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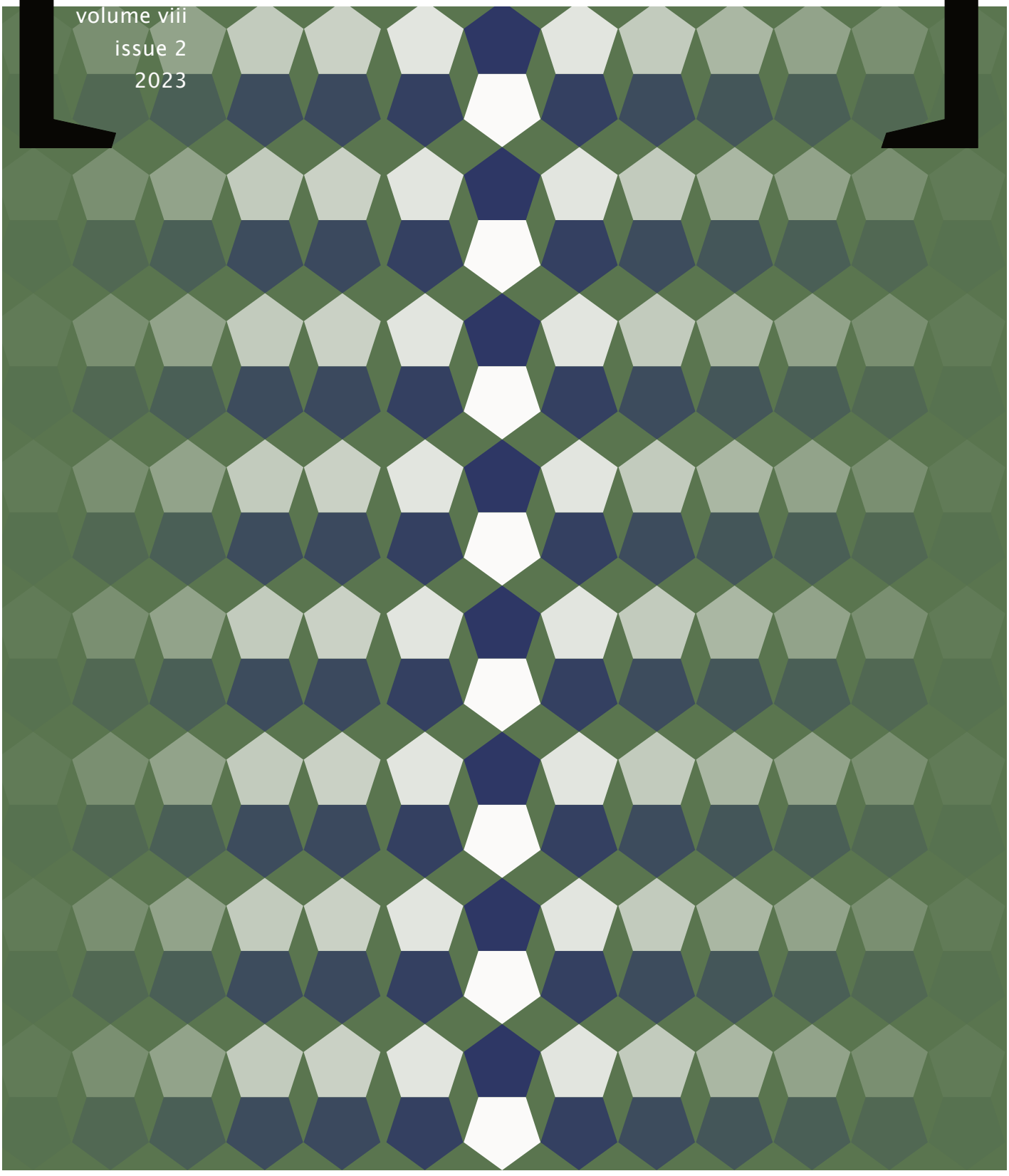

Global histories: a student journal

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Scope and purpose

In response to the increasing interest in the 'global' as a field of inquiry, a perspective, and an approach, *Global Histories: A Student Journal* aims to offer a platform for debate, discussion, and intellectual exchange for a new generation of scholars with diverse research interests. Global history can provide an opportunity to move beyond disciplinary boundaries and methodological centrisms, both in time and space. As students of global history at Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, our interest lies not in prescribing what global history is and what it is not, but to encourage collaboration, cooperation, and discourse among students seeking to explore new intellectual frontiers.

Publication frequency

The journal is published twice yearly in spring and autumn. Please see the website for further details.

This issue was published in March 2023.

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This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. All articles which appear in this issue, with the exception of editorial content, were subject to peer review.

Contact information

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Contents

Dear reader,

After many months in fruitful collaboration, we are delighted to present the second issue of the eighth volume of *Global histories*. This issue brought us the opportunity once more to exchange with students around the world, some of whom even attended our most recent Global History Student Conference. Our issue opens with Katharina Krause's thoughtful contribution to the field of emotional geography, examining the life and writings of Zanzibari princess Sayyida Sālme bint Saʿīd, who immigrated to Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and adopted the name Emily Ruete. Rania Ashour then examines the role of the Protestant missionary society of the Kaiserswerth Diaconia, evaluating the institution's internal newspapers to understand their role in the conversion of Muslims in nineteenth-century Egypt. Florian Ambach continues with a look into the imperial history of the Habsburg Empire, putting Austrian colonial activities abroad in context with contemporary Austrian historiographical discussions. Barbara Testini concludes the research articles with a critical look at girlhood and modernity, comparing the oft-studied Western flapper with the lesser-examined East African kanga-wearing woman. Finally, a methodological investigation from Aoibhín McQuillan concludes this issue with a discussion of the global historian's positionality, asking us to consider our roles as negotiators of history in light of the widening gap between Western academia and the global field.

Our team has been hard at work once more making preparations for the upcoming year. We opened the call for the 2023 Global History Student Conference, and anticipate many applications and many hard decisions on the presentations. The conference will be held from 30 June to 2 July in Berlin, and we hope to see any local readers there. More information about the conference will follow in the coming months on our website and social media pages.

This issue also represents a change in hands for *Global histories*. As I will hand in my Master's thesis, I leave the role of Editor to Phoebe Ka Laam Ng, who has been a member of our team for two years. It was one of the most fruitful opportunities of my academic career thus far to steer *Global histories*, and under Phoebe's guidance, there will only be more great things to come. My heartfelt gratitude to everyone I have worked with over the years, and a heartfelt *Auf wiedersehen*!

With best regards,

Ruby Guyot

Editor-in-chief

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the interest and work of all students who submitted an article, essay, or review during the last call for papers. We are especially grateful to the authors published in this issue, for both their fruitful contributions and efforts in revision. These authors include Katharina Krause, Rania Ashour, Florian Ambach, Barbara Testini, and Aoibhín McQuillan. Their work throughout the months was intensive, and it paid off in their excellent contributions to this issue.

In addition, we would like to extend our immense gratitude to the students on the *Global Histories* journal team and students in our Global History MA program, particularly those who devoted extensive time and effort to reviewing and editing the published pieces. These members include Simone Steadman-Gantous, Lukas Jung, Asya Kurtuldu, Sarah Gubitz, Geena Carlisle, Zaza Jung, Bella Ruhl, Phoebe Ka Laam Ng, and Joshua Rossetti. The attention and dedication these members provided towards the pieces they worked on during the arrival of another semester ensured this issue's high quality. We once again thank Cecilia Burgos Cuevas for her wonderful work in the layout and design of our journal, and for yet another visually appealing issue.

Finally, we are grateful for the continued support and assistance for this project by the Freie Universität Berlin, particularly the Global History faculty, chaired by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Conrad, and the Online Journal Systems team at CeDiS.

I.

Articles

Research

Between Obligation and Refuge. Emotional Place Attachment and Sayyida Sālme's/Emily Ruete's Migration to Germany

By

Katharina Krause

Abstract

Informed by perspectives from Migration Studies and Emotional Geography, this article investigates the nexus between emotion, migration, and space, and sets out a possible roadmap for future historiographical analyses of migrants' place attachment. To this end, I engage the self-narratives of Sayyida Sālme bint Saʿīd/ Emily Ruete as sources of an Omani Zanzibari individual's experience in Germany during the late nineteenth century. I argue that the emotional reactions to her spatial and social environment in Germany were impacted by both its foreignness as well as prevalent contemporary Orientalist and racialized discourses. The ambiguous emotions triggered by her migration were mitigated by her German husband, who functioned as a translator of the new environment and customs, as well as her continued attachment to Zanzibar, which she reinforced through practices of remembrance and writing. Overall, her emotions towards Germany and Zanzibar mirrored the overarching colonial context which they were felt in and, while being linked to certain material spaces and objects, were marked by their association with obligation to her husband and memories that misaligned with (spatial) reality. Her case and the analytical lens suggested in this article serve as a vignette for writing an aggregate emotional history of migration that broadens our understanding of the historical processes of global entanglement from below.

About the author

Katharina Krause received her BA in History and Philosophy from Ruhr-Universität Bochum and is currently pursuing an MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oxford. Her research interests include the histories of imperial and colonial involvement as well as nationalisms and state formation in the wider Middle East, with a particular focus on trans- and intraregional mobilities and exchanges, identity-related public discourses, and their intersection with emotions.

Introduction: Migration, Emotion, and Space

As an important focus of forerunners of the discipline, migration still takes center stage in the field of global history. After all, the transregional mobility of people and goods can be considered the very foundation of the globalized world. Despite this ubiquity of mobility, however, there remains a relative lack of historiographical analyses concerned with cases of migration from precolonial or colonized regions to Europe in the period of high imperialism, while the lives of Europeans abroad have been dealt with in abundance. Exceptions are rare and often focus on the post-1914 twentieth century.

Historians addressing the topic of migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must undoubtedly take into account that virtually all movement from Asian and African regions was affected, enabled, or forced by the impacts of European empires' colonial involvement. Studies drawing attention to the opportunities for native actors to permeate what in hindsight appear as rigid structures in colonized territories are therefore especially important when considering migration because they draw attention to 'colonized' individuals' agency in the face of colonial administrations.[1] Like interpreters or native agents in the colonies, migrants from colonized regions pervaded different spheres of empire and thereby transgressed geographic and racial segregation. Tracing their life trajectories thus enables a more holistic reconstruction of the realities of colonialism and, in particular, its impact on the European metropole.

While taking these perspectives into account, this article's topic has grown out of recent explorations in the disciplines of Migration Studies and Cultural Geography that focus on the significance of migration for individuals' identities.[2] David Conradson and Deirdre McKay coin the term "translocal subjectivities" to describe what they refer to as "multiply-located senses of self amongst those who inhabit transnational social fields."[3] In reference to their concept, Paolo Boccagni and Loretta Baldassar draw attention to the aspect of emotion and, relying on empirical studies focusing on contemporary migrant experiences, highlight that migration involves the "transmission, reproduction and evolution of emotions in relation to belonging, identity and 'home'" and is characterized by the "ambiguities and tensions around emotional connections to 'here' and 'there'."[4] Their perspective seeks to conjoin advancements in Cultural and Postcolonial Geography that include discussions of emotions in the discipline as well as perspectives of a New Materialism that concedes agency to inanimate objects.[5]

One current dealing with the connections between space and emotion explores "Place Attachment", basing its research on the assumption that humans often form emotional bonds to the places, spaces, or regions they inhabit or have formative experiences in.[6] One kind of place scholars generally assume individuals to form emotional connections with are "secure places", such as the home space.[7] Accordingly, Home Studies, another sub-discipline of Geography, empirically demonstrates the interconnection of spatial, or trans-spatial, experiences and emotions. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling define home as "an idea and an imaginary […] imbued with feelings" while "intrinsically spatial" and,

consequentially, as a "spatial imaginary" that is "both a place/physical location and a set of feelings."[8] Their account similarly highlights the importance of domesticity for empires as well as the multi-faceted meaning of home for contemporary migrant and diasporic communities.[9] Migrants, in particular, often understand home as a "site of memories" and are generally attached to more than one place.[10]

While some historiographical studies have scrutinized the concept of the European home as well as aspects of domesticity in the context of colonialism, it is currently only scholars from the social sciences that have explored the nexus between emotional place attachment and migration.[11] Still, with historiography's own 'emotional turn,' some historians have addressed the intersection of space and emotions, mostly with regard to how their relation is influenced by aspects of hegemony or the built environment.[12] Yet, few have so far connected the historical study of migration and the study of emotions.[13]

Building on this variety of contexts, this article will explore the relation between emotional place attachment and migration during the period of high imperialism by focusing on the case of Sayyida Sālme/Emily Ruete from Zanzibar,[14] daughter of Omani Sultan Saʿīd (r. 1804-56), who married a German merchant and relocated to Germany in 1867.[15] Several studies have engaged with her self-narratives as a source for various kinds of histories, and some of these accounts touch in passing on the emotionality underlying the writings about her translocal experience. However, none have dedicated a distinct analysis to what emotions the new spatial environment in Germany stirred in her and how her migration to Germany impacted her attachment to Zanzibar, the place of her upbringing.

Joseph Ben Prestel's suggestion to make use of an understanding of emotions as socially situated practices in order to bridge the dichotomy between universalistic and phenomenological definitions forms the methodological foundation of this investigation.[16] Emotions, understood as practice, "bridge the social, the body, and the mind."[17] By contextualizing Emily Ruete's emotions and relating them to her spatial environment, social constellations, and, particularly, their colonial circumstances, this study will contribute insights reaching beyond her individual case and function as a roadmap for future historiographical analyses of migrants' place attachment.

Before Migrating, There was Love

Sālme bint Saʿīd was born in 1844 in Zanzibar as one of thirty-six children of Omani Sultan Saʿīd and the only child to one of his Circassian concubines.[18] She was brought up in several of the sultan's island palaces among his ethnically diverse concubines and siblings. The description of her childhood in her memoirs includes innumerable traces accounting for the translocal environment that nineteenth century Zanzibar represented: the children were gifted donkeys from Muscat in mainland Oman and toys from Europe, food and weapons were imported from Arabia, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia, their beds were made of East Indian wood, and a manifold of languages were spoken in her father's harem, including

Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Circassian, Swahili, Nubian, Abyssinian, and Arabic.[19] These aspects testify to Zanzibar's far-reaching connections fostered during Sultan Saʿīd's reign.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Bū-Saʿīd dynasty had moved their administrative headquarters from Oman to Zanzibar, owing to the island's growing economic importance. The Omani Sultanate had long been a maritime empire with informal strongholds along the Indian Ocean littoral in the Persian Gulf and East Africa. Clove plantations as well as the slave and spice trades had created a bustling commercial environment in East Africa that increasingly attracted European trading companies to the island in the nineteenth century. Among them were the Hamburg-based firms O'Swald and Hansing on whose initiative three Hanseatic cities concluded a friendship agreement with the Zanzibari Sultanate in 1859.[20] Sālme's later husband, Rudolph Heinrich Ruete (*1839-1870), worked for Hansing and, as a member of the local German merchant community, can undoubtedly be counted as a member of what Ulrike Lindner termed a pre-colonial German "expatriate society."[21] Sālme was "on the most friendly terms with the Europeans in Zanzibar […] in so far as the custom of the country permitted."[22]

She met Ruete in 1865 during a "troubled time": following Saʿīd's death in 1856, she had acted as scribe to the cause of her brother Barghash's uprising against her other brother, reigning Sultan Mājid.[23] As their "palace revolution" failed, it led to the split of the sultanate in two spheres of influence, with one geographically limited to Oman, and the other to Zanzibar and parts of mainland East Africa. This development enabled the further encroachment of the British Empire in Zanzibar and similarly caused Barghash's accomplices during the attempted revolution, which included Sālme, to be met with "hatred" and "dissension" by members of the ruling elite.[24] Having moved out to the city due to these dissonances, her house was situated next to Ruete's.[25] While contacts to European women were permissible, her friendship and later "deep love" for Ruete was not in accordance with the local cultural script.[26] Her decision to leave Zanzibar for Aden in 1866 with the help of the British consul and his wife was most likely due to the fact that she was pregnant.[27] Ruete remained in Zanzibar for nine more months to conclude his business on the island before joining her in Aden. As soon as he arrived there in April 1867, she was baptized and took on the name Emily Ruete, they were married and left for Europe.[28]

The rough outline of their love story was widely known in Germany due to many retellings in contemporary newspapers and journals.[29] Lora Wildenthal argues that these public accounts of their romance "suited perfectly to an Orientalist narrative according to which a Christian man liberates an oppressed Muslim woman from her cruel family and introduces her to marriage based on romantic love."[30] Although Emily herself rejected these versions of her story, they bear testimony to the asymmetrical gender relations and the ubiquity of Orientalist stereotypes in the investigated historical context.[31]

Navigating Foreign Space: Feelings of Unbelonging

Most of Emily's now published writings were originally composed in German, meaning that she only started writing them after she had mastered the language.[32] They include her memoirs (*Memoiren einer arabischen Prinzessin*), which were first published in 1886 and which are widely considered as the first autobiography of an Arab woman, as well as her originally unpublished *Letters Home* (*Briefe nach der Heimat*), which are not actually letters but were composed as a diary-resembling una

d text between 1867 and 1884.[33] While the Letters mention at least one unknown female addressee, whom she refers to as her "dear friend", likely a person residing in Zanzibar, it is unclear whether she wrote them with the intention of actually sending them, given that they were also written in German.[34]

In contrast to the Letters, which include a myriad of emotional references, her memoirs are largely void of emotional remarks. This may point to the fact that a lack of emotionality was common in women's published writing during that period.[35] What is striking about her Letters, on the other hand, is that although they are rather rich in descriptions of her emotional life, they do not include references to her initial feelings for Heinrich Ruete, her time in Aden, her four pregnancies, the death of her first child, or her relation to Ruete's family.[36]

The Letters begin with their departure from Aden and with her remarking that "life, manners, customs and perceptions of the people of the North" differed so completely from those of her native country that she "needed years to get out of the quiet astonishment about everything which surrounded [her]."[37] This is a rather different impression from the one she gives in her memoirs where she contends that she "soon accustomed [her]self to the strange circumstances."[38] Contrarily, in the Letters she admits that she did face many hardships in Europe. Among these were the emotions her new environment stirred in her: for example, throughout the Letters she recurringly refers to feelings of fear. Already when leaving Marseille, the first European city they reached, for Hamburg, Ruete's native city, she recounts:

> While we were driving from our hotel to the railway station, I was seized by such a fear, otherwise unknown to me, that I would have preferred to cry aloud. It seemed to me as if from now on my homeland would be removed from me more and more and that all bridges had collapsed behind me. My soul was crying out for all of you and seemed to blend with a thousand voices from my beloved island, calling me back with one warning: "Go no further! Instead come back!" I fought a terrible fight with myself. Mechanically I mounted the train whose purpose it was to bring me as quickly as possible to an unknown country, to perfect strangers, as if I too were in the greatest hurry to reach my future destination as soon as possible – and so we drove on and on towards the North.[39]

This clearly illustrates her attachment to Zanzibar as a safe space, while she associated her still unknown destination, the "North", with fear. This feeling, she recounts, was a new sensation to her, since as a child she claims to not have known it, yet "became so anxious here in these new surroundings that it might seem hardly understandable" to her

addressee.[40] Even though she does not explicitly mention what it was about her new environment that induced this emotion, one can make out two distinct contexts she associated with feelings of unfamiliarity and foreignness in her early days in Germany.

