

## BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

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**Ulrich van der Heyden (Hrsg): Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen. Transkulturelle Wissensaneignung und -vermittlung durch christliche Missionare in Afrika und Asien im 17., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert (= Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv, Bd. 19), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2012, 456 S.**

Rezensiert von  
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The history of Christian missions in the extra-European world has received increased scholarly attention from people outside theology and church history departments in the last few decades. Profane historians have taken notice of missionary archives as well as missionary writings in colonial archives as such sources provide evidence of contact zones and borderlands, the complex and often messy spaces in which colonial encounters were played out. A recent trend in this area has been the focus upon knowledge. Missionaries were some of the longest serving Europeans in colonial spaces and due to their intimate contact with indigenous peoples were in a unique position to collect information on such things as local languages,

traditions, customs, art, religion, beliefs, medicine, and agriculture. With the rise of the professional anthropologist and linguist at the end of the nineteenth century, missionaries' contributions to professional science were often dismissed as irrelevant and tainted by their religious zeal.

Yet, a number of recent monographs, edited collections, and conferences are working to uncover the contributions of missionaries to the construction of colonial knowledge, whilst maintaining an awareness that much of this knowledge could not have been procured without the contributions of Indigenous peoples.<sup>1</sup>

Questions that have directed such research include: what types of knowledge did missionaries collect about colonies, including their indigenous inhabitants? How did they collect this knowledge, and what was the role of indigenous peoples in the collection of such knowledge? How was knowledge of the colonies transferred back to Europe, what did Europeans make of this knowledge? How did such knowledge transform or affect the European's image of self? What knowledge did missionaries and other colonists bring to the new-world, and, How was it received by indigenous peoples? What were the roles of Indigenous peoples in this knowledge transfer?

The book under review follows the line of the work outlined above. It is the product of an international conference held in September 2010 in Berlin, which was the fourth in a series of interdisciplinary and international conferences established in 1994 that has focused upon different aspects of mission history, including national development, violence, and mission and power in political change.<sup>2</sup> The change from the conference to the book title from “Missionsgeschichte als Globalgeschichte” to “Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen”, indicates a shift in focus from mission history as global history to that of mission history as a history of the globalisation of knowledge, placing knowledge as the central object under examination, and situating the book in the broader scholarly landscape beyond that of missionary history, examining knowledge as practice, as well as power.

The international nature of both authors and topics is noteworthy, with the 35 authors coming from eleven countries, being Côte d’Ivoire, Germany, India, Portugal, Slovakia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, UK, USA, and Zimbabwe. The diversity of countries that the authors come from and write about demonstrates quite clearly one of the ways in which the history of missions has contributed to the construction of knowledge in locations throughout the globe. As Teotónio R. de Souza states in the introduction to his article, “It is not difficult to draw up lists of the missionary contributions to modern science, but we need to go beyond the orientalist framework in which the European missionaries are presented as the only protagonists in the process, ignoring and forgetting the

native sources of that knowledge or without acknowledgment of native collaboration as an essential partnership” (p. 382). It is to be expected that de Souza’s advice is followed more by some authors and less by others given the fact that contemporaneous missionary records often neglect to record the contributions of indigenous informants and helpers. (Indeed, de Souza’s own work provides scant information about the Jesuits’ Indigenous informants in India). Despite the inadequacies of missionary writings, an acknowledgment of the potential input of indigenous peoples must still be maintained. For example, missionaries obviously needed indigenous peoples’ collaboration in the acquisition of local languages. To be sure, given the vast amount of work that missionaries undertook in codifying vernacular languages, it is not surprising that many of the articles within the collection focus upon this point. Many authors note that knowledge is culturally and historically interpreted, with missionaries extracting the material that they desired or needed to best reflect their aims (see, for example, Pakendorf’s contribution). Moreover, the transfer and accumulation of knowledge is not a one way process, rather is dynamic for all parties involved, and has the ability to affect people’s world view (see, for example, Korschorke’s contribution). Indeed, as Gabriele Richter notes, knowledge was itself a commodity that could be traded (p. 335). Given that it would have been difficult to structure the book geographically, owing to the number of papers that would have fitted into neither the ‘African’ nor ‘Asian’ categories of the book’s title, the editorial decision of an alphabetical structure is understandable. The book would nev-

ertheless have been made more accessible through the aid of an index. This would have been appreciated given the amount of cross-over between some of the articles. For example there are at least six articles that examine some aspect of Togo, however, not all of these articles have the name 'Togo' in the title, making it difficult for the casual reader to quickly find the material that he or she may be interested in. Like many edited collections, some articles are constrained to case studies that do little to extend the analyses or conclusions into broader scholarly debates. In contrast the contributions from Azamede, Burlacioiu, and Habermas, among others, provide insightful conclusions of generality beyond the subject matter alone. Although a number of the papers did not fit neatly into expectations of an academic article, this observation, rather than being a criticism, indicates that the production and consumption of knowledge is itself culturally and historically located, with personal and political agendas influencing these processes. Given its broad geographical and temporal range, this book is bound to provide material of interest for those engaged in how colonial fostered the production of global knowledge.

#### Notes:

- 1 See for example: P. Harries: *Butterflies & Barbarians. Swiss Missionaries & Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa*, Harare 2007; R. Habermas: *Mission im 19. Jahrhundert*. *Global Netze des Religiösen*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 287 (2008), S. 629-679; N. Etherington (Hrsg.): *Missions and Empire, The Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series*, Oxford, 2005; see also the special themed edition of "Geschichte und Gesellschaft" 2/2010 on "Mission und kulturelle Globalisierung". Workshops include: *Missionsgeschichte als Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. Die Dänisch-Hallesche Mission und

die Forschung im Kontext interdisziplinärer Zusammenarbeit, Halle, 31 August-2 September 2006; *Kognitive Kartographien des Religiösen*. *Missionsgeschichte, Wissensgeschichte, Transfergeschichte* (17. -20. Jh.), Wolfenbüttel, 19-20 March 2009.

- 2 U. v. d. Heyden/H. Liebau, (Hrsg.): *Missionsgeschichte – Kirchengeschichte – Weltgeschichte*. *Christliche Missionen im Kontext nationaler Entwicklung in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien*, Stuttgart 1996; ders., J. Becher (Hrsg.): *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt bei der Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*, Stuttgart 2000; ders./Holger Stoecker (Hrsg.): *Mission und Macht im Wandel politischer Orientierungen. Europäische Missionsgesellschaften in politischen Spannungsfeldern in Afrika und Asien zwischen 1800 und 1945*, Stuttgart 2005.

**Peter Hayes / Jean El Gammal (Hrsg.):  
Universitätskulturen. L'Université  
en perspective. The Future of the  
University (= Jahrbuch des Frank-  
reichzentrums der Universität des  
Saarlandes Bd. 11), Bielefeld:  
Transcript Verlag, 2012, 317 S.**

Rezensiert von  
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Der Band „Universitätskulturen“ ist in der Reihe der Jahrbücher des Frankreichzentrums der Universität des Saarlandes (UdS) erschienen und das Ergebnis des 2010 zum vierten Mal durchgeführten „Transatlantischen Dialogs“, der 2004 am Lehrstuhl für Neuere und Neueste Geschichte von Rainer Hudemann (UdS) etabliert wurde. Es handelt sich um ein Blockseminar für Ex-