¹ This was probably how Vehettge too understood the spiritual world when she encountered Schmidt in the contact zone of the Overberg and began her journey towards the adoption of a new Herrnhut-like culture of spirituality.

As an early 18th century Moravian missionary Schmidt showed, apart from his linguistic handicap, hardly any interest in Khoekhoe spirituality. He had therefore no desire to find ways and means of reconciling their beliefs with that of his. Understandably, his attitude and approach to non-Christian belief systems was essentially based on Zinzendorf's theory that all humanity shared a common notion of divinity though many were still ignorant of the true [Christian] understanding of this divinity. Infused with his religious master's ideas of conversion, Schmidt confronted Vehettge and others, irrespective of race or creed, solely with the gospel of the Cross.¹⁴² In this respect his mind was preoccupied with a graphic reality of Christ's blood and wounds sustained during the Lord's suffering and death on the day of his crucifixion. One writer has described this Zinzendorffian obsession as the result of "a blood-sodden adoration of Jesus' wounds".¹⁴³ Schmidt expected not only Vehettge's people, but everybody he encountered to revere these symbols of Christ's atonement with mystic adoration in and of themselves and not to be imagined merely as symbolic expressions of Christian salvation. His emphasis on the Saviour's suffering probably appealed to his converts

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁴¹ Schapera 1930: 380-96.

¹⁴² See Bredekamp 1998: 184.

¹⁴³ Gollin 1967: 13.

because of the association they could make with Khoekhoe mythology of *Tsuni-//Goam's* wounded knee.¹⁴⁴

Associated with the above emphasis, the missionary was able in his encounters with Vehettge and other Khoekhoe converts to infuse in the mind of some who failed to live in accordance with Schmidt's rules of moral conduct a consciousness of unbearable guilt. He condemned Khoekhoe culture and also some aspects of colonial culture as nothing but creations of evil minds. His means of converting his Khoekhoe followers to becoming true bearers of Herrnhut culture was by stressing adherence to strict discipline and instilling fear of punishment by either himself or their Saviour. The anguish he as a missionary, driven by pietist considerations, instilled in Vehettge's mind elicited hardly any empathy from him. When he received his letter of ordination in March 1742 from Zinzendorf, he first turned to three prospective males to be christened; only after there were no more men available for baptism did he call her some days later to his house. His diary leaves the impression that Schmidt did not inform her beforehand of the reason for the summons to his house near the river. She nonetheless replied so confidently to his questions about her conversion to his religion that he immediately took her to the nearby creek where, on 4 April 1742, she became the first South African female to be baptized east of the Hottentots-Holland Mountains. From that day on Vehettge became Magdalena officially. The Biblical name Lena acquired at the foot of the Genadendal mountain was perhaps to remind her of the sinful life she had to leave behind; a reminder of how strikingly her life corresponded with that of Mary Magdalene of Magdala in biblical Palestine, where centuries before a process of transculturation had also taken shape. In a different context the Herrnhut missionary expected Lena to follow faithfully the example of his New Testament icon, turning her back on her past and on her traditional culture in favour of a heavenly home believed to have been prepared by the crucified and resurrected Son of God. On this journey it would be expected of Lena to proclaim in similar fashion as her namesake, to whom the Lord appeared first on Easter Sunday, the gospel of His crucifixion and resurrection on African soil.¹⁴⁵

But before Magdalena could fulfill that calling with confidence she had to face another crisis related to false expectations concerning the power of the baptismal ritual performed on her. A few days after their christening she and her fellow converts discovered that despite their new spiritual status they were still lacking peace of mind on some religious questions. The baptism in water did not exercised a mythical or mystical influence over their lives, as they might have anticipated. Problems they experienced before their christening still remained with them after that defining moment. Vehettge could not overcome her addiction to tobacco and felt deeply frustrated by all the gossip about her. Nor could she understand why she remained caught in poverty after being baptized. She nevertheless attended Schmidt's classes faithfully, though he did not show a deep understanding of her psychological dilemma. Instead he stated that she lacked due appreciation for his mission work. He employed her, however, at times as a cook.¹⁴⁶

Schmidt's diary does not mention that he made use of Lena in any way to assist him with his spiritual work after her baptism; nor does it shed light on when she had overcome the problem of her troubled self-image. Other texts reveal that Magdalena Vehettge Tikkuie rose to prominence only some years after the missionary's departure for Europe. This happened probably around 1756, after the converted clan leader Africo Christian and the faithful Willem Josua had disappeared from the Christian mission scene. Oral history and Moravian

¹⁴⁴ Schapera 1930: 377.

¹⁴⁵ Bredekamp 1987: 137-38.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

collective memory correspond with Sparrman's description of the old Khoekhoe woman – Lena – who kept the flame of Herrnhut faith alive in the Overberg for years after Schmidt had left. It also tells of her harvesting annually the fruit from Schmidt's pear tree and sharing the crop with all around her.

But the visual image of her that is engraved in the mind of most Moravians and tourists is the lithographic drawing¹⁴⁷ depicting the aging Mother Lena at her first encounter with the three pioneer missionaries who arrived at the farm Snyderskraal along the Serjeants River¹⁴⁸ on 24 December 1792 to resume the work of Schmidt. Most striking in the depiction of that cultural encounter is the central space reserved for this Khoekhoe woman, attired respectably in western clothes like the overseer of Zoetemelks Vlei and the missionaries from Europe in contrast to the social skins of the half-naked Khoekhoe onlookers. The eyes of most of the identifiable persons in the drawing are focused on the New Testament in the Dutch language which she had received more than half a century before from the first missionary to colonial South Africa. Also in their Genadendal Diaries this encounter is presented as one of the most defining moments in Moravian mission history.¹⁴⁹ Another lesser known lithographic depiction of the literate Lena is her "encounter" with the three missionaries at the pear tree placed in an idyllic agrarian landscape, where she is brought to them assisted by two young men with her 'schoolbook' wrapped in sheepskin¹⁵⁰ like her New Testament. The schoolbook picture also points to her voluntary relocation to the mission station, near to the place where the first baptized of the Moravian Church are monumentalized, after the three missionaries had settled there. According to Moravian legend her age did not prevent Mother Lena from attending the school started by the missionaries; indeed, she encouraged others to follow her in joining the renewed process of Herrnhut transculturation.