One of these contexts was the home space in the city mansion she lived in with her husband. In general, she was rather displeased with the outline of their rooms which made her feel "confined and oppressed" and longing to breathe fresh air.[41] The closed doors struck her as odd and the custom to keep the windows closed as inexplicable.[42] She was surprised at the amount of furniture in a European household: "When we were arranging it, there was no end to the streaming in of hundreds of objects."[43] Sitting on chairs caused her pain, the duvets appeared to her as "monsters" whose use she was unsure of, and she felt disgusted by the prospect of taking a bath in a bathtub whose water was not regularly drained.[44]

The other space associated with feelings of foreignness were the social gatherings she attended and public places she frequented with her husband in Hamburg. As a member of Hamburg's bourgeoisie, Heinrich Ruete was a common invitee to various social events, to which his wife often accompanied him. While they were welcome opportunities for Emily to become more acquainted with Germany's societal customs, her appearance in public was, much to her dismay, often met with an intrusive curiosity:

> In the first years I […] suffered incredibly from the fact that only very few exotic people were to be seen in Germany […]. During parties, in the theatre and at concerts, I continuously felt observed, which I found extremely annoying. One day I went for a walk with my husband when some ladies drove by in a carriage. They did not content themselves with inspecting us conspicuously while driving by, but when I turned by chance I saw both ladies kneeling on the back seat, to be able to have a better look at us. Later I learned that these ladies belonged to the high society of Hamburg. These experiences brought about such a shyness that I usually drove in a closed carriage and declined invitations whenever I possibly could.[45]

Remarkable here is the contrast to her preferences in the domestic space: due to the perceived inquisitiveness of people on the street, she chose the closed carriage, while closed doors and windows in her new home made her feel uncomfortable. Similarly, she emphasizes Germany's hostile social environment during that period. A scarcity of non-white individuals coupled with stereotypes of non-Europeans that were influenced by the emerging discipline of Oriental Studies undoubtedly influenced reactions to her in the public sphere.[46] Her anxiety of social situations mirrors an increasingly racialized discourse in Europe:

> [B]ecause of my awkwardness, people will perhaps go beyond that and presently try to find the clumsiness of our race behind it. This worry troubled me most, when I thought how easily I might blunder against European customs and usages without having even the faintest notion of them.[47]

Being from a privileged background and having grown up in a translocal and multi-cultural environment in Zanzibar, these feelings must have stirred a feeling of dissonance in her that added to a general sense of foreignness.

A Lover as a Translator of Space

While the new environment in Hamburg induced feelings of fear and unbelonging, her migration to Germany had been motivated by a rather positive emotion. Unlike in many other cases of inter-racial marriage during the colonial period, her writings offer no reason to doubt the sincerity of her emotional attachment to her husband. However, it is indeed likely that the dynamic of their relationship changed significantly after their relocation to Germany: here, she was a foreigner, albeit her privileged heritage was known of, and initially she was familiar with neither the German language nor the country's societal customs.

Margrit Pernau draws attention to the difficulties associated with cross-cultural relationships, among them the fact that the emotions between lovers do not exist separately from a "network of emotion" that includes those felt towards other persons, such as family members and friends.[48] While agreeing with her intervention, I propose to extend this concept of contextual emotional networks to include the emotions felt towards space. Within the new environment then, it was Emily's feelings of longing towards Zanzibar and fear towards Germany—fear due to its and her foreignness—that formed part of the emotional context of her relation to Ruete. In addition to his role as a husband, he was now also a translator of the new space she found herself in.

On the most basic level, this meant that she depended on him to go about her day. Without him around, she was unable to converse with anyone.[49] Ruete would translate conversations to Swahili in and outside of their house, such as at the doctor.[50] His absence during the day meant that all she could do was wait, "idly and lonesome in the veranda room," for him to return from work.[51]

Emily explicitly underlines the importance of Ruete's translation of the new environment to her emotional well-being. When her husband leaves to his office in the mornings, for example, she affirms that she felt an "unnerving terror" and was "indescribably depressed to have to live in all these new surroundings."[52] When he prepares to go on a three-week-long business trip to England, she hopes to join him as she "continuously felt lonely and in need of help" whenever he was not around.[53]

Ruete seemed well aware that the cause of her troubles resulted from her missing Zanzibar. He actively tried to invoke her attachment to the island by returning from work with tropical fruit which made her cry as "they brought back so many remembrances."[54] Similarly, he teased her for going to bed early as he knew that she often dreamt of Zanzibar.[55] These gestures seem to imply Ruete's commitment to alleviate her emotional stress caused by their relocation to Germany by reinforcing her emotional connection to the island.

Still, as Benno Gammerl et al. have rightfully asserted, cross-cultural emotional understanding is "complicated and laborious" and dependent on cultural norms as much as

intersubjective understanding.[55] Emily, too, was therefore unable to communicate certain emotions to her husband owing to cultural differences. These concerned mainly her initially "miserable and deprived" feelings towards her conversion from Islam to Christianity, which she felt she could not openly discuss with her husband.[57] These emotions primarily resulted from the discord between her new outward Christian identity, most prominently represented by her new name, and the fact that, internally, she still felt Muslim.[58] Her hesitance to address this matter with him may have revolved around his adherence to prevalent stereotypes of Islam as a supposedly backward religion incompatible with civil development and European modernity.[59]

A similar feeling of discomfort is the subtext of a visit to the theatre, where they watched a play called "The African Woman," which Ruete insists "will remind [her] of [her] home country."[60] On the contrary, however:

> When my husband asked me whether I liked the play, I could only answer in the negative. I then asked him whether the performers were mad. "By no means," he answered, laughing. "But why do they act like this, if indeed they are not mad?", was my totally uneducated question. "These people want to imitate life in Africa." What could I, for my part, reply to that? Nothing at all! As is well known, Africa is very big; but European imagination seemed even bigger to me.[61]

Just as with the feelings concerning her conversion, she chooses not to address the matter with her husband, but is obviously critical of the way her native continent and its people are represented in the play. Ruete's prior suggestion that it will remind her of Zanzibar implies that he does not regard it as a wrongful portrayal, which again points towards his potential adherence to stereotypes of Africa and Africans despite having lived there himself. This dissonance is not bridged, yet apparently not a reason for Emily to actively correct him. Rather, her silence seems to indicate a strategy to unilaterally negotiate their cultural differences, even if they might have aroused unpleasant emotions in her. Ruete's translation was therefore evidence of her dependency as well as enabling her to increasingly reflect on her experiences in Germany.

Grieving in Space: Divided Place Attachment

In 1870, about three years after their move to Germany, Heinrich Ruete died from injuries sustained in a tram accident. By that time, Emily "had gradually become somewhat accustomed to the climate, the people, the food and the circumstances."[62] With the loss of Ruete, however, she similarly lost her translator of German language, customs, and spaces. The experiences she had following his death can be broadly categorized as illustrating the "ambiguities and tensions around emotional connections to 'here' and 'there'" often felt by migrants: while her early time in Germany was dominated by feelings of unfamiliarity, the descriptions of her grieving indicate that her place attachment was increasingly divided between Zanzibar and Germany.[63]

Her accounts of the first months after Ruete's death are marked by gloomy descriptions of their family home, where everything "seemed to remind [her] of [her] loss",

with the house seeming "totally deserted, though only one of the inhabitants was missing."[64] Her husband's smoking room became her "constant abode."[65] In spring 1871, about half a year after Ruete's death, she was forced to move to a cheaper house:

> Since the latter was much smaller than the villa in which we had resided so far, I was forced to sell with a heavy heart several pieces of furniture. Parting from the former house was very hard on me, oh, so hard that I cannot describe it for you. It was not only innumerable memories which bound me to this house, with in whose walls I had lived to see happiness and ineffable unhappiness and which made parting so very heavy. I had also to fight another feeling. At this move I experienced for the first time in my life the pungent feeling of beginning poverty.[66]

Selling the furniture, which during the early period of her residing in Germany had struck her as unnecessary, now contributed to her sadness of being forced to leave the house. The house itself was no longer solely associated with her inability to communicate with her housekeepers or unfamiliarity due to the ever-closed doors and windows, but a site inherently connected with the memories of her marriage. In addition, the loss of the house represents the social and financial hardship Ruete's death had plunged her into: having belonged to Hamburg's bourgeois society, she was now a foreign single mother without a steady income.[67] Ruete had not only been her necessary mediating link with Germany, but similarly represented her social security in the foreign country.

These obstacles significantly contributed to her increasingly missing Zanzibar. While references to her longing pervade the Letters, it was only after Ruete's death that she expressed for the first time a wish to return to East Africa and confessed that she had not "felt such a burning homesickness" before.[68] Her Letters suggest that she corresponded with her half-sister who urged her to return home.[69] Still, she struggled to make a decision:

> I had to go through a tremendous fight with myself—which lasted for years—to reach a decision. My complete existence was firmly attached to you and to the earthly paradise at home. But between the two of them now stood my husband's memory which I had to honour. With bleeding heart I denied myself the reunion and decided, in memory of my husband, to let his children grow up in this country, as he certainly would have wished.[70]

Her conflict points to her increasingly divided place attachment: her husband's death demonstrates the consequences of the transnational marriage for her feelings of obligation and her relation to Germany.[71] No longer just a foreign place, the country similarly signified the remaining connection to Ruete, whose supposed wishes she wanted to respect despite his no longer being there. While Ruete had functioned as a mediatory and emotional link to Germany, Germany consecutively served as an imaginary and emotional link to her husband for Emily and her children.

Zanzibar as "emotional refuge"

As research on contemporary migration suggests, throughout Emily's time in Germany, Zanzibar remained an important point of emotional reference. In this section, I interpret

her continuing place attachment to Zanzibar not merely in terms of the "imaginative space" of a once-abandoned home, but by means of William Reddy's concept of "emotional refuge."[72] As laid out by Reddy in his study on emotions in Revolutionary France, emotional refuge refers to a "relationship, ritual, or organization […] that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort […]."[73] Building on Reddy's definition, I here propose to expand his concept of emotional refuge to incorporate place attachment and the practices and materialities Ruete associated with it.

According to Reddy, emotional refuges provide release from the pressures of a prevailing "emotional regime", or a "set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them," that necessarily underpins political regimes.[74] In Emily's case, this emotional regime is represented by the racialized and Orientalist discourse that pervaded the scientific and public spheres, and is therefore manifest in many of her own interactions in Germany.

First, it becomes apparent with regard to her race. As already mentioned above, Hamburg's bourgeois society reacted to her public appearance with an exoticizing interest that brought her discomfort. In addition, it appears that rumors about her circulated in the city which compared her presumed appearance to stereotypes of other 'Oriental' women's physiognomies. The following excerpt from her Letters illustrates how these rumors and stereotypes shaped her encounters at the events she frequented with her husband:

> […] the most nonsensical stories were told about Arab women. Among other things it was said that I was as fat as a barrel, though at that time I looked more like a bean-pole. I was said to have the hair and complexion of a negress, and to have feet as small as chose of a Chinese woman, so that I, of course, was unable to walk. […] Often enough my husband had to take pains to explain to the worthy Northerners that there is a great difference between Arabs and Negroes, and that there are also people other than the last mentioned living throughout the vastness of Africa. A very naive lady became engrossed in my so-called negro-hair and took the peculiar freedom to even touch it.[75]

Not only does this demonstrate the inappropriate behavior she was met with, but also a general ignorance to the diversity of peoples inhabiting the African continent. The fact that stereotypes of Chinese and Black women were employed to imagine her appearance furthermore points to the monolithic representation of other races in Germany's public discourse.

Similarly, when searching for apartments in the years following Ruete's death, Emily was constantly interrogated about her origin.[76] One of these experiences in the Thuringian countryside even leads her to conclude that "a small German town is not exactly the place for a foreigner from overseas to feel happy […]."[77]

Second, the emotional regime is palpable in her references to aspects of "civilization," which are practices she generally understands as culturally customary to Europe and not the wide-ranging geographical realm she refers to as the "South." Broadly, these can be categorized as spanning aspects of education, work ethic, materialism, clothing rules, and gender relations. Her discomfort in situations she felt 'uncivilized' in

points to the relation between emotion and civility underlined by Margrit Pernau and Helge Jordheim.[78] Emily's feeling out of place induced her to comply with the supposedly 'civilized' manners imposed and expected by German society, thereby submitting herself to a narrative that formed an important pillar of the world-spanning order imposed by European colonialism.

Third, the absence of awareness of this Orientalist discourse's prevalence dominated her experiences following her husband's death. Her deteriorating financial situation was disregarded by her circle of acquaintances in Hamburg who assumed life as a single mother in the city to be manageable, without taking into account, however, that her situation differed substantially due to her being a foreigner.[79] This ignorance of intersectionality still dominates many contemporary gendered migrant experiences.

Seeking relief from this normatively rigid environment, Emily turned her memories of Zanzibar into practices, or rituals in Reddy's terms, that functioned as an emotional refuge and, despite its physical distance, maintained her place attachment to the locus of her upbringing. The first practice is the remembrance of the island, its nature and customs, as well as the characters and spaces of her youth.[80] Often, these thoughts were reinforced by material objects she connected with Zanzibar:

> […] my Arabic ornaments and clothes were not left in peace at all. For with these I could silently exchange my thoughts without needing words. Were they not the only objects which called you and my beloved home country to my mind? However childish this may seem to you, I frankly admit that, at this occupation which took place only behind closed doors, I often hugged and kissed the lifeless objects.[81]

The second practice was writing about Zanzibar.[82] Her memoirs, while less obviously emotional in tone, certainly carry a degree of sentimentality in their descriptions of her childhood, family, and culture in Zanzibar. Her aversion to the small rooms of her European accommodation and the closed doors, for example, is contrasted by the memoir's descriptions of the wide and lofty architecture and lively atmosphere of the palaces she inhabited on the island.[83] Similarly, the narrative sequence of the memoirs itself relies on spaces, recounting her early childhood days in Bet il-Mtoni and her subsequent moves to Bet il-Watoro, Bet il-Sahel, Bet il-Tani, her plantation estates Kisimbani and Bububu, and the apartment in Stone Town, where she would end up meeting Ruete. Each space represented different social relations, to her parents, siblings, friends, or European acquaintances, and emotions, such as the happiness at Bet il-Sahel, unhappiness at Bet il-Watoro, or the "carefree" and sociable time spent at Bububu.[84] Structurally then, the memoirs, like other autobiographical accounts, were a "narrative itinerar[y] to the formative places of the past," which in Emily's case were the locations of her childhood and youth in Zanzibar.[85]

In addition, if we understand the memoirs as an attempt "to correct prevalent stereotypes about the East," as Al-Rawi suggests, Emily understood the practice of writing as a means to correct the regime she sought refuge from.[86] This is exemplified by her passing comments about Europe's "holy civilization" that border on sarcasm, or the

chapters she spends explaining the "woman's position in the Orient," Arab marriage, slavery in the Omani sultanate, or Islamic traditions and festivities to her audiences in Europe and the US.[87] This, too, overlaps with Reddy's definition of emotional refuges, which asserts that "[t]hey may make the current order more livable for some people," or "may provide a place from which contestation, conflict, and transformation are launched" for others.[88] While thinking of Zanzibar made Germany more livable by providing solace, writing about it represented a space for contesting the norms she faced as an 'Oriental' individual in Europe.

The Impossibility of Return

In 1885, Emily was given the opportunity to return to Zanzibar for a visit, along with her three children. Her journey formed part of Germany's efforts to strengthen colonial influence in East Africa and was instigated and facilitated by the government.[89] As the reigning Sultan Barghash, her brother, had rejected his approval of the protectorate treaties entered into by mainland African chiefs with the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG), chancellor Bismarck sent a navy squadron to Zanzibar in order to pressure Barghash into accepting the treaties.[90] Emily seems to have been aware of this official objective of the journey.[91] While she intended to inquire with her brother regarding the payment of a financial allowance from her father's inheritance, the German government sought to instrumentalize her presence in case of Barghash's continuing refusal.[92] The instrumentalization of her relations to both Zanzibar and Germany by German colonial officials highlights Blunt and Dowling's insistence on the political dimension of home in the context of imperial formations.[93] Moreover, her writings about the trip allow an examination of how she experienced East Africa as a returning emigrant.

Before recounting the journey, she emphasizes that since she had "last seen [her] dear native country," she experienced an "eventful," "turbulent," and "miserable" time and underwent "remarkable changes."[94] Upon seeing the island from the German ship she was arriving with, she is moved by the sight, yet senses the ambiguity of her return that is inherently connected to these changes:

> When early in the morning I went on deck, the palm-trees of my home greeted me already from afar. At the magical sight of them, what else could I do but retire to my cabin as quickly as possible and thank the Almighty for His great kindness! The events of my life are all too manifold, and my feelings and sentiments are geared to them. For a great part the human being is only what life, experience and the commanding circumstances make of him: I left my home a complete Arab woman and a good Muslim and what am I now? [A bad Christian and somewhat more than half a German!] But at this moment it seemed to me as if my entire youth returned once more to make up for the many miserable and sorrowful years.[95]

Despite having changed from a "complete Arab woman" to "somewhat more than half a German," from the distance of the harbor Zanzibar still remained the emotional refuge and locus of memories that had buffered the emotional troubles of being foreign in

Germany. Upon actually entering Stone Town, however, her sentiment changed as she witnessed its condition: "The evident decay of the inner town struck me as indescribably sad."[96] In a similar vein, she recalls her visit to Bet il-Mtoni, which Sultan Barghash no longer used as his residence:

> When we went for the first time to the house where I saw the light of this world, I was deeply shocked. What a sight for me! In place of a house I saw a completely decayed ruin; no sound and no noise was able to free me from the oppressive feelings which convulsed me at this totally unexpected picture; for a long time I was not able to compose myself […]. More than half of the house lay in ruins exactly as it had tumbled down […]. Everything had decayed or was about to decay! […] From every slanting door awaiting collapse, from the rotten heaps of beams lying one over the other, even from the mountain-high rubbish heaps I thought the figure of a former inhabitant was coming forward. For a short while I was transported from the oppressive present, and my mind again lived entirely in the beautiful years of my youth.[97]

Against this background, it seems that the journey to Zanzibar, rather than being the return she had longed for, was quite a traumatic experience. Not only had she herself changed, but the material realities of her former home no longer aligned with the memories which had provided her solace throughout the experience of her migration to Germany. Even when actually in Zanzibar, the remembrance of the spaces of her youth mitigated her overwhelming emotions.

In addition to these experiences of Zanzibar's material change, it was the conditions of Emily's journey that underline her transformation. During her youth, she had been in public "only veiled and at night", while she was now "in the streets in broad daylight and accompanied by gentlemen."[98] Similarly, she recounts that it was a "strange coincidence" that she celebrated her birthday during her visit, a tradition she adopted only after converting to Christianity, and that for the occasion the accompanying German commander killed a pig in her honor, which sharply contradicted Islamic provisions.[99]

Not only did her personal experiences and Zanzibar's transformed material space influence her emotions during her visit, but they also had an impact on the growing awareness that her cultural outlook now differed substantially from the conditions of her upbringing. This is once more underlined by the fact that during a second visit to Zanzibar in 1888, Arab land owners asked her to mediate between them and the German regime in East Africa, which had recently implemented new tax laws, arguing that she knew their "manners and customs better than all the Germans in East Africa taken together."[100] It is not known whether she satisfied their demands, since she had her own falling out with German officials who denied their diplomatic support for her continued effort to claim a financial inheritance from the Zanzibari Sultanate. Declining her relatives' offers to reconvert to Islam in order to join the sultanate's harem and being denied British citizenship to be able to reside in Zanzibar without having to live in the sultan's household, Emily first relocated to Jaffa in 1888 and to Beirut in 1892.[101] She returned to Germany upon the outbreak of World War I to move in with one of her daughters. Her visit to Zanzibar in 1888 was her last.

Conclusion

Emily Ruete's case illustrates, above all, the ambiguities of place attachment associated with migration that have been addressed in the fields of Migration Studies and Emotional Geography. These ambiguities are grounded, first, in the complicated emotional networks created by her relation to individuals and experiences in different spaces, such as the relation and feelings of obligation to her husband that caused her growing place attachment towards Germany and her youth in Zanzibar that served as an emotional coping mechanism. Second, the political and discursive circumstances of colonialism had enabled both her falling in love with Ruete and her migration. These very same circumstances similarly resulted in her strong feelings of exclusion in Germany and facilitated her return to a homeland that was itself marked by increasing colonial influence and no longer congruent with her memories.

Beyond her individual case, I propose to engage the concepts and analytical angles of this study as a vignette for writing a global emotional history of migration that takes place attachment seriously.[102] Not only would such a history emphasize the complicated and ambiguous webs of belonging that increasing global mobility created, but it would also enable us to trace the emotional impact social and political norms and structures had on migrating individuals. This especially holds for the experiences of individuals migrating from regions of European colonial involvement to the metropole which strikingly demonstrate, as exemplified by Emily Ruete, the emotional consequences of the exclusionary mechanisms and racialized discourses colonial empires relied upon. Contextualizing these emotions is crucial, precisely because it allows us to unveil patterns that reach beyond the microhistory of a single case. The guiding questions of this article may then function as a starting point for an aggregate emotional history of migration that is able to explain overarching frameworks accompanying the world's growing entanglement from below. Therefore, while scrutinizing why an individual migrated, we should similarly pay attention to what migrating individuals felt towards their places of origin and destination, what these feelings were triggered by, how they changed or developed, and what strategies were employed to process them.