Within the first year of their work she attended what is perhaps the most significant custom and practice on the Moravian liturgical calendar, the feast of August Thirteenth:

In the afternoon we held a simple Love Feast with the five, four of ours and Lena who was baptized by Brother Schmidt. We told them its purpose, namely to bind us together in love. Lena witnessed that she could not thank the dear Saviour enough that he had kept her alove for so long so that she could now hear so much about Jesus, our Redeemer; and that she fully believed that the dear Saviour in His mercy would take her to heaven now. They all affirmed deep peace in their hearts. Two of these wear neat clthes, the third borrowed clothes for the baptism [...] This was a truly blessed Feast Day for us and for the Hottentots.¹⁵¹

Religious life was at times rudely interrupted by political events of the time, as in 1795, the year of the First British Occupation of the Cape. Ironically, while the men of Lena's town were engaged in the mountains behind Simon's Bay, Cape Town, in defending the VOC colonial order, Overberg colonists were arming themselves to destroy the Herrnhut mission there. They wanted to stem the exodus from farms to the mission station and force people to return as unfree labourers to the farmers. It is however not clear from the Moravian records whether Old Lena was among the Genadendalers who sought refuge in the nearby mountains or fled over the River Zondereinde to escape the wrath of the European Patriot nationalists in

¹⁴⁷ See Cape State Archives depot, Morrison Collection, item 242.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Prins 1983: 269.

¹⁴⁹ Bredekamp & Plüddemann 1992: 59-61.

¹⁵⁰ See the illustration in Balie 1988: 46.

¹⁵¹ Bredekamp & Plüddemann 1992: 125-6.

July 1795.¹⁵² Moravian legend about Old Lena being stopped by a farmer who demanded a pass to see whether she had freedom of movement in the territory is unfounded.¹⁵³

By the late 1790s she had become an invalid. She had to be carried to the welcoming ceremony of the first married missionary couple and head of the Moravian Church in South Africa on 21st May 1798. Thereafter her health deteriorated and she passed away peacefully five days before Kohrhammer consecrated the first Moravian chapel in Africa on Epiphany Sunday, 8 January 1800. She left only one son, born after she was christened, but of whom the church has no fond memories. His mother became in due course an edifying icon to many:

*Vir bewoners en besoekers aan die Overberg het sy as lewende getuie gedien van Schmidt se werk onder sy kudde van sewe-en-veertig gedooptes en ongedooptes; vir H. Marsveld, D. Schwinn en C. Kühnel het sy as skakel tussen die vroeë en latere sendingaksie van die Kerk gedien; en vir Suid-Afrika het sy haar onderskei as die eerste opvallende vroulike evangelie-verkondiger.*¹⁵⁴

2. Re-reading a nineteenth-century biography: Rosetta Klapmuts's transculturation in the Swartland

Almost three-quarters of a century after Old Lena had passed away and the memory of her first encounter with the pioneer missionaries became established in Moravian iconography, a biography of another Moravian icon of conversion appeared in Genadendal. The popular-memory history novel of 84 pages, *Benigna van Groenekloof of Mamre. Een verhaal voor de Christen Kleurligen van Zuid-Afrika*, was written "door een hunner Leeraars" and from 1873 available at all mission stations of the Church. As indicated on the front cover, its target audience was within the institutional context of the Moravian Church, the predominantly Khoekhoe communities that had by the processes of European colonization and transculturation been transformed into Christian Coloureds.

The identity of the anonymous author seems to be evident from a reading of the early printing history of the Church of the Herrnhuters in the Cape Colony.¹⁵⁵ The publication of the biography *Benigna van Groenekoof* was apparently an experiment of the missionary Herman Benno Marx that started in 1859 with the printing of the first issue of the Church magazine, *De Bode* at Genadendal. From the start he made space in *De Bode* for historical accounts highlighting the achievements of the Moravian Church in order to promote a pride among converts in the history of their mission church. In this regard Marx wrote in 1860 in another mission paper:

If we can get them to read tracts, books and magazines, printed expressly for them, and adapted for their use, the beneficial effect (*sic*) on their minds will, by the blessing of the Lord, be very great.¹⁵⁶

This sentiment the editor of *De Bode* expressed in his promotion of *Benigna van Groenekoof* in 1873 when he stated the underlying purpose of the book to be

om hen er toe optewekken, is er behoefte aan er naar hunnen smaak geschreven is, en aan

¹⁵² Bredekamp & Plüddemann 1999: 74-82; Bredekamp 1995: 46-47.

¹⁵³ Compare Krüger 1966: 68; Bredekamp & Plüddemann 1999: 63n.

¹⁵⁴ Bredekamp 1987: 139.

¹⁵⁵ Kerry Ward assumed wrongly that the Church's Superintendent in South Africa, William Ferdinand Bechler, wrote the novel. See her chapter, "Remembering Mamre in the early Twentieth Century: Life experiences & the making of History", in Bredekamp & Ross 1995: 237.

¹⁵⁶ *Periodical Accounts* 1860: 370.

*verhalen, die uit hun leven genomen zijn.*¹⁵⁷

By this time *De Bode* had already for over a decade been including in its church history accounts stories relating to the religious life history of indigenous converts. The *Lewens-Geschiedenis van Benigna Johannes (Naar haar eigene woorden geschreven)* appeared in the November 1860 issue. The bracketed sub-title and first-person mode of narration gave Benigna's life history and those of others an autobiographical character that had some resonance with the experiences of other converts of Khoisan and slave descent in the Western Cape.

The autobiographical account of Rosetta Klapmuts *alias* Benigna Johannes, published in three parts in *De Bode* over two years, devoted substantial space to her life experience before she had been converted to Christianity. Strikingly, the Benigna text of the early 1860s presented defining moments of her life in terms of her indigenous conceptualizing of space and time with virtually no reference to historical dates in the European sense. Specific dates, calculated according to the Christian notion of historical timelines, appeared only in the third part of the life story and are all three related to Benigna's Christian life: her christening day (17 July 1814), the day of her first communion (8 March 1817) and the day she was believed to have turned a hundred years of age (21 February 1852).

A crucial difference between *De Bode* version and the 1873 edition of Benigna's biography is the virtual absence in the former of information about the relationship between her life story and the founding history of the Mamre congregation. Perhaps, the writer of *De Bode* deemed it inappropriate, since a series of articles on the 'Geschiedenis van Mamre, van 1808 - 1858' appeared shortly before in the monthly magazine. In that series, initially put together by the missionary Christian Frederick Franke for the golden anniversary of the congregation, the main focus was on the role of the missionaries in the first decade of Mamre's history. *De Bode* reckoned that the remaining four decades did not merit the same amount of space in the magazine and only inserted "*enige bilzonderhede vermeld [kunnen] vermeld worden*" without any reference to the deceased Sister Benigna, whom Franke must have known about for at least a decade and a half.¹⁵⁸

As was customary in its editorial policy, *De Bode* did not give the name of the contributor for a historical account. By the time of the first account Franke had already returned to Germany, and in all probability he had no hand in the Benigna story that appeared in *De Bode*.

How the life of this remarkable indigenous person of the Western Cape's Swartland found its way to *De Bode* is not entirely clear. She died six years before her life story appeared in the magazine, having been blind for about thirty years prior to that. One could however assert that after she had made Groenekloof her place of abode in 1814, the Mamre missionaries – the cartwright Johann Heinrich Schmitt, the purse-maker Johann Gottlieb Bonatz and the bachelor Johannes Fritsch - would have been the first Westerners to listen attentively to her autobiography in preparation for her christening day. As the years moved on, Benigna's account of her life experience evidently developed into a publishable text for the editor as it first appeared in *De Bode*, in the Cape Dutch language. In the decade that followed the Benigna series the same editor who seems to have created the original biographical text would also have been the one to delve into the archival sources of the Church and secondary historical texts acquainting him with more information about her and others portrayed in the 1873 biography.

¹⁵⁷ *De Bode*, 1873.

¹⁵⁸ Compare Krüger & Schaberg 1984.

The book was ready for consumption by literate mission station dwellers when people referred to as Coloured in the Cape Colony were "lacking a sufficient firm sense of common group identity to mobilize them politically against the whites, whose prejudices, particularly in the rural areas, remained inviolate".¹⁵⁹ For this racially-defined subaltern people of mainly rural Western Cape, Benigna's biography had to serve as inspiration - a narrative of popular memory-history with which many could somehow identify. It tells the story, on the one hand, of how a 'heathen' of Khoisan descent was transformed into a Moravian Christian and bid a lifestyle of vagrancy farewell for a settled life on a mission station. On the other hand, it signifies a metaphysical message central to the Herrnhut mission throughout the world: *Vicit Agnus Noster Eum Sequamur*. Against this constant trope of Christ's victory over death, the life and death in faith of Benigna are complemented by those of a few other converts in an attempt to demonstrate how well the Church's project had worked in Mamre.

From beginning to end Rosetta's biography is presented in a captivating dramatic mode of narration within the context of life and death as historical phenomena complementing one another. Considering that the concluding sixth chapter of the novel has 1858 as its cut-off date, the time-frame and structure of the book suggest that the story is largely about Mamre's golden jubilee based on the life history of Benigna Johannes (1752-1854). The first chapter, with the heading 'Rosetta', opens the story with a dramatic account of the discriminatory exclusion of the young acculturated Khoekhoe girl Rosetta from the farm school because "*De onderwijser had strenge orders geen Hottentots kinderen in de schoolkamer te laten komen.*" Thus:

*zoo dikwerf het kleine meisje ook kwam om meê te leeren, werd zij de deur uitgewezen, tot haar ook verboden werd buiten de deur te stan luisteren, en de meester haar van de deur wegdreef, wanneer hij haar zag*¹⁶⁰

This set the scene for the rest of the thirteen-page chapter about her young life of abuse and misery as the daughter of detribalized Khoekhoe parents who were turned into vagrant coloured farm labourers of the Swartland. In the course of her teenage life she experienced the cruelty of death on more than one occasion, including the murder of her mother. But in due course she also heard about the promise of Christian education made possible by missionaries in other contact zones some distance from the Swartland, like Genadendal and Namaqualand. As a growing desire to become Christian and literate was taking possession of her by the first decade of the 19th century, Herrnhut missionaries started their work near the camp of her recalcitrant brother, Chief Hans Klapmuts of Louwskloof in the Groenekloof.

The next chapter of her bibliography, 'Groenekloof', is devoted to the founding years of the mission station Mamre. In this part of the novel, which narrates over fifteen pages the achievements of the three pioneer missionaries in the development of the Louwskloof and Groenekloof Khoekhoe till 1813, Rosetta does not feature at all. She reappears, however, in the third chapter, 'Benigna', composed of almost thirty pages. The chapter starts with reference to a spiritual awakening within her as she heard of "*de eerste Hottentotten gedoopt werden [te Groenekloof]*".¹⁶¹ The middle-aged Rosetta was at the time domestic worker for the benevolent farmer Jan Loubser of Vissershoeck, who read regularly for his workers and slaves from the Bible. After some years of deep soul-searching and the marriage of 'Baas Jan', whom she also satisfied sexually, she decided in 1812, at the age of sixty, to leave the farm and settle with some of her children at her brother's camp, Louwskloof, near the Groenekloof

¹⁵⁹ Marinkowitz 1985.

¹⁶⁰ *Benigna van Groenekloof*: 2.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 28.

mission. She only had one desire, to the dismay of her bother Hans Klapmuts: *"Gods Woord te leeren en gedoop te worden"*.¹⁶² This defining moment in her life occurred on 17 July 1814, the day she received the name Benigna, perhaps in memory of Count Zinzendorf's wife. The biographer voiced her experience of the event as follows:

"He dankbaar ik mij gevoel," zeide zij, "dat de Heiland mij hier gebracht heft, kan ik niet zeggen. Ik gevoel het, hoe al mijne zonden mij door het bloed van Jezus vergeven zijn; mijn hart is daarvan overtuigd." [...]