In the present case study, I have suggested translation and an amended understanding of Reddy's concept of emotional refuge as methods Emily employed to relieve the emotional misunderstandings and stress caused by her migration and Germany's prevalent emotional regime. Both her husband as translator and writing as emotional refuge were effectively means that enabled her to interact with the societal and normative conditions in Germany: her husband as a buffer for mediating her foreignness and the unfamiliarity of the public sphere as well as her memoirs as a space for critiquing mechanisms of exclusion allowed her to negotiate differences. While practices of translation and emotional refuge may differ depending on locale, period, and an individual's social circumstances, an emotional history of migration should be sensible to nexuses between individual emotional needs and the social environment as loci of both agency and dependency. An experience of

return or the loss of important relationships, on the other hand, may function as lenses that illustrate the conditions and reasons of divided place attachment as well as emerging conflicts or changes of identity.

Notes

[1] Achim von Oppen and Silke Stickrodt, eds., *Biographies Between Spheres of Empire. Life History Approaches to Colonial Africa* (London/New York: Routledge, 2018).

[2] In this approach, I follow de Vries's call for increased engagement with the social sciences, albeit somewhat differently than he intended. See Jan de Vries, "Changing the Narrative. The New History That Was and Is to Come," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 48 no. 3 (2018): 313-334.

[3] David Conradson and Deirdre McKay, "Translocal Subjectivities. Mobility, Connection, Emotions," *Mobilities* 2, no. 2 (2007): 168.

[4] Paolo Boccagni and Loretta Baldassar, "Emotions on the Move. Mapping the Emergent Field of Emotion and Migration," *Emotion, Space and Society* 16 (2015): 2.

[5] Boccagni and Baldassar, "Emotions on the Move," 3. See Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds., *Postcolonial Geographies* (New York/London: Continuum, 2002); Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith, eds., *Emotional Geographies* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007); Mick Smith, Joyce Davidson, Laura Cameron and Liz Bondi, *Emotion, Place and Culture* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).

[6] Jeffrey S. Smith, "Introduction. Putting Place Back in Place Attachment Research," in *Explorations in Place Attachment*, ed. Jeffrey S. Smith (London/New York: Routledge, 2018), 2.

[7] Smith, "Introduction," 7.

[8] Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, *Home* (London/New York: Routledge, 2022), 9, 28.

[9] Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 189-246, 247-308.

[10] Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 254, 269.

[11] Paolo Boccagni, *Migration and the Search for Home. Mapping Domestic Space in Migrants' Everyday Lives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). For historical studies on the European concept of home, see for example: Jon Stobart, ed., *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe 1700-1900* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[12] See Benno Gammerl and Rainer Herrn, "Gefühlsräume — Raumgefühle. Perspektiven auf die Verschränkung von emotionalen Praktiken und Topografien der Moderne," *Suburban. Zeitschrift für kritische Stadtforschung* 3, no. 2 (2015): 7-22; Benno Gammerl, "Emotional Styles. Concepts and Challenges," *Rethinking History. The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, no. 2 (2012): 164; Margrit Pernau, "Space and Emotion. Building to Feel," *History Compass* 12, no. 7 (2014): 541; Joseph Ben Prestel, *Emotional Cities. Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo*, 1860-1910 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[13] See Marcelo J. Borges, Sonia Cancian and Linda Reeder, eds., *Emotional Landscapes. Love, Gender, and Migration* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2021). Most of the studies in the volume focus solely on intra-European migration and contemporary history and center individuals not immediately affected by colonial structures. See also Marcelo J. Borges and María Berg, "Emotions and

Migration," in *The Routledge History of Emotions in the Modern World*, ed. Katie Barclay & Peter N. Stearns (London/New York: Routledge), 495-511. The article makes no direct mention of the relation between emotions and space.

[14] The correct transliteration of her Arabic name is most likely Sālama. Most accounts transliterate her name as Salme, which appears to be a shortened version comparable to a nickname. Throughout the article, I will refer to her first by Sālme and, following the year of her baptism and move to Germany in 1867, by her Christian name, Emily Ruete.

[15] Emeri J. van Donzel, "Introduction," in *An Arabian Princess between Two Worlds. Memoirs, Letters Home, Sequels to the Memoirs, Syrian Customs and Usages by Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete*, ed. Emeri J. van Donzel (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 20.

[16] Prestel, *Emotional Cities*, 12-14. On emotion as practice, see Monique Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion," *History and Theory* 51 (2012): 193-220.

[17] Prestel, *Emotional Cities*, 14.

[18] According to her, in total around seventy-five concubines (surrīya) lived in the harem: see Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete, "Memoirs of an Arabian Princess," in *An Arabian Princess between Two Worlds*, 154. In addition, he had two wives with whom he had no children: see Patricia W. Romero, "Seyyid Said bin Sultan BuSaid of Oman and Zanzibar. Women in the Life of this Arab Patriarch," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 3 (2012): 374.

[19] "Memoirs," 140, 156, 164, 175, 216, 334.

[20] Aischa Ahmed, *Arabische Präsenzen in Deutschland um 1900* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2020), 39. While Zanzibar itself was never part of Germany's later formal colonial possessions, the German merchant community was still referred to as a "Deutsche Kolonie" in German governmental records.

[21] Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika. 1880-1914* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2011), 159-185. These expatriate societies consisted of male European experts working in the colonies or pre-colonial African regions between 1850 and World War I as engineers, plantation agriculturalists, or commercial officers. According to Bang, the Germans had one of the most well-established foreign trading communities in Zanzibar, with some members active on the island since the 1840s. They remained influential even after the Heligoland-Zanzibar-Treaty concluded in 1890. See Anne K. Bang, "Cosmopolitanism Colonised? Three Cases from Zanzibar. 1890-1920," in *Struggling with History. Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean,* ed. Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), 181-82.

[22] "Memoirs," 371.

[23] According to Emily, she only participated in his uprising because of her half-sister. See "Memoirs," 341.

[24] "Memoirs," 371. She describes the events in the chapter "My mother's death. A Palace Revolution," 334-356. Barghash was subsequently sent to Bombay by the British. See "Memoirs," 356.

[25] "Memoirs," 371.

[26] "Memoirs," 371.

[27] "Memoirs," 371. Her child died either in Aden or on the journey to Marseille.

[28] Donzel, "Introduction," 20. Unfortunately, neither her memoirs nor the Letters mention any emotional impact her name change may have had. Similarly, it is not possible to judge whether her

husband, her children, or her German friends and acquaintances exclusively referred to her by her Christian name. There are at least two instances, however, in which she made use of her Arabic name post-conversion. One is in a letter in Arabic to her brother, by then ruling Sultan Barghash, in 1875 which she signs as Sālme bint Saʿīd. It seems likely that she continued to be referred to as Sālme by her Zanzibari relatives. The other instance was in the German editions of her memoirs, which only include her Arabic signature as the author's name. In contrast, the English and French editions indicate the author as Emily Ruete, "née Princess of Oman and Zanzibar" and "née Princess d'Oman et Zanzibar" respectively. There is reason to assume that she had more influence on the design of the German edition and thus actively chose to only include her Arabic name, but this cannot be ascertained.

[29] Jessica Rauch, "Hybride Identitäten. Die Ikonographie der 'arabischen Prinzessin' und 'Hamburger Kaufmannsfrau' Emily Ruete von 1868-1916," (MA diss., Heidelberg University, 2015), 11, 61.

[30] Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire. 1884-1945* (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 2001), 111.

[31] "Memoirs," 371.

[32] Her children may have assisted her writing the Memoirs. Her unpublished writings are held by the Ruete Archive at the University of Leiden. For a collection guide refer here: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/2086823?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=eab24a80a5a4d7240aab&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=4. Documents in Arabic appear to be marginal among these records.

[33] Ahmed K. Al-Rawi, "The Portrayal of the East vs. the West in Lady Mary Montagu's 'Letters' and Emily Ruete's 'Memoirs'," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (2008): 15; Jeremy Prestholdt, "From Zanzibar to Beirut. Sayyida Salme bint Said and the Tensions of Cosmopolitanism," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, ed. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 204.

[34] "Sayyida Salme/Emily Ruete, "Letters Home," in *An Arabian Princess between Two Worlds*, 407; Ahmed, Arabische Präsenzen, 92. It is also unlikely that the Letters were intended for publication since her daughters objected when her son wanted to publish them. See Abdalla El-Fakki El-Bashir, "The Fading of Yearnings for Liberation and Passage When the Bet on Love Is Lost. A Study of the Memoirs and Letters of an Arabian Princess," *Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 18 (2020): 6.

[35] Roxanne L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore. Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 161.

[36] She only remarks that upon arriving in Hamburg they "were received in the kindest manner by [her] husband's parents and relatives". See "Memoirs," 372.

[37] "Letters,"407.

[38] "Memoirs," 372.

[39] "Letters," 410.

[40] "Letters," 419.

[41] "Letters," 415.

[42] "Letters," 415-16.

[43] "Letters," 415-16.

[44] "Letters," 416-17.

[45] "Letters,"421.

[46] Ahmed, *Arabische Präsenzen*, 29-70. Despite her being othered by Germans and the emotional repercussions of said treatment, she still made use of her 'Oriental' appearance in her memoirs with a cover page, description, and an image series in 'Oriental' dress decidedly playing with Orientalist stereotypes of the time (see also Rauch, "Hybride Identitäten"). According to Roy, this was owed to the fact that the memoirs were "designed to sell", mainly to raise money after her husband's death, and therefore intentionally engaged with expectations influenced by Orientalist assumptions in German society. See Kate Roy, "Only the 'Outward Appearance' of a Harem? Reading the *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess* as Material Text," *Belphégor* 13, no. 1 (2015): 22.

[47] "Letters," 428-29.

[48] Margrit Pernau, "Lovers and Friends. Encounters of Hearts and Bodies," in *Encounters with Emotions. Negotiating Cultural Differences since Early Modernity*, ed. Benno Gammerl, Philipp Nielsen and Margrit Pernau (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 259.

[49] "Letters," 414.

[50] "Letters," 417.

[51] "Letters," 423.

[52] "Letters," 419.

[53] "Letters," 440.

[54] "Letters," 419.

[55] "Letters," 440

[56] Benno Gammerl, Philipp Nielsen and Margrit Pernau, "Encountering Feelings — Feeling Encounters," in *Encounters with Emotions*, 3.

[57] "Letters," 412.

[58] "Letters," 411.

[59] Christian Bailey, "Germany. Redrawing of Civilizational Trajectories," in *Civilizing Emotions. Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Asia and Europe*, ed. Margrit Pernau and Helge Jordheim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 89.

[60] "Letters," 426.

[61] "Letters," 426.

[62] "Letters," 442.

[63] Boccagni and Baldassar, "Emotions on the Move," 2.

[64] "Letters," 454.

[65] "Letters," 455.

[66] "Letters," 464.

[67] In addition, most of his inheritance was lost which she blamed on her husband's corporate representative in Zanzibar as well as her lawyer. See Donzel, "Introduction," 30.

[68] "Letters," 452-53.

[69] "Letters," 454.

[70] "Letters," 455.

[71] Errington has pointed to "Webs of Obligation" in a study on Transatlantic migrants in the nineteenth century. See Elizabeth Jane Errington, "Webs of Affection and Obligation. Glimpse into Families and Nineteenth Century Transatlantic Communities," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 19, no. 1 (2008): 1-26.

[72] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128.

[73] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 129. I argue that her marriage to Ruete does not qualify as an emotional refuge due to the emotional and cultural misunderstandings sketched in the preceding chapter. In some way, her marriage represented the reason she was in need of an emotional refuge in the first place: she was exposed to the emotionally draining environment in Germany only because of this relationship.

[74] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 129.

[75] "Letters," 422.

[76] "Letters," 470.

[77] "Letters," 494.

[78] Margrit Pernau and Helge Jordheim, "Introduction," in *Civilizing Emotions*, 1-24.

[79] "Memoirs," 373; "Letters," 467.

[80] For examples, see "Memoirs," 236; "Letters," 423, 482.

[81] "Letters," 418.

[82] One may also argue that her writing counts as a "productive use of nostalgia". See Borges and Berg, "Emotions and Migration," 503. After all, the Memoirs were a source of income for Emily.

[83] "Memoirs," 171, 176, 316.

[84] "Memoirs," 165, 174, 363.

[85] Friedrike Eigler, "Critical Approaches to 'Heimat' and the 'Spatial Turn'," *New German Critique* 115 (2012): 41.

[86] Al-Rawi, "The Portrayal of East vs. West," 27.

[87] "Memoirs," 211, 268-79, 280-85, 327-33, 296-318.

[88] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 128.

[89] In 1883, Emily even sent a letter to Barghash urging him to enter an alliance with Germany rather

than the British. In return, Wilhelm I granted the payment of a monthly allowance to Emily from August 1883. See Emeri J. van Donzel, E., "Sayyida Salme, Rudolph Said-Ruete und die deutsche Kolonialpolitik," *Die Welt des Islams* 17, no. 1 (1987): 19.

[90] Donzel, "Introduction," 73. The communities in Africa were Usagara, Useguha, Nguru, and Ukami, which Barghash asserted belonged to his formal sphere of influence.

[91] In her memoirs she claims that she "followed Germany's colonial efforts with warm interest". See "Memoirs," 402 fn96.

[92] Donzel, "Introduction," 69-70. According to Donzel, Sultan Barghash was on unamicable terms with Emily and refused to assent to her request for financial support due to her conversion to Christianity and her reconciliation with Mājid following his uprising after Sultan Saʿīd's death. See Donzel, "Introduction," 31.

[93] See Blunt and Dowling, 191-92.

[94] "Memoirs," 383.

[95] "Memoirs," 389. The text in brackets was only included in the memoirs' first edition.

[96] "Memoirs," 393.

[97] "Memoirs," 394.

[98] "Memoirs," 390. The gentlemen are the soldiers of the navy squadron that escorted her.

[99] "Memoirs," 393.

[100] "Letters," 520. The discord would erupt in the Araberaufstand (1888-90) in East Africa shortly after her departure to the Levant.

[101] Donzel, "Introduction," 87-89, 95, 97.

[102] This remark can be understood as a response to some of the methodological difficulties outlined by Claudia Ulbrich, "Self-Narratives as a Source for the History of Emotions," in *Childhood and Emotion. Across Cultures 1450-1800*, ed. Claudia Jarzebowski and Thomas Max Safley (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), 59-71.

“Cairo is the Main Castle of Islam”: Kaiserswerth Deaconesses’ Nursing in Nineteenth century Egypt and the Importance of Converting Muslims

By

Rania Ashour

Abstract

Research on the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institution’s ‘home mission’ (Innere Mission) abroad has long assumed that the conversion of non-Christians played a subordinate role compared to the evangelisation of the Christian population. The recent example of the Kaiserswerth mission in the Middle East and the analysis of the encounter between deaconesses and locals has shown that this was not necessarily the case. This article joins the new research trend and examines the context of the missionary efforts towards Muslims in Protestant hospitals in Egypt from the middle of the nineteenth century. As a contribution to global history, this paper includes the perspective of the non-Christians living in Egypt, especially Muslims, and their interactions with the German missionaries. This study finds that some actors of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute, including the deaconesses, had more agency over the practice of the missionary work than the mission’s founder Theodor Fliedner, specifically seeking to convert Muslims. In addition, by examining the motherhouse journal of the deaconess institute, this study demonstrates that Egyptian Muslims were not merely passive receptors of conversion efforts, but also actors who supported or rejected the missionary hospitals.

About the author

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I. Introduction[1]

"Sister Ruska is his special friend, and he waits with longing for her voice and never tires of listening to her reading from the Bible; he especially asks to read to him about Jesus, whom he probably only reveres as a prophet and teacher."[2]

This statement of a deaconess reading the Bible to a Muslim was made in the journal of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute about their nursing work in Alexandria in 1895. The reader may not find anything strange about this anecdote, as it is in line with the usual missionary narrative. It does, however, call into question one strand of research of the so-called Kaiserswerth Diaconia's 'home mission' abroad. The Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute, which was founded in Kaiserswerth, Rhineland, by Pastor Theodor Fliedner in 1836, was part of the transnational Protestant missionary movement of the nineteenth century and was the largest German Protestant missionary society in the Middle East.[3] In the Kaiserwerth Institute, the mission in the Middle East was known as *Orientarbeit* (work in the Orient) and referred to missionary work that involved exporting a social welfare model and cultural influence through religion.[4] The Institute constructed hospitals, orphanages, and schools in several locations, such as in Jerusalem, Beirut, and Alexandria.[5] The expansion in the Middle East from 1851 onwards was made financially possible primarily due to Fliedner's good relations with the Prussian King Frederick William IV, alongside donations from other associations and committees.[6] The Prussians were eager to offer their financial backing as part of their evangelical efforts in the Middle East in the 1850s.[7]

According to Fliedner's writings, the purpose of establishing institutions in the Middle East was to mainly reform Middle Eastern churches and to support the German-speaking diaspora.[8] Thus, it was seemingly a 'home mission' (*Innere Mission*) abroad. The German Protestant 'home mission' combined social welfare with evangelisation in the sense of reawakening the Christian faith of the already Christianised population in Germany.[9] The movement of Social Protestantism, which includes the representatives of the 'home mission', was particularly dedicated to educational and medical services since the mid-nineteenth century.[10] By establishing his institute, Fliedner was reacting to the social problems in Germany at that time. His deaconesses were trained as nurses to care for people from the lower classes and the petty bourgeois who had become impoverished in the process of industrialisation.[11] At the same time, the Protestant movement's nursing care also served to win the working class back to Christianity, after many had turned to the social democratic or socialist workers' movements and distanced themselves from the religion.[12] Thus, the representatives of the 'home mission' hoped to bring about social, religious, and political change by setting a good example for those who had turned away from their Christian faith.[13] This goal was not limited to Germany, but was also applied to German settlers abroad. Fliedner was particularly determined to evangelise the Christians in the Middle East.[14]

However, the extent to which the conversion of Muslims played a role in the missionary activities in the Middle East is disputed in recent research. On the basis of

Fliedner's writings, the historian and theologian Uwe Kaminsky argues that the missionary action was merely a matter of reforming the indigenous churches and that the conversion of non-Christians was not intended.[15] By focusing solely on the director's intention and thus emphasising the efforts to convert Christians, such work has missed an opportunity to consider how encounters with Muslims shaped the work of the Kaiserswerth Diaconia.[16] The historian Julia Hauser reinterpreted the missionary activities in the Middle East as a dynamic encounter between the deaconesses and local population, which allows us to look from the agenda to its actual implementation on the ground.[17] Her findings are significant for this study in that they show that missionary work depended on the local population, and the deaconesses as actors had their own intentions regarding missionary work.[18]

A new strand of research challenges the assumption that the institution only intended to attempt to convert or evangelise Christians.[19] In contrast to other studies on the 'home mission' in the Middle East, which deal mainly with the Asian part of the Ottoman Empire, the aim here is to examine the nature of the Kaiserswerth mission towards Muslims with the example of the little-discussed deaconess hospitals in Alexandria, founded in 1857, and the deaconess hospital Victoria in Cairo, founded in 1884. Missionaries began to settle in Egypt when Viceroy Muhammad Ali (1805-1848) and his successor Ibrahim (1848) opened Egypt to the West and tolerated ecclesiastical institutions alongside their support of Prussian enterprises.[20] The equalisation of all monotheistic religions through the Ottoman Tanzimat Decrees of 1839 and 1856 further pushed the opening of Egypt to the West and allowed Western missionaries to establish church communities in the Ottoman Empire.[21] However, the conversion of Muslims was generally prohibited. Nevertheless, I contend that actors from the Kaiserwerth Institute attributed great importance to Egypt, especially Cairo, for the conversion of Muslims. Officially, the facilities of the institution were supposed to support German and other Western Protestant congregations in Alexandria and Cairo, which formed in the second half of the nineteenth century in the face of growing trade interests.[22] However, as this paper demonstrates, co–founder of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria and pastor of the German Protestant congregation Martin Gräber, for example, attached greater importance to the conversion of Muslims through the hospital than to the care of the German Protestant congregation.