"Ja", zeide BENIGNA, " ik wil alleen voor Hem leven; dat is ook mijn besluit. Vroeger was ik er zeer op gesteld, rijk te worden in wereldsch goed; maar nu begeer ik rik te worden in mijnen Heiland."

*BENIGNA was nu een christin en lid van eene christelijke gemeente, en zijn wist de voorregten daaraan verbonden wel te waardeeren. Nooit verzuimde zij eene godsdienstoefening of andere zamenkomst in de gemeente. Overigens bleef zij liefst altijd thuis. Zij diende als vroedvrouw in de plaats, waardoor zij iets verdiende; maar zij genoot ook nog nu en dan ondersteuning van haren ouden baas JAN, naar wiens wensch zij nu den familienaam van "JOHANNES" droeg.*¹⁶³

The rest of the biography is very much about the religious discourse of Benigna and others on the mission station and how the history of the community fits into the broader history of the Church in South Africa. In this, frequent reference is made to the experience of Benigna and her Johannes family in the unfolding of the local church history of conversion, spiritual expression and burial. A substantial part of the rest of the biography is devoted to her life of faith as a convert struck by blindness in 1823. One of her greatest moments, as related in Chapter four - with the heading 'Simeon' – was, when in the year after the abolition of slavery (1838), her brother Chief Hans converted to the Herrnhut faith and received the name of Simeon on the day of his baptism, 1st April 1839. He died at the age of 110 in 1841, a year after the outbreak of a smallpox epidemic in the Swartland.

The penultimate chapter, 'Francina', nine pages long, is about how her faithful daughter-in-law cared for her and made Benigna's 100th birthday a special occasion; two years before she died. The day before she passed away, Benigna called all her pastors to bid them farewell. The last night and day of her life on earth the biographer describe powerfully as follows, before going on to narrate the death and funerals of others at the time:

*Aan de avond van dien dag riep zij FRANCINA nog aan haar bed, bedankte haar voor al hare trouwe oppassing en beval haar met haren man en hare kinderen den Heere aan. Zij gevoelde, dat de ure des doods nabij was, hoewel niemand van hare kinderen dat dacht. Den volgenden morgen, den 30sten Augustus, 1854, toen FRANCINA juist weg gegaan wa om de koeien te melken en hare moeder dus alleen gelaten had, ontsliep BENIGNA zonder eenig teeken van doodsbenauwied. Toen FRANCINA weer binnen kwam, vond zij hare lieve schoonmoeder een lijk; maar de vrede Gods rustte op haar gelaat. Men zag het haar aan, dat zij met blijmoedigheid deze wereld verlaten had, om nu altijd bij den Heere te wezen. De Heere had haar gebed verhoord en haar ten volle bij haar verstand laten blijven tot aan haar einde. Haar ouderdom was 102 jaren en 6 maanden.*¹⁶⁴

The last chapter, 'Mariane', closes the book with the life of the other faithful daughter-in-law of Benigna and the remaining history of the Johannes family. The widowed Mariane is portrayed as one who was still strong and healthy at the age of seventy two though *"verlangde zoo zeer, dat de dag mogt komen, waarop zij in de hemelsche rust zon kunnen ingaan"*.¹⁶⁵ But, like her late mother-in-law, she remained committed to her Moravian faith while

¹⁶² *ibid*, p. 32.

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p. 36.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, p. 74.

continuing with her work as midwife and comforter in the community. She died at the age of seventy-five on 30th October 1863, the day after she received a blessing from her pastor for "*haar vertrek naar het hemelsche vaderland*".¹⁶⁶

As a postscript to the narrative, the book concludes with an account of how the Mamre community celebrated two festive days. One, celebrating the golden jubilee of the mission station, had Rev. Benno Marx of Genadendal as a keynote speaker.¹⁶⁷ At the second, the celebration of the consecration of the new church building on 8 February 1868 a decade later, the celebrations closed with an evening service the Sunday led by

*de gekleurde assistant-leeraar van Goedverwacht, een kind van Mamre, met name JOZEF HARDENBERG, wiens vrouw eene dochter van FRANCINA, en dus een kleinkind beide van BENIGNA en MARIANE is.*¹⁶⁸

A century and a quarter after the publication of *Benigna van Groenekloof of Mamre* the family name Johannes remains well known in Mamre and among the Moravians of post-apartheid South Africa. Most of them, however, have only a vague social memory of her biography and even the written history of the community.¹⁶⁹ Copies of the printed text of 1873 can hardly be found in South Africa.¹⁷⁰

3. Conclusion

As with biographical representations of Old Lena in the construction of Moravian history and identity in South Africa, the narrative text of Benigna of Groenekloof has not yet been subjected to a critical reading from within. An article by the Dutch Reformed theologian Christina Landman of the University of South Africa, complementing the Moravian Church of the mid-1990s for its "positive and reconstructive attitude towards women",¹⁷¹ represents an exceptional early attempt in South Africa to create a feminist view on the indigenous beginnings of the Moravian Church. The Australian-born Kerry Ward's intellectual intervention in the oral history of the Mamre community, with critical reference to *Benigna of Groenekloof* being "the key text used to inform Mamriers about their history",¹⁷² contains postmodernist elements of discourse. But a decade since its publication Ward's study does not seem to have had the provocative or subversive impact on the consciousness of the target audience that he might have wished for. Perhaps Mamriers and Genadendalers in post-Apartheid South Africa remain theoretically too Herrnhut-bound to be able to read Old Lena and Benigna against the grain of the conventional biography and to recognise them as modes of discourse which can help us to look differently at missionary encounters.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, p. 81.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*, p. 83.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁹ Ward, "Remembering Mamre", pp. 237-38.

¹⁷⁰ As far as I could establish, except for less than a handful of printed copies kept in the archives of the Genadendal Mission Museum, only about five South African libraries have a copy. Meanwhile, an original hand-written translation in Afrikaans, dated December 1968, by P.D. Johannes of Louwskloof, a great- great-grandson of Benigna Johannes, has been put in the possession of the Institute for Historical Research, University of the Western Cape.

¹⁷¹ Landman 1995: 361.

¹⁷² Ward, "Remembering Mamre", pp. 237-41.

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Trail Blazers of Transculturation: Johannes Winter and his Family in South Africa (1873-1890)

Andrea Schultze

Recent publications dealing with mission history and colonial history, such as those of Mary Louise Pratt (1992), Ann Stoler (1995) or Jean and John Comaroff (1991/1992/1997), characterise colonial society as a "complex collectivity [...] fractured by internal difference" (Comaroffs 1992: 33-34). Edward Said argues along the same lines with the criticism that cultural encounter does not take place between clearly distinguishable homogenous identities. Instead he talks of "complex identities". There is no clear dividing line between the Own ("we") and the Other ("they") (Said 1994: 30). The contributions to the discussion aim at correcting simplistic models which reduce cultural encounters to the confrontation of clearly defined, incompatible systems. In an extreme case such models plead for an implicit or explicit cultural Darwinism, as suggested for instance by Huntington's title, "Clash of Civilizations" (1996).

Colonisers and colonised did not meet each other as monolithic blocs but were composed of heterogeneous groups and individuals with contradictory interests and changing coalitions. Their encounter was characterised by processes of transformation and transculturation.¹⁷³ Transculturation describes phenomena of mutual acquisition and redefinition of cultural elements by those people encountering one another in the contact zone (cf. Wirz 2000). This process may best be understood as a set of social and cognitive interactions where individual cultural elements were translated and negotiated and new affiliations constructed. The example of the Winter family highlights how strongly biographies were affected by processes which can be described as transculturation.

I

Johannes Winter (1847-1921) was a member of the Berlin Missionary Society. He was sent to South Africa in 1873 and some years later married Elisabeth Wangemann, daughter of the mission director Theodor Wangemann. In 1890 he left the Berlin Mission and joined the secession of African Christians who, under the guidance of ordained pastors and elders, renounced the Berlin Mission. In 1890 they founded one of the first African Independent Churches in Southern Africa, the Lutheran Bapedi Church, which still exists. The formation of the Lutheran Bapedi Church was an initiative on the part of the African mission congregations. It is unusual for a white missionary to have played an active part in such a movement.

The history of the Lutheran Bapedi Church and the biographies of Winter and his family cannot be pursued in detail here. Instead we will focus upon Winter's attempts to come to terms with the African context within which he lived, his remarkable openness to transcultural processes, how he became estranged from his colleagues and superiors and how they reacted to his behaviour and attitudes.

¹⁷³ Using the expression „transculturation“ Pratt follows the Cuban Fernando Ortiz and distances herself from the one-sided concept of „acculturation“ (cf. Pratt 1992: 5-6).

II

After being sent out, Winter worked for some years at the mission station Botshabelo in the southern Transvaal under the supervision and leadership of the mission superintendent, Alexander Merensky. In 1880, when the Pedi state was conquered by British colonial forces and Chief Sekukuni captured and put in jail, Winter was given the task of developing a mission station in the Pedi area, which was to be named after the conquered capital Mossego.

When Winter began to work in Mossego, a station remotely situated in the Leolu mountains, he did not appear to have different attitudes from his colleagues. Mossego was built on the ruins of Chief Sekukuni's seat of government. Thanks to Merensky's active support during the conquest, the mission was promised a grant of 5000 acres of land from the colonial government. Thus Winter settled in an area which had been destroyed, where the remaining population had recently had traumatic experiences with whites and the missionary was hated as someone who had helped the colonial government come to power. In full agreement with Merensky, Winter regarded the destruction of the Pedi state as a *"judgement"* which God had passed upon the stubborn *"heathen"*. He combined this with the hope that suffering would *"open the people to respect God"* and that the gospel would thereby be granted a *"pioneering success"*. *"Sorrow, hate and persecution have never yet harmed entry into the the Kingdom [of God]"*.

There are not very many notes in diaries which allow one to trace the change of heart of Winter and his wife over the following ten years, during which his family lived in great material poverty in Mossego, suffering from chronic malaria, geographically cut off from other missionary families. It is clear, however, that Winter was deeply influenced by exchanges with individual Pedi. For instance, he developed a deep friendship with Sekukuni's successor, Chief Kgolokoe, acquired a rich knowledge of the siPedi-language and the local culture and thereby gained the trust of the population in the course of time. Winter's openness to transcultural processes went unusually far. The sources show clearly that he no longer spoke German with his family but only siPedi. His children could not speak German. It is not certain if he married a Pedi as a second wife. The written sources indicate that other people accused him of this, but this is not conclusive proof. However the memory of Winter's alleged polygamy is firmly rooted in oral tradition. In 1998 an interview with descendants of members of the Botshabelo congregation produced the following information: Winter *"married a black woman. So the mission leadership wanted to do away with him. [...] He was found guilty when he married a black. [...] Then they excommunicated him."*¹⁷⁴ Winter's later removal from the missionary society is here remembered as a direct consequence of his marriage to a Pedi.

The more Winter's behaviour became known in Berlin, the more disconcerted was the reaction of Wangemann, the mission director. There are also records of many negative utterances on the part of his colleagues about Winter's unusual behaviour, which was referred to as *"blindness"* or *"aberration"*.

It is hard to discern from the sources the attitude of Elisabeth Winter to her husband's conflict with the mission leadership and with her father. From a few letters to her parents it appears that, after initial discontentment and difficult marriage crises, she accepted her husband's behaviour, even if she was not exactly happy about it. She spoke siPedi as fluently as her husband and was involved in the life of the congregation. Apart from this Elisabeth Winter wrote her husband's letters to missionary colleagues and superiors, perhaps because he was frequently ill or travelling. So she must have been entrusted with his opinions, taken part

¹⁷⁴ Interview with David Selokane, 31 January 1998 in Motetema; information confirmed by Louisa Ranthla, Helen Makwetla and others.

in conflicts and been more or less in agreement with him. Although divorce in missionary families was generally regarded as morally reprehensible and hardly ever occurred, Winter's behaviour appeared so unacceptable to his colleagues that it was suggested that his wife leave him; but she refused.