The geopolitical situation in which Egypt found itself at the time also represents a particularly important factor in the context of missionary work. Egypt as an autonomous vessel state of the Ottoman Empire had been occupied by Britain since 1882, and Alexandria in particular was dominated by foreign influence.[23] Among others, this influence was reflected in the institutional organisation of the Deaconess Hospitals in Alexandria and Cairo. They belonged to the Kaiserswerth Diaconia, but were run in cooperation with other Western Protestant communities who also funded the hospitals along with Egyptian viceroys.[24] In Cairo the hospital's board was made up of members of the four Protestant communities from Germany, Britain, Switzerland, and the United States.[25] The hospital in Alexandria, in turn, was managed by representatives of Germany, Britain, and Switzerland.[26] The cooperation of Western powers had an impact on the development of the

deaconess hospitals in Egypt. In this light, and given the lack of studies on the subject, it is worthwhile to look at the circumstances in Egypt and ask about the Kaiserwerth Deaconess Institute's action and their strategies of conversion. In the context of entangled history, I also want to include the perspective of Egyptian Muslim individuals in the activities of the mission stations run by the Kaiserwerth Deaconess Institute.[27] My aim here is to consider the various actors among both the missionaries and Egyptian individuals who pursued different interests regarding the use of the hospitals and who had opposing opinions on their establishment.[28] In the first part, I show that contrary to earlier research assumptions, deaconesses and other missionary volunteers specifically tried to convert Muslims, both directly and indirectly. I will then demonstrate that Muslim individuals also shaped the missionary work, as they could support or reject the activities of the deaconess institution.

The monthly journal of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund* (*Friend of the poor and sick*), or *AKF*, and its reports on missionary activities in Egypt offer an opportunity to answer these questions. Missionary sources can reveal divergence from their agendas in practice and the dynamics of intercultural encounters.[29] To include the perspective of the Muslim community and to show the bias of the missionaries, the journal's reports need to be read against the grain.[30] However, this is a source published by missionaries that did not address the individual experiences of Muslims, but recorded events with Muslims that were significant for the members of the deaconess hospitals. Therefore, the focus of this study is on individuals who have publicly advocated for or against the hospitals and had access to political power. Of interest to this study are the reports on the hospital in Alexandria and the Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. This delimitation represents the peak phase of the so-called *Orientarbeit*, or the German influence in the Middle East and Levant, until it came to a temporary end with the beginning of the First World War.[31] The reports on the activities in the Middle East are often anonymous and are taken from statements by the deaconesses, some of which are very abbreviated.[32] As a rule, they reported success stories that were intended to meet the expectations of the readership.[33] It can be assumed that the readership was interested in the Kaiserswerth institute's activities and in part supported them financially. The monthly journal was first published in 1849 and initially edited by the founder of the institute, Theodor Fliedner. After his death, his successors Julius Disselhoff and Fliedner's son Georg Fliedner, who was also a pastor in Kaiserswerth, continued the publication. The aim of the journal was to finance the activities that depended on donations as well as to improve the reputation of the Institute in Germany.[34] This must also be considered when examining the journal for evidence of attempts to convert Muslims.

II. Conversion efforts towards Muslims: Theory vs. Practice

The Deaconess hospitals in Egypt were utilised by many Muslims. From the reports of the *AKF* it becomes evident, after initial reticence, that the number of Muslim and generally

Middle Eastern patients gradually increased at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1902 Muslims represented the majority among ten denominations listed, with 651 patients in Alexandria's deaconess hospital.[35] The Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo was also utilized by many Muslims in 1902, who represented a quarter of the total number of visitors.[36] Since Muslims made up a large proportion of the patients, it is important to examine how the missionaries engaged with them.

The assumption that the conversion of Muslims played only a minor role or no role at all in the activities of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute's Christian mission is mainly based on Fliedner's writings, as well as on the efforts of his son Georg Fliedner in continuing to assert his father's programs.[37] Georg Fliedner, for example, opposed the missionary ambitions of Kaiserswerth pastor August Wilhelm Schreiber, who was planning to proselytise Muslims with the help of the deaconess institute.[38] This does not mean, however, that there was no desire to convert Muslims at all, and that Fliedner and other authority figures in the Kaiserwerth Deaconess Institute did not feel superior towards Islam. Missionaries usually held the conviction of cultural and racial superiority over the people they hoped to convert.[39] In the case of the deaconesses, they too were convinced that Protestantism was superior to other faiths, particularly to local non-Protestants.[40] In their writings, for example, this can be seen in the way they draw on Orientalist stereotypes when writing about local inhabitants, portraying them as mendacious and deceitful.[41] In keeping Orientalist discourse, the authors used a dichotomous representation of the so-called Orient and Occident to show the supposed superiority of the West and of German Protestantism. Likewise, Theodor Fliedner attributed fanaticism to Muslims and considered it necessary to weaken the influence of Islam.[42] He aimed to do this as a long-term project through the indirect strategy of exemplifying mercy, especially in the form of nursing.[43] To achieve this, he emphasised in his writings that hospitals must be built for all denominations.[44] In the Ottoman Empire and especially in Egypt, the foundation of hospitals was a perfect way of doing so, because the government invested little in health facilities and the missionaries could show with deeds what they preached.[45] In the case of Egypt, the financial crisis during the reign of Viceroy Ismail (1863-1879) further contributed to their neglect.[46] Apart from this, missionaries generally also hoped that their Western hospitals would prove Europe's technological superiority and show their supposed ideological superiority.[47] Returning to the deaconess institute's strategy of converting, however, it is clear that the conversion of Muslims through exemplifying mercy was of greater importance to some actors than it was to Theodor Fliedner.

The good example: Conversion efforts through so-called true mercy

In Egypt the conversion of Muslims was not a marginal phenomenon, but was sought by various individuals involved in the Deaconess hospitals. For example, one author of the *AKF* expressed hope that the Muslim population would in the future make greater use of the newly founded Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo, "and then also open their ears and hearts to the proclamation, through word and deed, of the eternal love revealed in Jesus

Christ."[48] The aforementioned clergyman of the German Protestant congregation in Cairo and "one of the most zealous co-founders of the work" Pastor Martin Gräber, also attached great importance to converting Muslims by exemplifying love for one's neighbour.[49] Gräber's view on the founding of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria was quoted in both 1887 and 1910 in the *AKF*.[50] The aim to convert Muslims becomes clear from these two articles insofar as it was mentioned as a reason for the establishment of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo even before the German-Protestant diaspora care: "It could no longer be lacking in her [Cairo] in fact. After all, Cairo is the main castle of Islam and there is no more effective preaching to the Muhamedans than that of active love!"[51] Only then does he address diaspora care: "But we Europeans, we Germans, we Protestants there have also been longing for a deaconess hospital like the one in Alexandria. We had no care for our sick, and there is so much sickness in the hot climate."[52] Interestingly, the reformation of the local churches as a further motivation for the establishment of the hospital was not mentioned in either article, although this had the highest priority in Theodor Fliedner's agenda. Gräber's choice of words also indicates that he saw Cairo as the centre of Islam and the settlement in Egypt as a symbol of another step towards challenging Islam's dominance in the region. Since the author of the 1910 article was probably Deodat Disselhoff, who was Julius Disselhoff's son and pastor of the motherhouse in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth, his views may also be reflected in the article. This also applies to the unknown author of the 1887 article. Crusade-like phrases, like 'main castle of Islam', accumulate from the 1880s onwards and fall into the same period as the German Empire's quest for imperial power.[53] As Malte Fuhrmann states, the new head of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institution, Wilhelm Zoellner, also campaigned in 1898 for the "crusade of love" against Muslims in the Middle East with the help of the deaconesses.[54] Ultimately, it is evident that after Theodor Fliedner's death in 1864, other actors associated with the Kaiserswerth Diaconia, such as the deaconesses, the pastor of the German protestant congregation, and other authority figures in the institute, had their own goals regarding the so-called *Orientarbeit*. This is reflected most notably in the fact that they prioritised the conversion of Muslims. One example of indirect efforts of conversion through exemplifying mercy is the focus on eye care, which missionaries saw as particularly suitable for the conversion of non-Christians.

Focus on eye care

Eye care as an example for indirect efforts of conversion has not been examined so far in the context of activities of the Kaiserswerth Diaconia in the Middle East. In his study of British missionary hospitals in nineteenth century Jerusalem, Yaron Perry pointed out that these hospitals usually specialised in the treatment of eye diseases and orthopaedic ailments as well as leprosy.[55] Perry argued that this specialisation in curing eye diseases and leprosy is connected with the healings by Jesus in the New Testament.[56] New Testament scholars assume that the healing of the blind in the New Testament would have meant a healing from so-called paganism rather than from a physical disability.[57] Relating this to the medical mission, missionaries hoped that the target group would understand this so-called

healing in the context of the biblical interpretations they preached and accordingly take it as "blessings of healing".[58]

The *AKF* shows that hospitals in Egypt also specialised in eye care. This is supported, for example, by the fact that the Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo employed a German ophthalmologist in addition to two general practitioners.[59] The *AKF* also reports that from 1887 an eye clinic and a surgical clinic were attached to the same hospital.[60] In Alexandria, the Deaconess Hospital offered treatment and cleaning of the eyes for Muslims in its pharmacy from 1864. In the same article an unknown author pointed out the popularity of eye treatement among Egyptian Muslims:

> Relatively few Muhamedans have come to the hospital so far. Here too, as was the case in Jerusalem in the beginning, we must wait and earn trust. However, many Muhamedans come to the pharmacy every day to get medicine, to consult the doctor or to have their wounds, especially sick eyes, cleaned and treated.[61]

This example is interesting in several respects for the question of conversion attempts. Against the background that nursing was used as a strategy of missionary work, it can be assumed here that for deaconesses and the articles' unknown authors, the goal of the eye treatment was not healing itself, but the patient's conversion to Christianity. The above-mentioned unknown author not only reveals the wish to convert Muslims, by explicitly mentioning them, but also the deceptive intentions of the missionary work in the hospital towards Muslims.

The authors of the reports in the *AKF* also attribute gratitude to the patients whose eyes were treated in Alexandria, with a religious interpretation: "When the sisters visited the poor Arab families in their miserable, dirty huts in the city and brought them medicine, especially for the many eye patients, they were received like angels of God."[62] Here it becomes clear how the author perceived their mission. The Arab families are portrayed as dirty and thus as pitiful, unable to help themselves. The text reveals the hope that through the deaconesses' medical support, their patients could be convinced of the righteousness of Christianity. Consequently, it appears that the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Hospitals in Egypt also specialised in certain treatments, such as of the eyes, to indirectly convert the target group.

Attempts of direct conversion

Examining the *AKF*, it becomes evident that individuals in the hospitals also actively tried to convert Muslims in Egypt. I define the act of direct conversion as missionary work that goes beyond exemplifying charity, and that includes the spreading of the gospel.[63] In mission hospitals, for example, it was generally common for missionaries to teach the New Testament to patients and to try to convert them with religious talks or sermons.[64] This was also the case in the deaconess hospitals in Egypt. The journal *AKF* reveals that missionaries and converted Copts read the Bible to Muslims in the outpatient clinic of the hospital in Alexandria.[65] The deaconesses also actively participated in spreading Christian doctrine.

Sister Ruska, who is quoted in the introduction to this paper, read the Bible to a blind Muslim and had religious discussions with him about Jesus, who is recognised as a prophet in Islam.[66] She explicitly asked him about the Christian doctrine of salvation: "When asked if he loved the Saviour, he answered 'Yes'; when asked if he believed that the Lord had died for him and that Jesus was the Son of God - he said: 'I want to hear more about him, tell me all about him.'"[67] The unknown deaconess then expressed the hope that "[t]his man [...] might convert to Christianity if he were taught."[68] The deaconesses were thus by no means resigned to the passive mission of converting the locals by exemplifying mercy, but also strove to actively convert non-Christians.[69] In some cases, it is not clear whether the patients they were trying to propagate Christian faith to were Muslims or not, as they sometimes just referred to them as Arabs. For example, the *AKF* reports about the Arab deaconess Hanna who read the Bible to Arab patients in Alexandria, and a superior sister in the same hospital distributed New Testaments, tracts, and sermons to not further identifiable patients.[70]

Interestingly, it was controversial in the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institution and other deaconess institutions that participated in the Kaiserswerth General Conference in 1861 whether deaconesses should participate in the conversion of non-Christians.[71] In general, contemporary German Protestantism rejected active missionary activities by women, such as preaching. The deaconesses of the Kaiserswerth institution were also criticised for their conversion ambitions by Protestant pastors and the director of the deaconesses' institution Theodor Schäfer in Altona, another prominent figure in German Social Protestantism.[72] Instead, they assigned to them the apparent passive task of converting non-Christians through care work. This corresponded to the gender-specific expectations of German Protestantism.[73] In general, work in hospitals and educational institutions conformed to the normative and bourgeois model of femininity of the time, as they were perceived as domestic spaces and the work resonated with the concept of spiritual motherhood.[74] The deaconesses, on the other hand, saw their work abroad as well as in Germany more as an active missionary task.[75] Their motivation was strongly religious and they saw the work abroad as a chance to prove themselves and to be recognised as "heroines".[76] Another reason for the modification of the mission could be related to the competing mission societies.[77] At the educational facility run by the Kaiserswerth institute's deaconesses in Beirut, for example, the deaconesses competed for their clientele primarily with the Catholic missionary societies, but also with Jewish organizations and local Christian, Muslim, and Jewish initiatives.[78] Accordingly, the above examples suggest that the deaconesses were also actors in the Middle East who resisted the orders and authority of the mother house on the ground.[79]

However, the question arises as to why the reports of undesired direct attempts of conversion by deaconesses were published in the *AKF*. Despite the debate about proselytizing women, the Kaiserwerth Institute's home board chose to make the women's activities public. The resulting contradiction can be explained by the fact that the presentation of successes, in this case the conversion of Muslims, could increase the

reputation of the Kaiserswerth Diaconia and therefore further finance their work.[80] This is particularly clear in the article *Hülferuf aus Afrika* (*Call for help from Africa*) in the *AKF* from 1862. The article began by listing the successes of the missionary activities, such as the fact that Muslims listened to the missionaries reading the Bible "with great devotion", followed by a request for donations.[81] Consequently, the editors and home board assumed that the readers and possible benefactors of the missionary activities in Egypt were in favour of the conversion of Muslims. Moreover, in connection with Germany's imperial plans, voices for the conversion of Muslims increased also within the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute. Thus, this example shows that after Fliedner's death, the home board of the Kaiserwerth Institute itself approved of attempts to convert Muslims in the Deaconess hospitals in Egypt.

III. Agency of Egyptian Muslims

After shedding light on the conversion attempts by the missionaries, I turn now to how Egyptian and Muslim individuals reacted to the converting efforts. The assumption that target groups of Christian missions were passive and unable to act is refuted by recent work, which seeks to break with the binary categorisation of the powerless indigenous people and the all-powerful missionaries.[82] The missionaries were in constant negotiation with their environment and were confronted with expectations and resistance from the local population.[83] In what follows, we will see that the hospitals were generally used by Muslim individuals and that they were also financed by the state. In addition, Muslim publicly voiced their concerns about the Cairo hospital.

Use of the deaconesses' hospital and financial support

Generally, the services of missionaries were valued by the Egyptian communities, despite the deceptive intentions of the missionaries themselves.[84] However, the interest of Muslims in Christianity, which is often mentioned in the reports on the activities of the Kaiserswerth Diaconia in Egypt, must be viewed critically, particularly as the journal wanted to fulfil the readers' expectations and therefore usually reported on supposed success stories.[85] One group that supported the Deaconess hospitals financially were the viceroys of Egypt. They were not the target of the Christian mission, but it was through their support of the missionary societies that the latter were able to establish themselves. Said Pasha (1854-1863), who ruled at the time of the foundation of the hospital in Alexandria, actively supported the founding of church institutions, unlike some of his predecessors who merely tolerated the work of missionary societies.[86] Nevertheless, as was generally the case, the conversion of Muslims was forbidden under his rule.[87] His successor, the liberal Ismail Pasha (1863-1879), also maintained the opening to the West and advocated Western influence in the fields of education, technology, and architecture.[88] It was only under his rule that Cairo became accessible to the West, as he encouraged the migration of Europeans to the city.[89] In this context, it can be gathered from the *AKF* that in 1884, Ismail, who had already

been deposed at the time, and his successor, Tawfik Pasha (1879-1892), financially supported the foundation of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria with 2,000 marks each.[90] Under the reign of Tawfik in 1881, the Egyptian government also promoted the gratuitous cession of a plot of land in Cairo to the founders of the hospital.[91]

However, especially with regard to the last viceroys, Ismail and Tawfik, it must be taken into account that Egypt was gradually more financially dependent on Western powers due to its bankruptcy.[92] Moreover, since the suppression of the so-called Urabi Uprising in 1882, Egypt had been occupied by Great Britain, as a result of which Viceroy Tawfik had to cede most of his ruling power to the British consul Evelyn Baring.[93] Consequently, the viceroys' decisions were influenced by the dependence of the major European powers. This also becomes evident when considering that the name 'Victoria' was agreed on in 1884 by the British and the other members of the Deaconess Hospital in Cairo. After the naming, the British pledged further financial support, transferring the Egyptian government's outgoing grant to an abandoned British hospital instead to the Deaconess Hospital Victoria.[94] This fact indicates the rising power of Britain since the occupation.

Opposition to the Deaconess Hospital in Cairo

In principle, the members of the Kaiserswerth mission and other involved missionary volunteers were not very successful in converting Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.[95] Although Muslims were indeed open to the missionaries' services in education and nursing, they strictly rejected the missionary attempts of conversion and harboured resentment towards their religious motives.[96] These resentments developed into public anti-missionary campaigns by religious reformers against the active promotion of Christianity in the 1920s and 1930s.[97] Scholar Umar Ryad noted that the strong Muslim resistance to missionaries in the twentieth century was a consequence of accumulating resentment against the missionaries' strategies of the previous century, which is of interest here.[98]

Evidence of opposition, or at least skepticism, on the part of the Muslim population can be found in the *AKF*. That the Muslim population was not passive is clear from a retrospective report by Deodat Disselhoff in 1910 on the founding of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria in Cairo. He wrote that in 1881 the Protestant community was to receive a plot of land for the Victoria Deaconess Hospital free of charge from the Egyptian government, but residents of the adjacent El-Abbasiya neighbourhood resisted and petitioned for the building permit to be denied.[99] Disselhoff explained that among the more than 300 signatures was "the sheikh of the mosque that houses the largest Islamist university"[100], which gave the petition greater weight and enabled it to achieve its goal. The mosque mentioned must be the Al-Azhar institution, still renowned in the Muslim world today, which includes a prestigious university as well as a mosque.[101] The Muslim institution thus regarded the settlement of a Christian-run missionary hospital at its location as a provocation. The strong resistance of the residents of this neighbourhood is also evident from Disselhoff's following remark: "But even if the petition had been rejected, the

hostility of the inhabitants of that neighbourhood would have held out the prospect of bad hours for the young work."[102] Thus, the founders had to search for an alternative property.

This, however, did not constitute the only opposition by Muslim individuals to the establishment of the Deaconess Hospital Victoria mentioned in *AKF*. The second case, according to Deodat Disselhoff, concerned the "all-powerful Arabi Pasha"[103] , who was minister of war at the time. Disselhoff stated in the article that Ahmed Urabi had opposed another purchase of property that was close to a military barrack "because he feared damage to the health of his soldiers lying in barracks 600 metres away from the neighbourhood of a hospital!"[104] Whether this was indeed Ahmed Urabi's fear must be questioned. Urabi, who was anti-European and therefore also opposed Viceroy Tawfik, had been the leader of the so-called Urabi Uprising between 1879 and 1882. His disapproval of European influence in Egypt may have been one reason for rejecting the construction of the hospital. Due to his anti-European attitude, there is the possibility that Disselhoff chose another explanation for the rejection to discredit him afterwards.

IV. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyse to what extent the conversion of Muslims in practice played a role in the activities of the Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institute in Egypt and how their work was perceived by Muslim individuals who had access to political power. The study of the reports of the *AKF* has shown that the missionary ambitions of the various actors involved differed and for some played more than just a marginal role. While Theodor Fliedner in theory attributed less importance towards proselytising to Muslims, other actors within the Institute showed greater interest in their conversion. In addition to this, this essay contends that actors in the field not only indirectly tried to convert Muslims, but also actively did so, highlighting the ambivalence between theory and practice of the so-called *Orientarbeit*.

At the same time, Egyptian Muslims under the care and sphere of the missionaries were not passive, harbouring various reactions to the missionary presence. While the government supported the missionary hospitals financially, and while Muslims generally used the hospitals, critics of the government, Islamic religious leaders, and Cairo inhabitants actively sought to obstruct their establishment. For future research, it would be worthwhile in this context to use local government and court records in Egypt as sources, as well as Egyptian newspapers, to better understand the relationship of the local population to the founding of the hospitals.