III

Which criticism of the Own caused Winter to turn to the Other, and what precisely did he find lacking in missionary praxis? Three points are clear:

1. Due to his intensive experiences in Pedi society, Winter became increasingly estranged from the usual **missionary methods** of his colleagues, which in his eyes led to a Christianity of dependent copycats. As early as 1884 he wrote that he was less and less able to bring himself to force "heathens" to convert:

"More than anything else in the world, I don't want to cause by force what I see here so often: a timid, scared withdrawal and flight from me or even a Christianity which is not developed independently, freely, gladly and full of vitality but is rather the fruit of force and pressure; I would like to cut off from the very beginning the belief that one is doing me a personal favour when one converts and that the teacher must be grateful to his believers for their belief: this feeling is more common in our congregation than is generally assumed..."¹⁷⁵

Years later he renewed his criticism, using even more unambiguous language:

"A missionary who is of the opinion that the black race will never be capable of standing on its own feet in the Christian religion, but must be for ever bound hand and foot to the stoles, cassocks and so on of the whites, either still has to learn what real Christianity means or should give up the attempt to convert the black heathen. The central point of Christian teaching is making people free and morally independent. And every Christian mission which shirks its duty, whoever it instructs, of leading to moral and religious independence, deceives itself and betrays the belief in the liberating and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. At best it will produce a pathetic copy of Christianity."¹⁷⁶

Winter criticised mission theology, which often tried to convert by preaching about sin and through fear. He rightly observed that conversion in many cases was merely a side-effect of social transformation. Where colonial conquests led to the break-up of African societies, many converts were political refugees who were baptised in order to be able to live on a mission station in safety and gain a share in its material privileges. While his colleagues had great reservations, Winter was one of the first to demand explicitly that African congregations should be set free from the paternalistic leadership claims of the missionaries. This led him consistently to support the emerging Lutheran Bapedi Church.

2. As a result of his experiences in Mossego, Winter developed a **deviant policy towards the African chiefs**. In November 1889 he wrote to his father-in-law:

"I am quite alone with my missionary practice in relation to the chiefs. [...] I am to many missionaries [...] therefore a thorn in the flesh. [...] Believe me, I have found that for 90 per cent of baptised Bas[otho] belief mainly means that they are free from all duties towards chiefs, husbands, parents and that they are not governed by anyone. [...] When I began to reject this, they considered it a quite unreasonable new demand, indeed a reversion to heathenism."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Berlin Mission Archive (BMA), Stationsakte Mossego, Document 12, Winter's diary from August 1883 to June 1884.

¹⁷⁶ Winter to H.M. Taberer, 4 February 1904, Pretoria National Archives, SNA 66/1853 1906. Quoted from Kamphausen 1976: 87.

¹⁷⁷ BMA, Synodalakte Southern Transvaal 1890-1891, Document 40, Winter to Wangemann, 26 November 1889.

Winter's dissent led to him being accused of regression both by colleagues and converts, for completely different reasons. For his colleagues the subordination under a chief was an unacceptable part of the Other, whilst for the converts it was an outdated part of the Own, deserving criticism.

"...this is the root of the hate of all teachers which I encountered on my arrival: the teacher [...] teaches that subjects no longer have to obey their chiefs but should obey the teacher instead. [...] When I came here to Bopedi, I had first of all to try to persuade the people by all means possible that I did not want to be a chief [...] in order to make the people turn away from their chiefs. I refused many who turned to me and always urged them not just to stay with their chiefs but to serve them better and to obey better than the heathen. That was hard for them to accept, but it meant that the chiefs came to love and trust me."

For this, however, he received "face-to-face reprimands" from his colleagues and superiors.¹⁷⁸

Winter defended himself against the competitive roles of missionary and chief which he had become familiar with, particularly in the case of Merensky. He criticised the policy of the mission leadership which established stations on the mission's own farms, because Christianising in this way was bound to go along with uprooting from the African social context. In contrast to Winter, Merensky represented a clear "either-or" policy – chief or missionary: no man could serve two masters. Winter, however, followed his behaviour to its logical conclusion: his converts did not settle around the church on the mission station, thereby founding a kind of "state within a state" in competition to Chief Kgolokoe. Instead they continued to live in the mountains. However this did not please the mission leadership, which in 1890 considered giving up Mossego as a mission station, because the success of the work could not be measured in terms of a large settlement of converts committed to the church.

3. The third point of criticism in which Winter supported unreservedly the concerns of African Christians, thereby calling into question one of the central economic tenets of missionary work, was the **possession of vast landed property and the practice of tenancy**, which the mission demanded from Christians living on its land. The missionary was responsible for collecting rent, which often led to bitter conflicts. According to Winter, congregations decried the mission as "*the robber of our land*".¹⁷⁹ Subsequently, in a letter to Wangemann, shortly before the final breach, he wrote:

"All Bapedi congregations [...] have been complaining bitterly for a long time: about the now dominant missionary practice [...] of inconsiderate money-grabbing on the one hand, about the arrogant, lordly behaviour of the missionaries towards the people and helpers on the other, about the mutual trust which has been completely lost. [...] I have not only told you in writing that I bear ill-will at heart towards this interest-grabbing, in the manner it occurs, but have complained about it openly in the synod [...] Some brothers shared my opinion, but only tacitly."¹⁸⁰

IV

The passages quoted here from archival sources give at least some insight into three intertwining stories: they provide information on the history of a family, on forms of "othering" and on transculturation in the colonial context.

¹⁷⁸ BMA, Synodalakte Southern Transvaal 1890-1891, Document 40, Winter to Wangemann, 26. November 1889.

¹⁷⁹ BMA, Stationsakte Mossego, Document 12, Winter's diary from August 1883 to June 1884.

¹⁸⁰ BMA, Synodalakte Southern Transvaal 1890-1891, Document 54, Winter to Wangemann, Easter 1890.

Missionary societies such as the Berlin Mission were heterogeneous organisations with a "complex identity". At the same time they were only capable to a limited extent of engaging in constructive debate with dissent within their own ranks.

What was particularly unsettling about Winter's utterances for his superiors must have been his implicit demand that missionaries should discuss with the Other so seriously that even personal convictions could be called into question and changed. The annoyance of the missionary leadership in Berlin about Winter's approach to local culture showed a eurocentric blindness (albeit not untypical in the 19th century) to the fact that in the contact zone transculturation (as a reciprocal process) was much more likely to occur than a one-sided acculturation – and this applies to religious convictions and theological knowledge as well. Mission, viewed as a one-way street from Berlin to Africa, could not concede on the basis of this world view that the Own was itself also deeply changed by the Other (cf. Pratt 1992:6).

Winter's decision to join the initiative of the secession of the Lutheran Bapedi Church with all the consequences of changing sides must be seen partly as an act of desperation, partly as one of courage. He and his family constituted an unusually pronounced case of border-crossers within the contact zone. They became protagonists and trail blazers of a "transcultural history". The case of the Winter family indicates – to a greater extent than Mary Louise Pratt acknowledges - that transculturation should be understood as an irreversible process. The learning curve which the Winters experienced was not reversible.

Within the Berlin Mission, Winter's radical dissent remained unique. In the many years that followed, the mission leadership was unable to make constructive, reconciliatory contact with this outcast critic.

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Abstracts

The papers deal with cultural interaction between Europe and Africa resulting from missionary activity in Africa. The main focus is on the premises and impact of Protestant missionary work, both in Africa and in Europe, but one paper deals with similar processes in Islam.

Part 1: Religion and Modernity

Albert Wirz et al.: Transculturation - Mission and modernity in Africa: A manifesto

The term "transculturation" refers to those processes of cultural translation which take place in contact zones. Such processes are complex and multi-directional. They concern not only the translation, appropriation, re-modelling and redefinition of cultural elements from the places of origin of missionary activities by the population of the "target areas", but also their influence on the bearers of the penetrating culture themselves. Hence to discuss transculturation obliges us to confront questions regarding the significance of contact experiences for society, culture and history in the places of origin. Since culture is not something closed but is created and changed through discourse, our aim is to reconstruct processes of cultural transfer between African and European societies and thereby to discover the rudiments of a shared history.

Klaus Hock: Transculturation - Some exploratory remarks

Hitherto, transculturation as a category facilitating research into the interaction and transfer between cultures has primarily been put to test on the level of micro studies, focussing on individual biographies as *loci* where processes of cultural transformation can be traced. Nevertheless, transculturation may likewise provide a paradigm relevant to the analysis of cultural change on a macro level.

The introductory remarks focus on transculturation from the perspective of the History of Religions as an academic discipline. In studying the Christianisation of Africa (and the Africanisation of Christianity) transculturation focusses on "the African factor" by analysing religious change as a phenomenon characterized by multi-directional processes, thereby going beyond notions of synthesis or syncretism and highlighting the dynamics of the alleged "minor" traditions; then, transculturation helps us to identify processes of differentiation in the context of the encounter between European Christianity and African religions constitutive of the emergence of "Western" modernity; on the other hand, transculturation serves as an analytical tool for tagging processes of adaptation and amalgamation in the emergence of "African" modernity; and, in the context of accelerated globalisation in the second half of the 20th century, transculturation provides a means of analysing African religions as non-static, variable phenomena which are part of a "poly-contextual" world, especially with regard to migrant or diaspora religions.

Roman Loimeier: 'Where was this worship of coughing invented?' Processes of transculturation from an Islamic perspective

Processes of Islamisation and, linked with this, of adopting "Islamic" norms as well as strategies of "Islamic mission" (*da`wa*) have been discussed since the beginning of European colonialism in Africa from various perspectives (those of missions, the administration, and academics). The paper offers a case study - the expansion of the Qâdiriyya-Sufi brotherhood in East Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries - relating to the transfer of certain Islamic practices into non-Islamic African contexts and to the problems which this raises for Muslims.

Part 2: Biographical Case Studies

Sonia Abun-Nasr: A 'prince' as missionary: The ambition of David Asante

This paper examines the career of David Asante, a nineteenth-century African missionary in the Gold Coast. It aims at shedding light on the social conditions under which he worked and the possibilities they provided for missionary activities. It raises the questions of whether David Asante performed his duties as a missionary and pastor as defined by the Basle Mission and how he interpreted them in the African surroundings in which he lived and worked. Answers to these questions are sought in the influence his standing in the Basle Mission and his descent from a family of African rulers had on the development of his career. The picture that emerges is that of an ardent Christian who tried in his own way to adapt his role as a missionary to African values and patterns of life.

Rainer Alsheimer: Of leopards in caves and owls in alcohol: The imagination of a hybrid world view by an African missionary assistant

The paper focuses on the individual contact of an African "helper" or assistant of German-Protestant missionary with the cultural behaviour of Europeans during the last half of the 19th century in West Africa. The life history of Wilhelm Lemgo reflects his way between cultures: early childhood as a slave, being put on sale, purchased by the missionaries, school attendance, apprenticeship to a "helper" and bricklayer, conflict with the senior missionary's authority, return to the mission and marriage, Pietistic awakening, work as a catechist, domestic conflict and the upbringing of children.

Both autobiographical texts and reports written by others are used. The material comes from the archive of the Northern German Missionary Society in Bremen, which contains an enormous corpus of *regulae vitae*, personal records, diaries, minute books, correspondence, exercise books, pupils' essays, statutes and articles of association, as well as brochures from the missionary press.

Jatti Bredekamp: Biographical representations of Vehettge Tikkuie and Rosetta Klapmuts: Moravian Khoekhoe icons of conversion in South Africa

In Moravian Mission mythology and history in South Africa, 'Oude Lena' alias Vehettge Tikkuie and 'Rosetta Klapmuts' alias Benigna Johannes have become over the past two centuries most revered icons of conversion. The paper discusses their life histories as recorded in missionary diaries and reflected in other printed sources directed at a particular readership of the 18th and 19th centuries.