In order to answer the question of the nature of missionary activities in the Middle East, it is worth going beyond Fliedner's writings and instead focusing on implementation in practice. Through an entangled history, it becomes evident the individuals involved were not passive targets of conversion and all-powerful missionaries. Indeed, missionary work in

Egypt was not a one-sided transfer process imposed by the missionaries, but an encounter with a reciprocal character. Equally, deaconesses were not inclined to conform to the gendered expectations of the missionary work by staying passive. The study of the encounter between protagonists of the mission and local actors in Egypt therefore opens the possibility of reframing the Kaiserswerth Institute's efforts to convert, but also the agency of those actors involved.

Notes

[1] I thank Global Histories editor Ruby Guyot and other reviewers for much good advice in completing this article, as well as Karen Nolte for encouraging me to take on this topic.

[2] "Bilder aus der Diakonissenarbeit im Hospital zu Alexandrien," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, May-August, 1895, 91. Original text: „Schwester Ruska ist seine besondere Freundin und er wartet mit Sehnsucht auf ihre Stimme und wird nie müde, ihrem Lesen aus der Bibel zuzuhören; besonders bittet er, ihm von Jesus vorzulesen, den er aber wohl nur als Propheten und Lehrer verehrt."

[3] Julia Hauser, *German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut: Competing Missions* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), 23.

[4] Uwe Kaminsky, "The Establishment of Nursing Care in the Parish: Kaiserswerth Deaconesses in Jerusalem," in *Deaconesses in Nursing Care: International Transfer of a Female Model of Life and Work in the 19th and 20th Century*, ed. Susanne Kreutzer and Karen Nolte (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 81f., 84.

[5] Norbert Friedrich, Uwe Kaminsky, and Roland Löffler, "Preface," in T*he Social Dimension of Christian Missions in the Middle East: Historical Studies of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Norbert Friedrich, Uwe Kaminsky, and Roland Löffler (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 10.

[6] Uwe Kaminsky, "Die innere Mission Kaiserswerths im Ausland: Von der Evangelisation zum Bemühen um die Dritte Welt," in *Sozialer Protestantismus im Kaiserreich: Problemkonstellationen – Lösungsperspektiven – Handlungsprofile*, ed. Norbert Friedrich and Traugott Jähnichen (Münster: LIT, 2005), 360f; Uwe Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland: Der Aufbau religiöser und sozialer Infrastruktur am Beispiel der Kaiserswerther Diakonie (1851-1975)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 46f.

[7] Kaminksy, "Die innere Mission Kaiserswerths im Ausland," 364.

[8] Theodor Fliedner, "Vorschlag zur Gründung einer deutsch-evangelischen Missions-Gesellschaft für das Morgenland," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, November-December, 1857, 1, 10f; Uwe Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad: *The Orientarbeit* of the Deaconess Institution Kaiserswerth in the Ottoman Empire," in *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 198, 208.

[9] Bettina Hitzer, "Protestantische Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland: Ein vieldeutiges Verhältnis," in *Zwischen Fürsorge und Seelensorge: Christliche Kirchen in den europäischen Zivilgesellschaften seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Arnd Bauerkämper and Jürgen Nautz (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2009), 117.

[10] Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 12.

[11] Karen Nolte, "Deaconesses' Self-Understanding and Everyday Nursing Practice in the First Deaconess Community in Kaiserswerth, Germany," in *Deaconesses in Nursing Care*, ed. Kreutzer and

Nolte, 21.

[12] Nolte, "Deaconesses' Self-Understanding," 29.

[13] Nolte, "Deaconesses' Self-Understanding," 29; Uwe Kaminsky, "Die Kaiserswerther Orientarbeit als soziale Infrastruktur zwischen Staat und Kirche," in *Protestanten im Orient*, ed. Martin Tamcke and Arthur Manukyan (Würzburg: Ergon, 2009), 86.

[14] Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad," 194f.

[15] See Kaminsky, "The Establishment of Nursing," 81, 83, 87; Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad," 203f.; See also Thorsten Norbert Preine, "Fliedners Engagement in Jerusalem: Kaiserwether Diakonie in Kontext de Orientmission," in *Mission im Konfliktfeld von Islam, Judentum und Christenum: Eine Bestandsaufnahme zum 150-järigen Jubiläum des Jerusalemsverenis*, ed. Andreas Feldtkeller and Almut Nothnagle (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck, 2003), 67f.

[16] For an overview of the state of research see Julia Hauser, "Mind the Gap!: Raum, Geschlecht und Zirkulation von Wissen in der Mission am Beispiel der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen in Beirut," in *Mission global: Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Richard Hölzl and Rebekka Habermas (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 6f.

[17] Julia Hauser, "From Transformation to Negotiation: A Female Mission in a 'City of Schools'," *Journal of World History* 27, no. 3 (2016): 476, 493, https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2016.0117.

[18] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 1–3, 14. Deaconesses were not understood as missionaries by contemporaries, but recent research on missionary work recognises deaconesses as central actors. See Hauser, "Mind the Gap," 139f.; Rebekka Habermas and Richard Hölzl, "Mission global: Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert: Einleitung," in *Mission global*, ed. Hölzl and Habermas, 11f.

[19] Hauser, "Mind the Gap," 140.

[20] Samir Boulos, *European Evangelicals in Egypt (1900-1956): Cultural Entanglements and Missionary Spaces* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), 28; Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 89.

[21] Heather J. Sharkey, "Empire and Muslim Conversion: Historical Reflections on Christian Missions in Egypt," *Islam & Christian Muslim Relations* 16, no. 1 (2005): 44, https://doi.org/10.1080/0959641052000313237.

[22] Albrecht Fueß, *Die deutsche Gemeinde in Ägypten von 1919-1939* (Hamburg: Lit, 1996), 39; Anita Müller, *Schweizer in Alexandrien 1914-1963: Zur ausländischen Präsenz in Ägypten* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 21. On the Kaiserswerth support for Protestant congregations in Egypt see Angelika Marks, "Von Kaiserswerth nach Kairo – die ‚Liebesarbeit' der Diakonissen," in *1912-2012: Die Deutsche Evangelische Kirche in Bulak: Ein Jahrhundert wechselhafter Geschichte in Kairo*, ed. Deutschsprachige Evangelische Gemeinde Kairo (Berlin: Heenemann, 2012),195f.

[23] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 6.

[24] On cooperation see Marks, "Von Kaiserswerth," 189, 195f. On the funding see [Deodat] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria in Kairo: Ein Rückblick auf die 25jährige Geschichte des Hauses 1885-1910," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, February, 1910, 26.

[25] Marks, "Von Kaiserswerth," 189.

[26] Carl Goebel, "Die deutschen Krankenhäuser im Orient," in *Länder und Völker der Türkei:*

Schriftensammlung der Deutschen Vorderasiengesellschaft, ed. Hugo Grothe (Leipzig: Gaeblers Geograph. Inst., 1917), 16.

[27] On the agency of non-European actors see for example Rebekka Habermas, "Mission im 19. Jahrhundert - Globale Netze des Religiösen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 287, no. 3 (2008): 639f., https://doi.org/10.1524/hzhz.2008.0056; Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 1. On the perspective of Muslims on Christian missionary work in the Middle East see for example Umar Ryad, "Muslim Response to Missionary Activities in Egypt: With a Special Reference to the Al-Azhar High Corps of '*Ulamâ* (1925-1935)," in *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, ed. Murre-van den Berg, 281.

[28] Hilde Nielssen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and Karina Hestad Skeie, "Introduction," in P*rotestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Unto the Ends of the World*, ed. Hilde Nielssen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and Karina Hestad Skeie (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 13. See also Habermas and Hölzl, "Mission global," 28.

[29] Hauser, "From Transformation," 476.

[30] On this method see Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 10.

[31] For periodisation see Falk Wiesemann, "In diesem Land, wo die Lebenssonne zuerst hineinleuchtet: Kaiserswerther Diakonissen im Morgenland. Mit 26 Abbildungen," *Düsseldorfer Jahrbuch* 80 (2010): 157, 159.

[32] Hauser, "Waisen gewinnen," 28f.

[33] Hauser, "Waisen gewinnen," 28f.

[34] See Falk Wiesemann, "In diesem Land," 152; Kaminsky, "Die innere Mission Kaiserswerths im Ausland," 366f.; Kaminsky, "Establishment of Nursing," 86.

[35] "Übersicht über den Stand der Arbeit der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen im Morgenland," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, July-August, 1903, 111. As the author of the article signed only 'D.', it is not possible to identify them with certainty, but there is a possibility that it was Deodat Disselhoff, as his father, J. Disselhoff, had already died in 1896, and he wrote a large number of articles.

[36] "Übersicht," *AKF*, 1903, 112.

[37] Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad," 204.

[38] Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad," 204.

[39] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 11. On the realtionship between missionaries and imperialism see John M. MacKenzie, "Introduction," in E*uropean Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester University Press, 2011), 9.

[40] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 249.

[41] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 287.

[42] Fliedner, "Vorschlag," 10.

[43] Hauser, "Mind the Gap," 140–142; Kaminsky, "Establishment of Nursing Care," 86; Kaminsky, "German 'Home Mission' Abroad," 201.

[44] Fliedner, "Vorschlag," 6.

[45] See Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei 1839-1938* (Zürich: Chronos, 2000), 525.

[46] For Arabic names, I do not use transliteration with diacritical marks. Instead, the Latinised form is used. On the situation in Egypt see Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 28f.

[47] Yaron Perry, "Medical Treatment as a Missionary Instrument and its Social Consequences: Aspects of the Work by the London Jews Society in Palestine up to 1914," in *The Social Dimension of Christian Missions in the Middle East*, ed. Friedrich, Kaminsky, and Löffler, 153.

[48] "Das Diakonissen-Hospital Victoria in Cairo," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, January-April, 1885, 12.

[49] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 25.

[50] "Diakonissen," *AKF*, 1887, 16–18; Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital," 25.

[51] "Diakonissen," *AKF*, 1887, 16. Original text: „Es durfte in ihr [Kairo] in der That nicht länger fehlen. Ist doch Cairo die Hauptburg des Islams und keine wirksamere Predigt giebts den Muhamedanern gegenüber, als die der thätigen Liebe!". Disselhoff's article from 1910 seems to have taken over most of the text from 1887. In Disselhoff's article, the word 'capital' (*Hauptstadt*) was used instead of 'main castle' (*Hauptburg*). See Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital," 25.

[52] "Diakonissen," *AKF*, 1887, 16. Original text: „Aber auch wir Europäer, wir Deutsche, wir Evangelischen dort sehnten uns seit lange nach einem Diakonissenhospital, wie Alexandrien es besitzt. Wir hatten für unsere Kranken keine Pflege, und es giebt doch so viel Krankheit im heißen Klima."

[53] See Malte Fuhrmann, *Der Traum vom deutschen Orient: Zwei deutsche Kolonien im Osmanischen Reich 1851-1918* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 187–188; Hauser, "Mind the Gap," 140, 156.

[54] Fuhrmann, *Der Traum*, 187.

[55] Perry, "Medical Treatment," 153.

[56] Perry, "Medical Treatment," 153.

[57] See for example Brian R. Miller, "History of the Blind," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed August 11, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-the-blind-1996241.

[58] Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 97.

[59] "Diakonissen," *AKF*, 1887, 18.

[60] "Übersicht," *AKF*, 1903, 112.

[61] "Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, July-August, 1864, 123. Original text: „Ins Hospital selbst kommen bis jetzt verhältnismäßig nur erst wenige Muhamedaner. Es gilt auch hier, wie es in Jerusalem Anfangs der Fall war, harren und Vertrauen erwerben. In die Apotheke aber kommen täglich viele Muhamedaner, um sich Arzneien zu holen, den Arzt zu consultieren oder die Wunden, namentlich kranke Augen reinigen und behandeln zu lassen."

[62] "Hülferuf aus Afrika, aus dem Diakonissen-Hospital zu Alexandrien, von den Kaiserswerther Schwestern," *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, May-Juni, 1862, 80. Original text: „Wenn die Schwestern die armen arabischen Familien in ihren elenden, schmutzigen Hütten in der Stadt besuchten, und ihnen Arznei brachten, besonders den vielen Augenkranken, so wurden sie wie Engel

Gottes aufgenommen.“ Whether they were Christian or Muslim Arabs cannot be deduced from the text.

[63] See also Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 100.

[64] Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 100.

[65] “Hülferuf aus Afrika,” *AKF*, 1862, 80. The missionaries’ identities are not specified any further in the article.

[66] ”Bilder aus der Diakonissenarbeit,” *AKF*, 1895, 91.

[67] “Bilder aus der Diakonissenarbeit,” *AKF*, 1895, 91. Original text: „Auf die Frage, ob er den Heiland liebe, antwortete er ‚Ja‘; fragt man ihn, ob er glaube, daß der Herr für ihn gestorben sei und daß Jesus Gottes Sohn ist – so sagt er: ‚Ich will noch mehr von ihm hören, erzählt mir alles!“

[68] “Bilder aus der Diakonissenarbeit im Hospital zu Alexandrien,” *AKF*, 1895, 91. Original text: „Dieser Mann würde vielleicht zum Christentum bekehren, wenn man ihn lehrte.“

[69] On the passive mission, see Hauser, “Mind the Gap,” 141.

[70] “Über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande,” *Der Armen- und Krankenfreund*, March-April, 1881, 55; “Diakonissen Arbeit im Morgenlande,” *AKF*, 1887, 16.

[71] Kaminsky, “German ‘Home Mission’ Abroad,” 203f.

[72] Hauser, “Mind the Gap,” 141 and 10f; Nolte, “Deaconesses’ Self-Understanding,” 31f.

For more see Hauser, “Mind the Gap,” 140f.

[74] Hauser touches upon this in *German Religious Women*, 2.

[75] [73] Wiesemann, “In diesem Land,” 155; Nolte, “Deaconesses’ Self-Understanding,” 31f.

[76] Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 48; Kaminsky, “German ‘Home Mission’ Abroad,” 206, 208.

[77] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 2.

[78] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 1f., 5.

[79] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 1, 14. On the authority of diaconia see Susanne Kreutzer and Karen Nolte, “Deaconesses in Nursing Care: A Transnational History,” in *Deaconesses in Nursing Care*, ed. Kreutzer and Nolte, 8.

[80] Hauser, “Waisen gewinnen,” 29; Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 47.

[81] “Hülferuf aus Afrika,” *AKF*, 1862, 80.

[82] Habermas, “Mission im 19. Jahrhundert,” 639; Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 11.

[83] Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 11; Hauser, “From Transformation,” 496.

[84] Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 2.

[85] See e. g. “Bilder aus der Diakonissenarbeit im Hospital zu Alexandrien,” *AKF*, 1895, 91, 93. Hauser, “Waisen gewinnen,” 28f.

[86] Sharkey, "Empire," 44.

[87] Sharkey, "Empire," 44; Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 38.

[88] Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 28; Fueß, *Die deutsche Gemeinde*, 47f.

[89] Marks, "Von Kaiserswerth," 197.

[90] "Diakonissen Arbeit im Morgenlande," *AKF*, 1887, 17.

[91] "Diakonissen Arbeit im Morgenlande," *AKF*, 1887, 17.

[92] Cilli Kasper-Holtkotte, *Deutschland in Ägypten: Orientalistische Netzwerke, Judenverfolgung und das Leben der Frankfurter Jüdin Mimi Borchardt* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 38.

[93] See for example Martin W. Daly, "The British Occupation, 1882-1922," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt. Vol 2: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Martin W. Daly and Carl F. Petry (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 239.

[94] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital," 27f.

[95] Marcel Geser, *Zwischen Missionierung und „Stärkung des Deutschtums": Der Deutsche Kindergarten in Konstantinopel von seinen Anfängen bis 1918* (Würzburg: Ergon-Verl., 2010), 67f.

[96] Heather J. Sharkey, "Missionary Legacies: Muslim-Christian Encounters in Egypt and Sudan during the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 68. See also Hauser, *German Religious Women*, 4.

[97] Boulos, *European Evangelicals*, 43, 46; Ryad, "Muslim Response," 286.

[98] Ryad, "Muslim Response," 281f. However, Ryad was referring here mainly to English-speaking missionary societies. On their more offensive strategy at the end of the nineteenth century, see also Sharkey, "Missionary Legacies," 62.

[99] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 26f.

[100] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 26f. Original text: „da an ihrer Spitze der Scheich der Moschee stand, die die größte islamistische Universität beherbergt."

[101] Ryad, "Muslim Response," 282.

[102] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 27. Original text: „Aber auch bei Abweisung der Petition hätte doch die Feindseligkeit der Bewohner jenes Viertels dem jungen Werke böse Stunden in Aussicht gestellt."

[103] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 27. Original text: „allmächtige Arabi Pascha".

[104] Disselhoff, "Das Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhospital Viktoria," 27. Original text: „da er von der Nachbarschaft eines Hospitals Schädigung der Gesundheit seiner in einer 600 Meter entfernten Kaserne liegenden Soldaten fürchtete!"

Habsburgs in the Indian Ocean. A Commercial History of the Austrian East India Company and its Colonies and Bases in East Africa, India, and China, 1775–1785

By

Florian Ambach

Abstract

The study of the Habsburg monarchy's colonial past and global interconnections is a comparatively young field of research, traditionally understudied as it did not fit into the Austrian narrative of colonial disentanglement. The following paper offers new understandings of the history of the Habsburg monarchy within a global framework by focusing on the Habsburg East India Company of Trieste-Antwerp (1775–1785). In contrast to previous studies of their political dimensions, this article focuses mainly on the commercial actions of the company. Ship inventories, invoices, logbooks, letters, diaries, reports, and petitions from the archives of Vienna provide valuable insights into the everyday life of the Company. Raw materials and products can serve as probes of transcontinental linkages to bring into focus the economic and political contexts and the histories of people who produced, cultivated, processed, transported, and traded with them. But beyond that, the company trade of enslaved people constituted a key part of the company's commercial endeavors. Based on these theoretical and methodological considerations, the goods and people shipped by the Company sheds light on aspects of global trade and colonization projects of the Habsburg monarchy and can be used as a touchstone by which the national-historical perspective is challenged.

About the author

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Introduction

Although the Habsburg monarchy had established two East India Companies in the eighteenth century, the Company of Ostend (1722–1727) and the Company of Trieste-Antwerp (1775–1785), its colonial past and global interconnections were ignored in both public discourse and academic scholarship. This erasure was in part due to the Austrian narrative of colonial disentanglement. After 1945, Austrian historiography was committed to portraying the nation in a favorable light and to relativizing or even ignoring discreditable passages in its history. This includes not only the so-called *victim theory*, according to which Austria was not a perpetrator but a victim of Nazism and therefore not responsible for the crimes committed in its name, but also the downplaying of any participation in colonialism and imperialism.[1] Only in the last two decades has there been a significant increase in publications on this topic.[2]

In contrast to previous studies, this contribution focuses on the aspect of trade not only with raw materials and products, but also of enslaved people, in order to provide a supplement to the understanding of the Austrian East India Company. However, a clear distinction must be made between trade in goods and trade in humans. Mainly on the coasts of East Africa, company employees bought people who were dragged from the interior of the continent to hubs of the slave trade. These individuals were robbed of their homes, their families, and their identities in order to be commodified for the commercial gain of the company.[3] In this context, the paper explores what role intercontinental trade of raw materials, products, and enslaved people played in justifying and maintaining the colonial bases established in East Africa and the East Indies. For this purpose, the short-lived colonial settlements in Delagoa Bay (1777–1781) in the south of present-day Mozambique, and on the Nicobar Islands (1778–1784) in the Bay of Bengal are placed at the center of the study. In order to situate the Habsburgs' colonial ambitions in a wider context, the study draws comparisons with the other East India Companies, primarily the *British East India Company* (EIC) and the Dutch *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC). International research has attempted to overcome national historiography in favor of global perspectives by employing different products such as sugar and cotton as the main analytical lens.[4]

Owing to the lack of serial sources on the activities of the Austrian East India Company, it is impossible to reconstruct a comprehensive history of the Company with reliable quantitative data. What the sources do provide, however, is an exemplary account of the economic pillars of the short-lived Habsburg colonial empire. This paper seeks to follow the chronology of events. Beginning with the debates surrounding the creation of the Company, the second section illustrates the close intertwining of its founding with the colonial ambitions of the Viennese Court and the economic and financial elite of the empire. The third and fourth sections revolve around the Delagoa Coast and the Nicobar Islands, which were established as permanent colonies – with large plantations, a multitude of settlers, and the implementation of slavery. The fifth section focuses on a specific commodity, tea, to show the impact of its importation into Europe on consumer habits and

how its profitability provoked a controversy about the company's core business. These different thematic approaches provide insights into multiple layers of the commercial life of the company in order to gain deeper insights into its role in colonialism.

The formation of an Austrian East India Company

The idea of establishing a company for the East Indies did not come about by chance. As early as the 1720s, the Habsburg monarchy had taken the first steps towards establishing overseas colonies with the Company of Ostend. The Belgian city of Ostend, which was conceded to the Habsburg monarchy in the course of the peace negotiations of Utrecht, Rastatt and Baden (1713/14), served as the main hub. The international merchant community organized several voyages to the Americas, Africa, and Asia and was successful in securing the support of Emperor Charles VI (r. 1711–1740), who issued an octroi in 1722.[5] In the slipstream of the EIC and VOC, the Ostend Company was able to build up a small colonial empire based on outposts on the Coromandel coast and in Bengal.[6] As they raced against the other European powers for colonies, the Ostend Company's agents became increasingly impatient in negotiations with the Nawab Murshid Quli Khan (r. 1717–1727) and the Faujdar of Hugli for the cession of Banquibazar, Hydsiapour and Bourompour. As a result, the Scottish-born Governor-General of the Ostend Company, Alexander Hume, and officer Macdonnel resorted to violent measures such as the blockade of the Hugli River, the capture of Indian ships, hostage-taking, and the menace of a massive retaliatory expedition. In return, the EIC and VOC persuaded the Nawab to launch a combined British-Dutch-Bengali attack on the Ostend Company. The Nawab actively supported the operation by committing an army of 1,500 soldiers to blockade the imperial settlement at Banquibazar. Imperial ships were eventually captured, isolating Banquibazar from supplies.[7] Due to international pressure, Charles VI had to liquidate the Company as early as 1727 and finally dissolve it in 1731 in order to secure support for the Pragmatic Sanction and the succession for his daughter Maria Theresia.[8] Despite the Company's dissolution, the Banquibazar base was still maintained, but Bengal was increasingly affected by the expansion of the Maratha Empire. Hume's successor François de Schonamille managed to gather a force of 350 European and Indian soldiers and went plundering through the surrounding areas. After leaving Banquibazar on 9 November 1744, they made their way to Syriam in Burma. But as Schonamille disregarded the ceremonial at an audience at the court of King Smim Htaw Buddhaketi (r. 1740–1747) in March 1745, he and most of his men were killed.[9]

These events show that colonial ambitions by no means ceased with the dissolution of the Company. Due to the involvement of the Habsburg monarchy in various wars on the European continent, however, plans to reestablish the East India Company had to be subordinated to coping with the consequences of these wars.[10] Nevertheless, Trieste, the port city on the Adriatic Sea, became an increasingly important hub between Austria and overseas countries and markets, because it had been declared a free port by Charles VI in

1719, offering economic advantages for long-distance trade.[11] Moreover, it allowed merchants from the entire Mediterranean to settle in the city, bringing their know-how and networks with them. Soon communities of Protestant, Jewish, Armenian, Serbian and Greek Orthodox merchants emerged in Trieste, contributing significantly to the rise of the port.[12] Originally focused in particular on the eastern Mediterranean and the Levant, the merchants attempted to expand the trade route into the Indian Ocean. There are two main reasons the operational base was moved from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean (while the financial center remained in the Austrian Netherlands). Firstly, the political and economic elites hoped this would prevent jealous reactions from Great Britain and the Netherlands. Secondly, Trieste gained importance as a commercial hub due to the administrative restructuring and the designation of Karl von Zinzendorf (1739–1813) as governor.[13]

In 1775, Amsterdam-born former EIC employee Willem Bolts (1738–1808)[14] was able to obtain from Maria Theresia (r. 1740–1780) the issuing of a new octroi for the founding of the new *Société impériale asiatique*.[15] Unlike the octroi of the Ostend Company, whose 103 articles had strongly predetermined how the company was to operate, the founding patent consisted of only 18 articles and thus left Bolts with wide-ranging liberties for shaping the company. The right to seize land overseas (Article 14) and the permission to trade enslaved people (Article 11),[16] "from the eastern and western coasts of Africa, or from the island of Madagascar, to the continent or to the islands of America",[17] were explicitly stated.

Following the negotiations with a group of Antwerp bankers, headed by Charles de Proli (1723–1786),[18] Bolts acquired the EIC ship *Earl of Lincoln* in London and baptized it *Giuseppe e Teresa*. After almost being seized in Lisbon due to British suspicions that the ship was carrying contraband, it was able to continue its voyage to the Tuscan port of Livorno, where Pietro Leopoldo (1747–1792),[19] the brother of Emperor Joseph II (r. 1765–1790), sat on the throne. The *Giuseppe e Teresa* was then loaded with soldiers provided by the Court War Council. In addition, the ship received a cargo of iron, copper, brass, steel, more than 13,000 rifles, several cannons, and ammunition contributed by the state budget. In September 1776, Bolts was ready to begin the voyage to the East Indies with the ship.[20]

Delagoa Bay: Between trading post, plantation economy, and settler colony

When the *Giuseppe e Teresa* ran aground on a sandbank off the southeast African coast at the end of March 1777, the East India project was in danger of failing early on.[21] The aforementioned cargo could have capsized.[22] However, the ship broke free with the next tide and reached the nearby coast at Delagoa Bay.[23] Bolts knew about the prospect of establishing a colony in Delagoa Bay.[24] Since the crossing to India could never be made in one go, a settlement on the East African coast had crucial strategic importance. This would mean that the Company ships would no longer have to rely on going to the Dutch Cape Colony for fresh food and drinking water.[25] Bolts himself had considered occupying the then

still uninhabited island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic.[26] But when the *Giuseppe e Teresa* arrived in Delagoa Bay and laid the groundwork for a colony by treaties with three local princes, Mohaâr Capêll of Tembè, Chibanzaân Matôla, and Bilêne Masoûmo, this plan was obsolete.[27]

Delagoa Bay not only offered an outpost with fresh water and food as well as timber for the maintenance of ships, but also seemed suitable for permanent colonization, because two key conditions were fulfilled: no immediate presence of major bases from other colonial powers and the successful negotiations with the East African princes. A central component of the treaties was the exclusive pre-emption right for ivory. As a result, the colony in Delagoa exported about 75,000 pounds of ivory annually.[28] In addition, Bolts planned the cultivation of sugar cane, for which he envisaged the use of forced labor by enslaved Africans.[29] The fertile soil was deemed suitable for the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, and rice, and possibly even coffee, pepper, and indigo.[30] How meticulously Bolts must have planned the establishment of the colony in advance is evident from the seeds brought from Livorno and Rio de Janeiro, which were to enable the colonists to grow lemons, oranges, pineapples, ginger, watermelons, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes. A gardener who had travelled with them was to ensure that the plants and fruits flourished.[31] Before Bolts' departure in July 1777, he selected ten soldiers from the ship to remain in Delagoa and commissioned the German Daniel Pollet to continue the construction of the Fort St. Joseph. Meanwhile, a station was established on the island of Inhaca, which was ideal for pearl fishing and for collecting cowrie shells that could be used inland as barter currency for the acquisition of gold, ivory, tobacco, and enslaved people.[32] This strategy of the Company parallels that of the other colonial powers, which adopted this ancient form of payment in order to establish a barter system that was asymmetrical in their favor.[33]

A document from the archival legacy of the Trieste governor Karl von Zinzendorf lists the persons and objects to be sent to Delagoa and shows how the Company attempted to build up the newly acquired colony. It listed 24 cannons of 18 and 12 pounds, 2 field pieces, 300 shotguns, 300 pistols, 300 sabres, gunpowder, lead, 20 tents, 10 sea compasses, staves, fishing nets, fishing rods, 2 sloops, 2 ploughs, 20 plough knives, 6 bells, linen for flags, 50 doors, 200 windows, 100 wagons and wagon wheels, 300 hoes, 200 shovels, 200 sickles, 20 scythes, and 200 wooden hoes.[34] Precise specifications were also made for the composition of the settler community: 173 colonists, as many of them as possible married, among them 50 soldiers, 5 cannoneers, 20 fishermen, 12 bricklayers, 12 carpenters, 20 of the like for building houses, 5 armourers, 5 blacksmiths, 5 brickmakers, 5 tailors, 5 cobblers, 2 millers, 3 coopers, and one Catholic and one Protestant clergyman.[35]

This list clearly illustrates that the use of violence played a central role in the establishment of the colony.[36] As shown above, only half a century before, the rivalries of the Ostend Company with the indigenous powers in Bengal as well as with the European colonial forces had escalated to the point of violent excesses with many casualties.[37] This experience is likely to have still been present in the minds of the Company's central actors,

especially as the geopolitical situation continued to deteriorate. Portugal could have at any time viewed the colony as a threat of its sovereignty in East Africa.[38] In addition, the list makes it evident that skilled labor and the precise composition of working equipment were essential for anticipating the everyday work of the settlers and thus, in further consequence, for ensuring their supplies. In matters of faith, the illusion that the colonization project could have been linked to Catholic missionary purposes appears to have been abandoned right from the outset. They opted instead for the pragmatic solution of sending out both a Catholic and a Protestant priest – a necessary concession, because many Company employees did not come from Habsburg lands with a Catholic majority. Instead, due to the lack of personnel, the project had to be an international and multiconfessional undertaking right from the start.[39]

The Nicobar Islands: Cash Crops on a Deserted Archipelago?

The next step was to look for outposts on the coast of western India. Bolts steered the *Giuseppe e Teresa* into the Gulf of Cambay, where he targeted the port city of Ghogha for the establishment of a trading post.[40] Negotiations with the Marathi Peshwa, Madhavrao II (r. 1774–1795), were thwarted by the EIC.[41] Instead, Bolts entered into a private deal with the Portuguese trader Manuel Simon dos Santos to establish a regular connection between the North West Indian ports and Delagoa Bay.[42] East African ivory was highly demanded in India and yielded sizable returns in order to acquire cotton fabrics, which could be sold profitably in East Africa.[43] Enslaved Africans were to be acquired in Mozambique and sold to the island of Mauritius east of Madagascar.[44] To boost this triangular trade between Ghogha, Delagoa, and Mauritius, three new ships were acquired.[45]

Taking into account the power dynamics on the Indian continent, Bolts had sent Captain Henry Bennett to the Bay of Bengal to take possession of the Nicobar Islands.[46] After initial explorations, the deed of submission was signed on 12 July 1778 by heads of families of the local population and by the Moravian Brethren, a group of the Protestant *Herrnhut Mission*, who had pushed ahead with an attempt at colonization by the Danish East India Company that had been aborted in 1772.[47] In order to gather supplies, the new settlers were led to Madras in August 1778, where they met Bolts. He had in the meantime received permission for the establishment of three factories in Mangaluru, Karwar, and Balliapatam on the Coromandel coast from Hyder Ali (r. 1761–1782), the Nawab of Mysore, who shared his hostility to the EIC. In return, Bolts supplied the Mysore leader with six cannons and the remaining rifles for the wars against the British.[48] More than a year passed in which they concentrated on building up these factories before Bolts acquired the ship *Le Borrekens* on 3 August 1779 and concluded an agreement about regular supply trips to the Nicobar Islands with the traders Rafael Pagose and Agavelli Satur.[49] Water and provisions were to be brought from Madras to the Nicobar Islands, where plantation produce was to be loaded onto the ship to be dropped off in Bago (Burma) to buy rice. For this purpose, the Company sought to establish a warehouse in Bago.[50] The first supply voyage in August 1779

brought the German Gottfried Stahl, whom Bolts entrusted with the establishment of the colony, to the Nicobar Islands with seeds, livestock, and twenty workers from the Malabar Coast, as well as four enslaved Africans.[51]

The harbour was located in a weather-protected bay and offered space for 80 to 100 ships. Due to the proximity to Sumatra, Cai Friedrich von Brocktorff, a former employee of the VOC from the German port of Kiel, who after his return to Europe offered his services to the Viennese court as an informant for Habsburg's East India plans, suspected auriferous ore on the Nicobar Islands.[52] By listing the fruits and spices that one could find or at least cultivate in the future, the former member of the *Herrenhut Mission* Jakob Hegner, in order to convince the Viennese court of this venture, painted a picture of an idyllic overseas paradise where everything grew in abundance, including coconuts, areca, kapok, yams, cassava, ginger, capsicum, pineapple, mango, lemons, tamarind, jackfruit, bananas, turmeric, and saffron.[53] Stahl estimated sugar cane and cocoa to be the most profitable.[54] Cotton, coffee, indigo, maize, rice, and pepper could also be cultivated.[55] Due to its location, trade with Bengal, the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, Ceylon, Bago, Malacca, Sumatra, Java, and China was possible from the Nicobar Islands, and thus they had all the potential to become a pivotal hub for Austrian ambitions in the Indian Ocean.[56] Even Chinese traders frequently came to the area to acquire coveted swallow's nests.[57] Another highly demanded export product were coconuts. Brocktorff claimed that the VOC rented out coconut palms in Java for the annual price of one *Reichstaler* and 30 *Silbergroschen*.[58]

But the question arose as to how these crops could be grown on a large scale. According to Stahl, the workers from the Malabar Coast were not suitable for plantation work, describing them as "lazy people".[59] He therefore sent a memo to Vienna in which he outlined his vision for the establishment of the colony: in Europe, 200 to 300 settlers were to be recruited and brought to the Cape of Good Hope in four ships. There were many similarities between the envisioned composition of the settler community in Delagoa Bay and on the Nicobar Islands. They were to be composed of farmers, carpenters, masons, bricklayers, lime burners, potters, joiners, tailors, locksmiths, tanners, cobblers, blacksmiths, doctors, and surgeons.[60] Two ships were to head for Mozambique, where they would acquire 200 slaves and bring them to the Nicobar Islands. The other two ships were to load butter, salt, meat, beans, and flour for the colony at the Cape and sail with the European colonists to Rangoon (Burma), where the craftsmen were to carve huts from the high-quality timber there. In order to transport these together with cattle and poultry to the Nicobar Islands, the purchase of one or two more ships would be necessary. Then the construction of settlements and the establishment of plantations could begin.[61] Sugar cane would be particularly profitable, which could possibly be processed on site through a refinery and rum distillery, but cocoa, pepper, cinnamon, cotton, coffee, and indigo could also be experimented with.[62] In practice, however, the settlers did not manage to grow more than small quantities of crops, and the dream of large-scale plantations did not materialize. Nevertheless, news of the islands' products soon circulated throughout German newspapers, as can be seen from an article of 20 September 1779 in the newspaper

Reichspostreuter, which was issued in Altona and widely distributed across the German-speaking countries:

> The commanders of the Imperial and Royal ships Joseph and Theresia and Prince Kaunitz, have, with the consent of the inhabitants, taken possession of the islands of Nicobari, Souri, Tricatte and Carcioul, which are situated at the entrance of the Bay of Bengal, and have built a house and a fort there, leaving a few Europeans behind for the time being, until more can be sent there. These islands are inhabited by otherwise benign but ignorant Indians, and cinnamon, muscat and coconuts etc. grow there.[63]

In the heyday of the companies, spices were among the most demanded goods, some even more valuable than precious metals, including pepper from Sumatra, Borneo, India, and Bengal, nutmeg from the Banda archipelago, and cloves from the Moluccas.[64] The VOC made every effort to monopolize this trade.[65] However, in 1769/70, the Frenchman Pierre Poivre had managed to steal clove and nutmeg plants from the Moluccas and to cultivate them on Mauritius and Réunion.[66] This transfer of plants beyond the Dutch monopolies can also be seen in the activities of the smaller companies. On the Nicobar Islands, according to Hegner's reports, the Moravian Brethren had secretly imported a cinnamon tree from Ceylon. He criticized, however, that the colonists did not know how to scrape it properly.[67] This shows that the smaller companies had difficulties in obtaining the plants and raw materials, whose access was strictly monitored and blocked by the hegemonic powers EIC and VOC. Even after the successful acquisition of the plant, they lacked sufficient know-how to extract the final product, in this case cinnamon, due to their limited personnel and their inexperience in the economic sphere of the Indian Ocean.

Brocktorff drafted detailed plans on how the colonization of the Nicobar Islands should ideally be carried out. He advised the Viennese court to recruit colonists primarily from Europe and the Coromandel Coast. In Tranquebar, he said, there were a number of children of European origin who had been taken into custody by the missionaries.[68] The Protestant missionaries in the Danish colonial empire in India were responsible for the custody and education of children. These included not only children of European settlers, but also children from relationships between Europeans and Tamils, as well as Tamil orphans adopted by colonists.[69] According to Stahl, these children were particularly suitable as colonists, as they were better accustomed to the climate and therefore more resistant to tropical diseases.[70] Stahl also considered the possibility of attracting colonists from China.[71] For the permanent fixing of a Habsburg colony on the archipelago, a number of conditions, intended for both the colonial authorities and the settlers, seemed indispensable to him: religious tolerance, alliances with neighboring powers, adaptation to the climate, regular expeditions, and the establishment of plantations. Each colonist would have to be allocated a piece of land and cultivate it with the help of enslaved people.[72] Stahl stressed, however, that "[…] every effort must be expended to attract many free blacks in order to have little need of slaves, which is otherwise a very necessary evil in India."[73] This statement indicates that he wanted to use slaves only with reservations. Moreover, it is not entirely clear whom Stahl was referring to as "free blacks". Given Stahl's use of this racialized concept, which was related not only to skin color but also to social

hierarchization, it seems plausible that he subsumed both people of African and Indian origin under this term.

This argument also seemed most powerful for Hegner, since as a member of the Herrenhut Mission he had witnessed firsthand how many Danish colonists had been carried off by diseases in the Nicobar Islands. Workers from the Malabar coast were paid seven to nine pagodas a month and some were paid six months in advance before the ships left from Madras – an indication of how unattractive the prospect of life on the Nicobar Islands was considered to be.[74] For these reasons, Stahl envisaged enslaved Africans for labor: "For 1,000 pagodas one could have bought at least 15 African slaves, who have a strong constitution to endure in the most unhealthy land, and one of whom works more than ten Malabars."[75] For logistical reasons, Stahl considered the purchase of slaves at Portuguese bases in East Africa, primarily Mozambique, to be the best option.[76] According to his calculations, 150 to 200 enslaved African men were to be brought to the Nicobar Islands at first – together with their wives.[77] His cynical argument was that "this will sweeten the discomfort of slavery, keep them from much debauchery, and at the same time provide the colony with an increase of young slaves, who are generally more capable of learning all kinds of crafts."[78] At the same time, however, a large number of Europeans would be required "to keep them in check."[79] As an option, Stahl mentioned that the slaves might be released after ten years' work, in order to continue building up the colony as free men.[80] Under no circumstances, however, should they be allowed to keep slaves themselves, because "this would put them too much on an equal footing with the Europeans and tempt them to give themselves up to idleness and to bring up their children wimpishly." Stahl described the native inhabitants of the Nicobar Islands as "ignorant savages" who were to be "civilized" by a series of measures and made useful to the colony.[82] These included plans to build schools for Nicobarese children. At the age of 13 or 14, the boys were to enter a six- or seven-year apprenticeship with a European craftsman, in order to become carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, or something similar.[83] The training of young Nicobarese as seafarers occupied a special place in the plans.[84]

With these arguments, Hegner and Stahl fit into a discursive context that, on the one hand, still followed a strict economic logic of maximizing profits through the exploitation of enslaved people, but nevertheless already showed sprinklings of Enlightenment ideas, especially considering the option of eventually setting them free and conceding them land ownership. Under no circumstances, however, is this to be regarded as particularly humane, let alone proto-abolitionist, since the slaves in the colonies continued to be politically, economically, culturally, and physically oppressed. Although the Nicobar Islands and Delagoa represented the only Habsburg plantation colonies during this period, there were a number of German merchants in the Austrian Netherlands who were also involved in the Atlantic triangular trade. The most prominent example is Friedrich von Romberg (1729–1813), whose company, based in Brussels, Ostend, Bordeaux, and Le Havre, brought slaves from Africa to the Caribbean to work on plantations of cotton, sugar cane, and indigo, and in turn sold the products in Europe.[85]

Although slave labor was an important factor in the design of a colonial economy under Habsburg guidance, the Austrian East India Company lacked large-scale colonies with sufficient cash crops. Even if their sale was extremely profitable, the overall trade volume of the plantation products grown by settlers and slaves remained too small. Therefore, the Company had to consider other options to increase the returns from intercontinental trade.