It argues that the primary concern of the producers of biographical knowledge about the two icons was to create an image of the converted Khoekhoen that would appeal to Herrnhut ideology of the 'other'. The paper focuses on the transformed life of these two Khoekhoe females within the context of a) colonial Cape of Good Hope as a 'contact zone'; b) Moravian conceptions of Christian cultural identity versus a 'heathen' identity; c) transculturation as perceptibly a one-direction movement in colonial Moravianism; and d) the impact of missionary representation of biographical case studies on post-apartheid Moravians.

Andrea Schultze: Trail blazers of transculturation: Johannes Winter and his family in South Africa (1873-1890)

“Transculturation” may serve as a model for describing aspects of the colonial encounter as processes of transformation and mutual exchange. Through the interpretation of nineteenth-century missionary letters and diaries we can gain insight into biographies which are marked by transcultural processes. The paper aims at exemplifying life in a "contact zone" by focusing on the situation of Johannes Winter and his family, who served as missionaries of the Berlin Missionary Society in South Africa (1873-1890). Earlier than his colleagues Winter promoted a discussion about transculturation and (what makes his reports extremely unusual) reflected upon the transformation his family underwent. He thus became one of the missionary society's most controversial figures.

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Anette Volk, 2000. ISBN 3-932632-52-4, 3-932632-54-0. Pp. vi, 318, 1 ill.

A guide to photos from East Africa in the Herrnhut (Moravian) Mission's archive.

No. 16: Afrikabestände im Archiv des Ev.-Lutherischen Missionswerkes Leipzig e.V.: IV. Das Bildarchiv (Teil 3)

Matthias Eger 2000. ISBN 3-932632-76-1. Pp. iii, 46, 1 ill.

The third part of a guide which lists photographs taken by Leipzig missionaries in what are now Kenya and Tanzania, mainly between 1890 and 1940.

- No. 17: Führer zum Material über Ostafrika im *Evang.-Luth. Missionsblatt* 1901-1905**
Anja Reimers 2000. ISBN 3-932632-78-8. Pp. iii, 68, 1 ill.
References to East Africa (including photographs) in the main journal of the Leipzig Mission (for previous years see No. 4), including an index.
- No. 18: Führer zum Archiv des Ev.-Luth. Missionswerkes Leipzig**
Birgit Niquice 2001. ISBN 3-932632-81-8. Pp. 124, 1 ill.
Overview of the archival holdings of the Leipzig Mission, covering the mission's central administration and its work in India, New Guinea, Brazil etc., and some holdings on East Africa not included in previous guides.
- No. 19: Photographs from Pare. From the Archive of the Leipzig Mission c.1900-1940**
Viola Solluntsch 2001. ISBN 3-932632-83-4. Pp. x, 121 ill.
120 photographs from the Pare Diocese (northeastern Tanzania), mainly by W. Guth and F. Nüssler.
- No. 20: Afrikabestände der Norddeutschen Missionsgesellschaft im Staatsarchiv Bremen**
Manuela Büttner & Sandy Martens 2001. ISBN 3-932632-95-8. Pp. xi, 89, 1 ill.
Protestant missionaries from northern Germany began work in the Ewe-speaking area of West Africa in 1847. This guide is based on notes made by Rainer Alsheimer, with the addition of an index and a preface.
- No. 21: Archivbestände zu Tansania in der Benediktiner-Erzabtei St. Ottilien**
Anette Volk 2002. ISBN 3-935999-05-4. Pp. vi, 156, 1 ill.
The Benedictine Congregation of St. Ottilien (in Bavaria) has been active in southern Tanzania since 1888.
- No. 22: Transculturation: Mission and Modernity in Africa**
Edited by Adam Jones 2003. ISBN 3-935999-14-3. Pp. 84.
Papers by S. Abun-Nasr, R. Alsheimer, J. Bredekamp, K. Hock, R. Loimeier, A. Schultze and A. Wirz on cultural interaction between Europe and Africa resulting from missionary activity. The focus is on the premises and impact of Protestant missionary work; one paper deals with similar processes in Islam.
- No. 23: Guide to the Basel Mission's Ghana Archive**
Paul Jenkins et al. 2003. ISBN 3-935999-17-8. Pp. 117
Relates mainly to southern Ghana in the period 1828-1914, but with some more recent material.
- No. 24: Afrikabestände im Archiv der Breklumer Mission**
Kristin Schierenberg. 2005. ISBN 3-935999-40-2. Pp. 166
Records of a Protestant missionary society based in Schleswig-Holstein, which sent three missionaries to what is now northwestern Tanzania in 1912. They founded three mission stations in the Uha-Ujiji region and continued to work there – with relatively little success - until taken prisoner by Belgian troops in 1916.
- No. 25: Fotos der Hermannsburger Mission aus Äthiopien im Archiv des ELM 1927-1958, Teil 1 & Teil 2**
Uta Dierking. 2005. ISBN 3-935999-42-9. Pp. 336
A list of 1,712 photographs from western and southwestern Ethiopia conserved in the archive of the Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionswerk in Hermannsburg (Germany).
- No. 26: Guide to the ELCT Northern Diocese Archive in Moshi, Tanzania 1906-1993**
Monika Rammelt 2005. ISBN 3-935999-44-5. Pp. 170
Holdings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, mostly dealing with the last 40 years, but with some material from German mission stations and personnel files of those trained at Machame Theological College in 1933-34.
- No. 27: Fotos und Texte von der Visitationsreise des Leipziger Missionsdirektors Carl Ihmels nach Tanganyika, 1927**
Matthias Kempke 2006. ISBN 3-935999-52-6. Pp. 81
328 photographs from a visitation to Tanganyika by the Leipzig Mission's Director in 1927. Supplemented by an index and copies of reports on the visitation published in the Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionsblatt.
- No. 28: Digitized Records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania in Moshi**
Monika Rammelt & Antonia Witt. 5th ed. 2012. ISBN 3-935999-61-5. Pp. 66, 1 map
List of church archival records from the period 1896-1930 that have been digitized (cf. Nos. 9 and 26).
- No. 29: Führer zum Material über Ostafrika im Evangelisch-Lutherischen Missionsblatt 1906-1910**
Uta Frömel & Markus Rügamer. 2011. ISBN 3-935999-61-5. Pp. 76
Sequel to Nos. 4 and 17.