Tea Time in Austria? Two Competing Models of Habsburg Colonialism and the Flow of Goods back to Europe: Colonial Country Trade versus the Europe-China Trade Axis

The smaller companies, like the Danish and the Austrian East India Company, soon realized that the spice trade offered hardly any lucrative opportunities for latecomers, so they turned to trading tea from China. Both, moreover, tried to present themselves as neutral powers and offered shipping space on their ships to English and Dutch merchants in order to create loopholes within the hardened fronts between the VOC and the EIC.[86] Since no Company ship had yet returned to Europe and Bolts was therefore under pressure to present a visible return for the Antwerp business partners and the court elites, he acquired the 600-ton *Prince de Kaunitz* in Bombay, which headed for Canton in China with a cargo of pepper and cotton, to pick up tea and silk and take the fastest route back to Livorno, where the ship arrived in the spring of 1779.[87] A newspaper article indicates that after selling such large quantities of silk, the price of Italian silk dropped dramatically in order to remain competitive.[88]

Besides the spice trade in India and Southeast Asia, Chinese tea represented a valuable commodity that could generate considerable profits. Since the last third of the seventeenth century, and with the gradual opening of Chinese ports, ever larger quantities of tea had arrived in Europe, where the beverage became much beloved. Increased demand caused the production of more tea in China, which lowered the price – not only in China, but also in Europe, allowing tea to spread to broader social classes. During the eighteenth century, the VOC as well as the East India Companies of other powers, such as Sweden, Denmark, and the Habsburg monarchy, also recognized the potential of the tea trade and wanted to enter the business.[89] The Ostend Company had already managed to become the largest importer of tea in Europe (excluding the Ottoman Empire) within a very short time: between 1725 and 1728, it had supplied about 60 percent of the tea consumed in Europe.[90] In the countries that maintained strong trade connections with Asia, tea slowly found its way into society – initially into elite circles of the court, the aristocracy, and the merchant class, but more and more into the urban middle-class as well. In the Habsburg monarchy, tea only slowly gained acceptance. For example, the consumption of Zinzendorf, the governor of Trieste, was limited to domestic herbal teas.[91] This changed with the arrival of the first ship from Asia in Trieste, the *Prince de Kaunitz*, which carried a great variety of different teas.[92] From the supercargo, a Frenchman named Hay, Zinzendorf received a gift

of the tea variety *Pou-eul-Tchâ* on 20 December 1780.[93] This is what the Assam variety *Pu'er* (普洱茶), grown in the upper reaches of the Mekong River, where China's Yunnan province borders Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar, was called. The next day, when the port captain Johann Peter Mayer visited the governor, he brought him boxes containing the varieties *Sunchée* and *Padre Saotchaou*.[94] Together with doctor Domenico Francesco Gobbi, he also tried *thé en boule*.[95] These are tea leaves pressed together into balls, mostly of different varieties, from Yunnan Province in southwestern China.

The majority of the shipload of the *Prince of Kaunitz* consisted of the black tea variety *Buoy/Bohea* (3,390 boxes/797,378 poids[96]), as the area of origin of the Wuyi Mountains in Fujian was pronounced by European traders. This variety was the global bestseller because it was obtained from the lowest quality leaves directly on the stem, and thus the price was lower. Part of the reason for its success was that the fermentation of the leaves into black tea was developed in this area, which allowed it to be preserved for transport to ports, primarily Canton, and from there to transregional Asian or later even global markets.[97] Among the other black teas, rising in quality, were *Saotchaon/Lapsang Soachong* (立山小種) (341 boxes/14,672 poids), a variety from the same area which was smoked over pine wood, and the *Camphou/Congou* (工夫) (450 boxes/5,400 poids) variety, also grown in that region. The black tea *Pekao/Pekoe*, of which the ship carried 216 boxes (10,368 poids), was among the highest quality and thus most expensive teas from China because it was obtained from the smallest, silver-tipped leaves, and had floral notes.[98] Therefore, the further the leaf was from the stem, the higher its quality and price.[99] The cargo also included various types of green tea, such as 1,063 boxes of *Verd Sonlo*, which refers to the *Songluo* variety cultivated in a small area on the mountain of the same name in Anhui Province since the Ming Dynasty.[100] The 1,000 boxes of *Verd Tonkaye* refer to the *Twankay* (屯溪) variety of green tea, a refined variety of *Songluo* that originated in the Tunxi district of Anhui. Imported volumes of the green tea variety *Haissuen/Hyson* (熙春茶) (1,198 boxes/74,307 ½ poids) and the slightly lower quality variety *Haissuenskine/Hyson skin* (熙春皮) (236 boxes/14,285 ¾ poids) were also harvested in this area, whereas *Padre Saotchaou* (5 boxes/310 poids) originated from the Wuyi Mountains.[101]

In addition, cinnamon, rhubarb, silk, porcelain, and paper were also imported, but tea made up the majority of the cargo, approximately 560 tons – more than 80 percent of the total load.[102] This shows that the companies responded to the demand of the time, focusing mainly on tea. Tea, which until then had been imported to Austria almost entirely from other nations and only in small quantities, had the status of a curiosity – even in Trieste, one of Austria's most important gateways to commodities from all around the world. This was about to change with the activities of the Company: from then on, tea became a more frequently imported commodity that enjoyed increasing popularity in the Habsburg monarchy and profoundly changed consumption patterns.

For 1780, governor Zinzendorf noted imports from Chinese ports that amounted 939,094 *Gulden*, whereas no goods from Europe could be sold in China.[103] He emphasized, however, that all imports from China could be sold to various merchants in Trieste – at a profit of 600,000 *Gulden*.[104] Therefore, the merchants of the Southern Netherlands mainly turned their gaze to China, because they wanted to focus on the profitable tea trade.[105] Because Bolts only expedited one ship to Canton during his expedition, he was confronted with rumors that he sought to enrich himself in the country trade and take revenge on the EIC.[106] The Antwerpers had more and more ships equipped in Europe to send them directly to Canton and back again.[107] The stations of the country trade network set up by Bolts tended to be avoided in this process as to not further add fuel to the fire in the conflict between the two factions in the Company's leadership. In view of these divergent ideas about the goals of the East India Company, the colonies were increasingly left to their own devices, something that Bolts' further arrangements could not do much to change. After establishing trade links between saltpeter-rich Bengal and Madras, Bolts concluded agreements with merchants to annually bring 24,000 pounds of rice and four African slaves to the Nicobar Islands.[108] With three ships, he left India once and for all in April 1780 for Mauritius, where he bought the ship *Baron de Binder* and had it loaded with coffee from the plantations of Réunion. A four-year contract with the merchants Lorenzo Raffo, Geronimo Gaibisso, and Andreas Utter provided for two annual supply voyages to the Nicobar Islands worth 24,000 pounds of rice and four slaves.[109]

After his return to Europe, negotiations between the Antwerp merchants and Joseph II intensified, and on 8 October 1781 an agreement was reached to transform the East India Company into a joint-stock company in which the financiers from the Southern Netherlands were given more decision-making power.[110] As a result, ships were sent out to focus on intercontinental trade between Europe and China, and the colonies visibly withered away. This was quite different in the case of the direct trade axis between the Habsburg monarchy and Canton: in 1784 alone, five ships with imperial flags arrived in Europe with a total cargo of over two million pounds of tea and silk.[111] But trade between Austria and Asia seemed no longer profitable after the end of the American War of Independence in 1783 and the easing of relations between Britain and France. Europe was instantaneously flooded with goods from the Americas and Asia – and for the Austrian East India Company, this marked the beginning of the end.[112]

Conclusion

The commercial history of the Habsburg East India Companies underlines the twofold objective of the Habsburg presence in the Indian Ocean: the creation of a chain of trading posts and factories on the coasts on the one hand and the establishment of colonies with plantation economies and the use of slavery on the other. While the mercantilist-minded elites of the Habsburg monarchy and the Antwerp bankers were eager to enter the race for overseas factories to promote exports, the Company's main player in the East Indies,

Willem Bolts, pushed for the capital-, resource- and labor-intensive establishment of colonies and the cultivation of cash crops. For the plantation work and thus for the entire commercial activity of the Company, the forced use and exploitation of enslaved Africans was central – both on the coast of Delagoa Bay in Southeast Africa and on the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

The Viennese court laid the framework for the Company's endeavors, explicitly allowing Bolts and the Company to trade enslaved Africans. The expeditions were not only connected to commercial interests, but also included concrete colonization plans. The memos explicitly demanded that military capability be ensured by sending weapons and soldiers and by the construction of fortifications. In addition, all plans in Delagoa Bay and the Nicobar Islands were based on triangular trade in the Indian Ocean. European products and metals were used to buy cotton and silk on the Indian and Chinese markets, which were to be brought to the East African coast in order to purchase enslaved people, who were forced to grow sugar cane, cotton, pepper, cocoa, and tobacco in Delagoa Bay and the Nicobar Islands. These products in turn were destined to be sold in Europe at a profitable price. The economic system of the Habsburg colonial empire operated according to this pattern.

Due to the diverging objectives and the hostility of the other colonial powers, the Company was no longer able to ensure the cohesion of the overseas possessions. The connections established in the East Indies between the outposts and colonies also proved too weak to be maintained permanently. Nevertheless, even after the official expiry of the octroi in 1785, individual merchants proved willing to breathe new life into the Indian Ocean bases. Without the support of the court and because of the armed conflicts on the European continent, however, these efforts came to a standstill.

This paper has shown how the economic patterns of the Habsburg colonies in East Africa and Asia functioned and how the Austrian East India Company attempted to establish a network of bases and colonies in the Indian Ocean. The focus on specific colonies and commodities, as exemplified by the case study on tea, can serve as an impetus for future research on Austrian participation in global systems of colonial exploitation and colonialism. Beyond that, it remains a desideratum to study the period from the end of the Company to the renewed ambitions of Austria(-Hungary) in the nineteenth century. Especially for the second half of the nineteenth century, there are numerous publications devoted to Austrian colonial ambitions in Brazil, Mexico, Sudan, and Tianjin.[113] This would allow researchers to trace the continuities and discontinuities of how the monarchy sought to secure its overseas presence under rapidly changing geopolitical, technological, and ideological auspices in order to remain competitive in the global race for colonies. There is still much work to be done to improve the understanding of the Habsburgs' involvement in colonialism and imperialism – and to disseminate the research findings beyond academia to deconstruct the myth of Austria's colonial ignorance.

Notes

[1] Martin Scheutz and Arno Strohmeyer, "Einleitung," in *Was heißt „österreichische" Geschichte? Probleme, Perspektiven und Räume der Neuzeitforschung*, ed. Martin Scheutz and Arno Strohmeyer (Innsbruck/Vienna/Bolzano: Studienverlag, 2008), 7–20, 9; Walter Sauer, "Auf dem Weg zu einer Kolonialgeschichte Österreichs," *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 55, no. 1 (2011): 2–6.

[2] John Everaert, "Willem Bolts. India Regained and Lost. Indiamen, Imperial Factories and Country Trade (1775–1785)," in *International Conference on Shipping, Factories and Colonization*, ed. John Everaert and Jan Parmentier (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen, 1996), 61–67; Michael Wanner, "Imperial Asiatic Company in Trieste and Antwerp. The Last Attempt of the Habsburg Monarchy to Penetrate East Indian Trade 1781–1785," *Miscellanea Historio-Archivistica* 19 (2012): 177–202; Stefan Meisterle, "Von Coblon bis Delagoa. Die kolonialen Aktivitäten der Habsburgermonarchie in Ostindien," (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2014); Boro Bronza, "Preparations of the Austrian Expedition towards India 1775–1776," *Istraživanja. Journal of Historical Researches* 29 (2018): 63–77; Gijs Dreijer, "The Afterlife of the Ostend Company, 1727–1745," *The Mariner's Mirror* 105, no. 3 (2019): 275–287.

[3] The concept of "commodification" is suitable for the analysis of the slave trade, as it reflects the process of tearing people out of their environment for economic purposes, denying them their humanity in order to turn them and their labor into a commodity to be sold as profitably as possible. See Nicholas T. Rinehart, "The Man That Was a Thing. Reconsidering Human Commodification in Slavery," *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 1 (2016): 28–50.

[4] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and power. The place of sugar in modern history* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton. A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2015).

[5] Michal Wanner, "The Establishment of the General Company in Ostend in the Context of the Habsburg Maritime Plans 1714–1723," *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations* (2007): 33–62, 50–62. An octroi is a kind of patent for trading companies in which different rights and obligations were stipulated. It was usually issued by the central political authorities of a country, e.g. monarchs, councils or parliaments.

[6] Jan Parmentier, *De Holle Compagnie. Smokkel en legale handel onder Zuidnederlandse vlag in Bengalen, ca. 1720–1744* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1992).

[7] Ibid, 80–89; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 222–225, 244–249.

[8] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 84–85.

[9] Ibid, 289–290; Parmentier, *De Holle Compagnie*, 86–89.

[10] The Habsburg monarchy was involved in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748), First Silesian War (1740–1742), Second Silesian War (1744–1745), and Third Silesian War/Seven Years' War (1756–1763).

[11] Fulvio Babudieri, *Industrie, commerci e navigazione a Trieste e nella regione Giulia dall'inizio del Settecento ai primi anni del Novecento. Dall'inizio del Settecento ai primi anni del Novecento* (Milan: Dott. A. Giuffrè, 1982), 43–83.

[12] Aleksej Kalc, "Immigration Policy in Eighteenth-Century Trieste," in *Gated Communities? Regulating Migration in Early Modern Cities*, ed. Bert Be Munck and Anne Winter (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2016), 117–134.

[13] For Zinzendorf's period as governor of Trieste between 1776 and 1782 see Grete Klingenstein, *Europäische Aufklärung zwischen Wien und Triest. Die Tagebücher des Gouverneurs Karl Graf Zinzendorf (1776-1782)* (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2009); Florian Ambach, "Zirkulation von

Personen, Waren und Informationen. Triest als maritimer Knotenpunkt globaler Verflechtungen unter dem Gouverneur Karl von Zinzendorf (1776–1782)" (master's thesis, University of Innsbruck, 2022), https://resolver.obvsg.at/urn:nbn:at:at-ubi:1-110641.

[14] Bolts was born in Amsterdam in 1738 to German parents. The family moved to England in 1749, where Bolts took up a career as a merchant that took him to Lisbon for a few years. In 1759 he joined the EIC, which took him to Calcutta in 1760, where he proved himself as a factor and was able to accumulate a considerable fortune by circumventing monopolies in the trade of opium, saltpeter, cotton, and diamonds. This led to his dismissal from the EIC. After his involvement in the colonial ambitions of the Habsburg monarchy, Tuscany, Naples and Sweden, he stayed in London, Lisbon, and Paris. He died in 1808. See Norman Leslie Hallward, *William Bolts, a Dutch Adventurer under John Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920).

[15] Babudieri, *Industrie*, 39–42; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 96–97; Bronza, "Preparations", 70–73.

[16] William Bolts, *Recueil de pieces authentiques, relatives aux affaires de la ci-devant Société impériale Asiatique de Trieste, gerées à Anvers* (Antwerp, 1787), 44–49.

[17] Bolts, 47. Translated by the author.

[18] Charles Melchior André de Proli was born in Antwerp in 1726. The family, originally from Como, had settled in Antwerp and became a central player in the East India ambitions of the Ostend Company, of which his father Pietro Proli was a director. The banking family also maintained contacts in the Austrian Litorale, where they participated in the Fiuman Sugar Purification Company, which was granted an imperial privilege in 1750. See Helma Houtman-De Smedt, *Charles Proli. Antwerps zakenman en bankier, 1723-1786. Een biografische en bedrijfshistorische studie* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1983).

[19] Adam Wandruszka, *Pietro Leopoldo. Un grande riformatore* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1968); Pier Francesco Listri, *Pietro Leopoldo. Granduca di Toscana, un riformatore del Settecento* (Firenze: Firenze Leonardo Edizioni, 2016).

[20] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 100–102.

[21] Ibid, 316.

[22] Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), Staatenabteilung (StAbt), Ostindienkompanie Triest-Antwerpen (OTA) 1, Konv. 1, Précis der ersten mit Bolts gepflogenen Unterredung, 13.5.1776, fol. 11r; Bolts, Recueil, 38–39, 42, 45–47; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 92–93, 310–313; Franz von Pollack-Parnau, *Eine österreichisch-ostindische Handelscompagnie 1775-1785. Ein Beitrag zur österreichischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte unter Maria Theresia und Joseph II* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927), 31–34.

[23] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 316–318.

[24] Portuguese ships visited Delago Bay several times on their way to India in the sixteenth century. However, the Portuguese did not establish the colony there, but some 1,500 kilometers to the north on Ilha de Moçambique. See Wolfgang Reinhard, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt. Globalgeschichte der europäischen Expansion 1415-2015* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016), 114, 121, 168. The absence of European colonial powers in Delagoa attracted the VOC in 1720. However, the Dutch were unable to establish themselves there permanently and left the fort as early as 1730. Thus, Delagoa Bay remained an unoccupied territory until Austrian colonization in 1777, but was nevertheless frequently visited by European ships. See Rene Barendse, A*rabian Seas 1700-1763, vol. 1. The Western Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), 129–154.

[25] In order to avoid the Cape Colony, the Company of Ostend in the 1720s had already considered

colonizing either Madagascar or the island of Fernando de Noronha, which was off the Brazilian coast and on course for the East Indies due to the wind currents. See John G. Everaert, "Commerce d'Afrique et traite négrière dans les Pays-Bas," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 62 (1975): 177–185, 180–181.

[26] Jonathan Singerton, *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy* (Charlottesville, VA/ London: University of Virginia Press, 2021), 7; Walter W. Davis, *Joseph II. An Imperial Reformer for the Austrian Netherlands* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 143; Houtman-De Smedt, *Charles Proli*, 140.

[27] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 321–323, which also contains a facsimile of the contract between Bolts and Mohaâr Capêl.

[28] Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington/Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995) 159.

[29] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 5, Konv. C, Bolts' instructions for Pollet, 1.7.1777, fol. 48r-55v, fol. 49v; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 327–328. For the history of Portuguese ivory trade in East Africa, see Alexandra Celia Kelly, *Consuming Ivory: Mercantile Legacies of East Africa and New England* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2021), 30–47; Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975).

[30] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 5, Konv. C, Bolts' instructions for Pollet, 1.7.1777, fol. 51r.

[31] Nikolaus Fontana, *Tagebuch der Reise des kais. kön. Schiffes Joseph und Theresia nach den neuen österreichischen Pflanzorten in Asia und Afrika* (Dessau/Leipzig: 1782), 13; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 324–325.

[32] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 5, Konv. C, Bolts' instructions for Pollet, 1.7.1777, fol. 49v, 51r; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 326.

[33] Jan Hogendorn and Marion Johnson, *The Shell Money of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); James Walvin, *Slavery in Small Things. Slavery and Modern Cultural Habits* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 37–53.

[34] HHStA, Nachlass Zinzendorf (NlZ), Karton 2, Boltsische Factoreien und Besiznemungen in Africa und Ostindien, 3.2.1780, fol. 1r–19r, 5r.

[35] Ibid, fol. 5r–5v.

[36] On the correlation between violence and the fortification of colonies, see inter alia Erik Odegard, *The Company Fortress. Military Engineering and the Dutch East India Company in South Asia, 1638–1795* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020); Christopher Kurt Waters, "Indefensible Landscapers. Power Dynamics, Social Relations, and Antigua's Eighteenth-Century Fortifications," in *Power, Political Economy, and Historical Landscapes of the Modern World. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Christopher R. DeCorse (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), 153–176.

[37] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 222–225, 244–249, 286–290; Parmentier, *De Holle Compagnie*, 80–89.

[38] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 320, 330.

[39] Ibid, 313.

[40] Hallward, *William Bolts*, 143.

[41] Ibid, 172.

[42] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 4, Letter collection of Adam von Lebzeltern, Copy of the contract between Bolts and dos Santos, fol. 20r-30v.

[43] Martha Chaiklin, "Surat and Bombay. Ivory and commercial networks in western India," in T*he Dutch and English East India Companies. Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia*, ed. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 101–124.

[44] Richard B. Allen, "The Constant Demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the Worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of African History* 49 (2008): 43–72; Reinhard, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt*, 277.

[45] Bolts, *Recueil*, 78; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 335–336.

[46] HHStA, NlZ, Handschrift (HS) 179, No. 64, Prolischer Vorschlag einer neuen Asiatischen Handlungs-Gesellschaft, 3.9.1780; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 340–341.

[47] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 342–343. For the Danish occupation of the Nicobars, see Stephan Diller, *Die Dänen in Indien, Südostasien und China (1620-1845)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 240–241; Michael Bregnsbo and Kurt Villads Jensen, *The Rise and Fall of the Danish Empire* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 160.

[48] HHStA, NlZ, HS 178, 269; Bolts, *Recueil*, 106–107; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa,* 339.

[49] Bolts, *Recueil*, 78; HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Jakob Hegner, Abhandlung betreffend der Einrichtung einer Kolonie und Haupt-Handlungs-Niederlage der Kayserl. Königl. Asiatische Compagnie auf der Nicobarischen Eilanden und in dasigen Hafen, 1782/83, fol. 302v; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 345.

[50] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 6, Konv. G, Report of Bolts, 23.8.1782; HHStA, StAbt, OTA 5, Konv. D, Treaty with the King of Pegu, fol. 178r; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 373–374.

[51] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 345.

[52] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. C., Brocktorff on the Nicobar Islands, 12.8.1782, fol. 202r–227v, fol. 210r.

[53] Ibid., fol. 209r; HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 297r–298r, 331r–331v.

[54] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 298r, 305r.

[55] Ibid., fol. 297v–298r, 331r–331v.

[56] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. C., Brocktorff on the Nicobar Islands, fol. 207v.

[57] On the spread of this luxury product, which was highly demanded among Chinese traders, see Amy S. M. Lau and David S. Melville, *International Trade in Swiftlet Nests with Special Reference to Hong Kong* (Cambridge: TRAFFIC International, 1994), 2–7; Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1400–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 309. Swallow's nest soup was also a highly praised delicacy in Europe, served as a feast at the Munich wedding celebrations between Emperor Joseph II and Maria Josepha of Bavaria. The price for this specialty was 6,000 *Gulden*. See Felix Joseph Lipowsky, *Leben und Thaten des Maximilian Joseph III* (Munich: Jakob Giel, 1833), 211–212.

[58] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. C., Brocktorff on the Nicobar Islands, fol. 209r–209v.

[59] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 303r. Translated by the author.

[60] Ibid., fol. 305r.

[61] Ibid., fol. 308v–311r.

[62] Ibid., fol. 331r–331v.

[63] *Beytrag zum Reichspostreuter*, Nr. 73, 20.9.1779, [1]. Translated by the author.

[64] Reinhard Wendt, *Vom Kolonialismus zur Globalisierung. Europa und die Welt seit 1500* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007), 58–59, 83–85; Jürgen G. Nagel, *Abenteuer Fernhandel. Die Ostindienkompanien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), 17.

[65] Femme S. Gaastra, "Die Vereinigte Ostindische Compagnie der Niederlande. Ein Abriß ihrer Geschichte," in *Kaufleute als Kolonialherren. Die Handelswelt der Niederländer vom Kap der Guten Hoffnung bis Nagasaki 1600–1800*, ed. Eberhard Schmitt, Thomas Schleich, and Thomas Beck (Bamberg: C. C. Buchners Verlag, 1988), 1–90, 15–16, 21.

[66] Reinhard Wendt, "Globalisierung von Pflanzen und neue Nahrungsgewohnheiten. Zur Funktion botanischer Gärten bei der Erschließung natürlicher Ressourcen der überseeischen Welt," in *Überseegeschichte. Beiträge der jüngeren Forschung. Festschrift anläßlich der Gründung der Forschungsstiftung für vergleichende europäische Überseegeschichte 1999 in Bamberg*, ed. Thomas Beck, Host Gründer, Horst Pietschmann and Roderich Ptak (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 206–222, 214–215.

[67] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 298r.

[68] On the Danish missionaries and the colony of Tranquebar, see D. Dennis Hudson, "The First Protestant Mission to India. Its Social and Religious Developments," *Sociological Bulletin* 42 (1993): 37–63; Anne-Charlott Trepp, "Von der Missionierung der Seelen zur Erforschung der Natur. Die Dänisch-Hallesche Südindienmission im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36 (2010): 231–256; Diller, *Die Dänen in Indien*, 147–189.

[69] Jana Tschurenev, *Empire, Civil Society, and the Beginnings of Colonial Education in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 150–152; Heike Liebau, *Cultural Encounters in India. The Local Co-Workers of Tranquebar Mission, 18th to 19th Centuries* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2018), 342–421.

[70] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. C., Brocktorff on the Nicobar Islands, fol. 223r–224v.

[71] Ibid, fol. 221r.

[72] Ibid, fol. 220v–222v.

[73] Ibid, fol. 222v. Translated by the author.

[74] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 303r.

[75] Ibid, fol. 303v–304r. Translated from German by the author.

[76] On the slave trade from Mozambique to India, see José Capela, "Slave Trade Networks in Eighteenth-Century Mozambique," in *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange. Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590–1867*, ed. David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2015), 165–193; Pedro Machado, "A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean. Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c. 1730–1830," in *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), 16–33, 18–24.

For the broader context of slavery in the Indian Ocean and Asia, see Michael Zeuske, *Sklaverei. Eine Menschheitsgeschichte von der Steinzeit bis heute* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2018), 180–187.

[77] HHStA, StAbt, OTA 1, Fasz. F., Hegner, Abhandlung, fol. 305v.

[78] Ibid, fol. 320v–321r. Translated by the author.

[79] Ibid, fol. 308r. Translated by the author.

[80] Ibid, fol. 321v–322v. Translated by the author.

[81] Ibid, fol. 323r. Translated by the author.

[82] Ibid, fol. 324r. Translated by the author.

[83] Ibid, fol. 328r–328v.

[84] Ibid, fol. 326r–327v.

[85] Klaus Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel, 1680–1830* (München: C. H. Beck, 2004), 195–204, 284–285, 369.

[86] Nagel, *Abenteuer Fernhandel*, 135–137.

[87] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 103; HHStA, NlZ, HS 176, 299–300; HHStA, NlZ, Karton 2, Hafen- und Mauthgefälle zu Triest 1781.

[88] *Reichspostreuter*, 7.12.1779, Nr. 195, [3].

[89] Eberhard Schmitt, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der europäischen Expansion* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), 302–304; Nagel, Abenteuer Fernhandel, 84–85.

[90] Peer Vries, *Zur politischen Ökonomie des Tees. Was und Tee über die englische und chinesische Wirtschaft der Frühen Neuzeit sagen kann* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 2009), 39.

[91] Karl von Zinzendorf, *Europäische Aufklärung zwischen Wien und Triest. Die Tagebücher des Gouverneurs Karl Graf Zinzendorf 1776–1782*, vol. 3, ed. Grete Klingenstein, Eva Faber, and Antonio Trampus (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2009), 552 (12.12.1779), 618 (18.3.1780), 628 (7.4.1780), 630 (11.4.1780 and 12.4.1780), 631 (14.4.1780), 933 (4.10.1781), 934 (9.10.1781).

[92] HHStA, NlZ, HS 179, Nr. 65, Chargement du Vaisseau Impérial le Prince de Kaunitz relaché à Malaga le 19 Aout 1780 & attendu incessament à Trieste.

[93] See the contemporary description in Jean-Baptiste du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et phisique de l'empire de Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise* (Paris: P. G. Le Mercier, 1735), 22. For the history of this tea variety see George van Driem, *The Tale of Tea. A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019), 138–153.

[94] Zinzendorf, *Europäische Aufklärung*, vol. 3, 777 (20.12.1780 and 21.12.1780).

[95] Ibid, 781 (29.12.1780).

[96] The unit *poid* is the equivalent to pound and amounted to half a kilogram, with minor regional differences.

[97] Peter Rohrsen, *Der Tee. Anbau, Sorten, Geschichte* (München: C. H. Beck, 2013), 19–21.

[98] Yong Liu, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 68–69, 73.

[99] Alan H. Varnam and Jane P. Sutherland, *Beverages. Technology, chemistry and microbiology* (New York: Aspen, 1999), 146–147.

[100] James A. Benn, *Tea in China. A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 175–176.

[101] Liu, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China*, 69–73. For the history of Padre Saotchaou, see Jason Goodwin, *A Time for Tea. Travels through India and China in search of Tea* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 50.

[102] HHStA, NlZ, HS 179, Nr. 65, Chargement du Vaisseau Impérial le Prince de Kaunitz […].

[103] HHStA, NlZ, HS 178, 331.

[104] Ibid, 332.

[105] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 104, 116–117; Reinhard, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt*, 232–233.

[106] HHStA, NlZ, HS 176, 301–302; Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 364.

[107] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 104, 117–119. The Antwerp group equipped eight ships for Canton between 1780 and 1785. Only three ships were destined for the Indian Ocean.

[108] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 355. For the saltpeter trade, see James W. Frey, "The Indian Saltpeter Trade, the Military Revolution, and the Rise of Britain as a Global Superpower," *The Historian* 71, no. 3 (2009): 507–554.

[109] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 355-357; Hallward, *William Bolts*, 187.

[110] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 110–115.

[111] Ernst van Bruyssel, *Histoire du commerce et de la marine en Belgique*, vol. 3 (Brussels/Leipzig/Paris: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven, Jung-Treuttel, 1864), 299.

[112] Meisterle, *Von Coblon bis Delagoa*, 126. For a more detailed account of Habsburg trade after the end of the war, see Singerton, *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy*, 143–165.

[113] Among the many publications on these topics, see the following, ranked by recency of publication: Michael Falser, *Habsburgs going global. The Austro-Hungarian Concession in Tientsin/Tianjin in China (1901-1917)* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2022); Edward Shawcross, *The Last Emperor of Mexico. A Disaster in the New World* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022); Florian Ambach, „Baumwolle, Elfenbein und Glasperlen. Perspektiven österreichischer Reisender auf die Errichtung eines ‚informal empire' im Sudan des 19. Jahrhunderts," *historia.scribere* 13 (2021): 203–231; Mary Margaret McAllen, *Maximilian and Carlota. Europe's Last Empire in Mexico* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2014); Markus Kaiserseder, "Die österreichischen Missionsstationen im Sudan zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Wegbereiter eines Kolonialismus?" (diploma thesis, University of Vienna, 2013), https://utheses.univie.ac.at/detail/22281; David Pruonto, "Did the Second Mexican Empire under Maximilian of Habsburg (1864–1867) have an 'Austrian Face'?" *Austrian Studies* 20 (2012): 96–111; Carlos H. Oberacker, *Leopoldine. Habsburges Kaiserin von Brasilien* (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1988); Walter Sauer, "Schwarz-Gelb in Afrika. Habsburgermonarchie und koloniale Frage," in *k. u. k. colonial. Habsburgermonarchie und europäische Herrschaft in Afrika*, ed. Walter Sauer (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2002), 17–78; Michael Zach, *Österreicher im Sudan von 1820 bis 1914* (Vienna: Afro-Pub, 1985).

Re-fashioning Modernity.

A comparative study of the flapper and kanga and their relation with modernity

By

Barbara Testini

Abstract

Starting with the definition proposed by the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (MGRG) in their 2008 book The Modern Girl Around the World*, this paper aims to deconstruct Eurocentric narratives often attached to the concept of modernity in relation to fashion.*[1] *It achieves this through a comparative analysis of visual iconography depicting the figures of the flapper and of urban women wearing* kanga *in the Zanzibari post-abolitionist society of the 1890s. Employing methodological tools such as the heuristic device and the connective comparison, this paper will critique the univocal visual link established in cultural theory and the collective imagination between modernity and the image of the flapper. In order to provide a counterexample to this dominant association, the six features identified by the MGRG as pertaining to the flapper will be applied to women wearing kanga, a type of decorative fabric used as a garment, in the context of Zanzibar at the end of the nineteenth century. Although existing scholarship on fashion and its connection to modernity does reflect upon the Eurocentricity of the concept, this comparison provides an original contribution in that it aims at reframing the connection between fashion and modernity through the re-reading of the idea of the Modern Girl to include non-Western expressions of style.*

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Introduction: *kanga* and the flapper

According to the cultural historian Joanne Entwistle, "the term 'fashion' carries with it the more specific meaning of a system of dress that is found in Western modernity."[2] In other words, "fashion" is only ever a product of European and North American industrial modernity, and reaches the rest of the world through exportation and colonial imposition. This insistence on the convergence of fashion and the characteristics of Western modernity is embedded in the premises of the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (hereafter MGRG), which was a collaborative research project largely based at the University of Washington from 2003-2009. The panel was composed of faculty members with an expertise on various topics such as literary criticism, history, cultural and feminist studies, and political economy. The aim of the MGRG was to retrace the Modern Girl "as a global phenomenon," by discovering "the Modern Girl's various colonial and national incarnations and revealing linkages among the many geographic locations in which she appeared" and contextually "explor[ing] the[…] issues of consumption, representation, and social and political agency through a variety of approaches."[3] They discuss a set of case studies located in the United States, France, South Africa, India and the British colonial empire, the USSR, Australia, Japan, China (Shanghai), and Germany between the 1920-1930s, focusing on class and race. Through this approach the MGRG attempts to gain a truly global insight on the manifestations of the Modern Girl.

In doing so, the MGRG aims to deconstruct Eurocentric narratives on those phenomena that have been considered as grounded in, or even originated by, European history, such as modernity. Their methods of inquiry challenge the notion of modernity in non-Western contexts as "deviations from an abstracted 'norm'" or as a measure of development and progress "that posit some societies as 'ahead' and others as 'catching up.'"[4] The principle goal of the MGRG study is then to "decenter the idea of Western modernity" by "pay[ing] attention to how people in different contexts understood the Modern Girl as *modern*." However, by relying on signifiers rooted in European modernity (specifically the figure of the flapper) to define "what [they] refer to as 'the Modern Girl look': the Modern Girl's surface or image and its representation," they reproduce the link between European cultural production and modernity while excluding non-Western fashion from their purview.[6]

Starting from these conceptions, this article will first break down the concept of modernity and its connection to fashion.[7] It will then provide a historical overview on the origins of *kanga*, focusing on the "modern" elements that make a *kanga*-wearing woman comparable to the flapper style.[8] Finally, this article will reexamine the key features the MGRG identifies as pertaining to the Modern Girl to apply them to the context that informed the use of *kanga*.[9] To achieve this, I will examine the idea of the Modern Girl as it was defined in the book *The Modern Girl Around the World*, accepting the invitation proposed by the MGRG, whose "hope is that the chapters collected here will inspire others […] to employ the method of connective comparison […] in the study of gendered modernity in a global frame."[10] The method they speak of consists of comparing phenomena by *connecting*

rather than *contrasting* them; that is, by focusing on how local processes exert a reciprocal influence in a global network of relations.[11] By doing so, the MGRG singled out six specific recurrent themes associated with the Modern Girl and her expression of style: the modern, the girl, visual economy, nationalism, commodities, and consumption (and agency of the consumer).[12] The MGRG has specifically connected the idea of "modern" that the Modern Girl typifies to the specific Western iconography of the flapper, as it is known in an Anglo-American context, or *garçonne* in the French context.[13]

The flapper fashion style is popularly recognised as an iconic cultural facet of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe and the United States. It is characterised by specific features, including both physical appearance (bobbed hair, accentuated makeup, loose-fitting dresses) and behavioural traits (smoking, drinking alcohol, dancing). It is this figure which the MGRG uses to define the "modern girl" which serves as the subject of its analysis.[14] While the MGRG has examined the singular re-interpretations of the Modern Girl around the world, it fails to acknowledge that the six parameters they set to identify the modernity of the flapper actually appear outside of the spatial and temporal constraints set in the study. The scope of my study is therefore not only to expand such constraints, but rather to point towards alternative visual manifestations of these underlying forces. Even though the *kanga*-wearer may not look like the stereotype of the flapper, the two figures undoubtedly share key attributes. Thus, my aim is to broaden the interpretation of how these characteristics can be manifested in order to acknowledge indigenous modernities that are not just reproductions or appropriations, albeit with a component of agency and reworking, of a North Atlantic model.[15]

Scholar Susan Stanford Friedman theorises that "*modern, modernism, and modernity*" are "contradictory terms resisting consensual definition," opening up the field to multiple interpretations of modernity, but also to arbitrary conflations of meanings.[16] In the MGRG's text, the visual figure of the flapper becomes an archetype of "The Modern." Modernity, in this sense, is understood as the manifestation of specific cultural and economic formations which can be traced back to a Western (or Western-influenced) inter-war historical context. Closely linked in literature and art to the artistic and intellectual movement of modernism, with which the style was contemporaneous, the flapper appears in film, literature, and popular media as the visual manifestation of modernity as a concept. Thus, the idea of "The Modern" overlaps with the time-specific and space-bound cultural phenomenon of modernism, erasing the possibility of linking modernity to other expressive means and forms.

The process of associating modernity to modernism works in both ways, and contributes to establish a univocal link between the two terms. According to fashion historian Elizabeth Wilson, the word 'modernism' has been used as "an umbrella term to indicate a wide variety of different currents in modern art and aesthetics," suggesting that the concept encompasses "what is *common* to much of modern art: its oppositionalism and iconoclasm, its questioning of reality and perception, its attempt to come to grips with the nature of human experience in a mechanized (unnatural) world."[17] In this way, the cultural

experience of modernism is expressed through the classification of "modern art," which represents the first conceptual leap from the artistic movement (modernism) to the time period (modernity), and further to the set of characteristics that should constitute the modern. At the same time the term 'modernity' attempts to encapsulate "the essence of both the cultural and the subjective experience of capitalist society and all its contradictions,"[18] thus conflating modernity with the modernist experience of the early twentieth century North Atlantic, particularly Europe. This potentially obscures various modernities around the world by unambiguously associating the peculiar experience of twentieth century modernism with modernity.

Fashion has typically been viewed by scholars dealing with the study of dress as a product of Western modernity, as defined through "status, mobility, and rapid change" in a Western, capitalist world.[19] Scholarship on dress in Africa has been traditionally tied to an anthropological approach that did not bestow African clothing the status of 'fashion'. This reinforced the colonial view of Africa as unchanging and traditional, and demonstrates how fashion has been excluded from non-Western contexts because of its link with Western modernity.[20] Yet, according to historian Jean Allman, fashion has been "centrally implicated in the forging of a distinct African modernity, through slavery and freedom, colonialism and conversion, ethnicity and nation, gender and generation, hybridity and cosmopolitanism, state-building and state authority, subjecthood and citizenship."[21] A study of clothing, then, provides access to the many ways in which modernity is expressed in the African continent.[22] In this matter, fashion can be a useful tool in discovering new paradigms for a (gendered) modernity in a global perspective, in order to liberate it from its Eurocentric focus. Fashion is a cultural activity, and as such it is a product of social norms, individual self-expression, and technology.[23] An understanding of fashion which moves outside its constraints as "a dress system specific to the West"[24] enables the analysis of non-Western fashions as equally important. By employing the theoretical framework of modernity, it is possible to recognise its core features ("status, mobility, and rapid change") moving them outside its geographical boundaries.[25]

In order to validate the claim that these characteristics of modernity can be found outside of the West, and in forms not directly adopted from Western models, I will consider the case of the *kanga* dress, which became popular in Zanzibar between 1890 and 1915. *Kanga*, a type of colourful patterned cloth, was worn as the marker of a new social identity among young, urban, Zanzibarian women. Drawing on the same six elements established by the MGRG as particular to the Modern Girl, I will argue that these signifiers of modernity appeared in Zanzibar years before the explosion of the flapper style as a global fashion movement, and developed in a social and geographical context outside of the West. Echoing Jeremy Prestholdt, this consideration might further prove that "change in Zanzibar was as radical as contemporaneous change in Europe," even though it has been "excluded from any definition of modernity."[26] Re-reading kanga through the same analytic parameters elaborated by the MGRG could then open up an opportunity to challenge the notion of modernity especially in its relativism, which confines the idea of "modern" to the European context.[27]

Historical context: the origins of *kanga* between cosmopolitanism and subjectivity

Kanga is the Swahili term defining both the textile and, by extension, its use as a fashion garment. It was worn along the coast of East Africa, more specifically in the area including today's Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Kanga is a printed cotton cloth of about one meter height and one and a half meters length, composed of a wide, decorated border (*pinto*) and a central graphic image or pattern (*mji*) that features an inscription in Kiswahili below the image, on the bottom side of the kanga. The text is called *jina*, meaning the 'name' of the *kanga*, and is usually a proverbial phrase, a common saying, a blessing, or a warning.[28] *Kangas* are sold and worn in pairs, to create a two-piece wrap dress composed by a long skirt and a top that covers the shoulders and often functions as a headscarf, depending on the occasion.[29]

The origins of the garment can be dated back to the decade between 1876 and 1886, shortly before the British Empire imposed the abolition of slavery on the British protectorate of Zanzibar in 1890.[30] Wrapped clothes were not new in Zanzibar, even though the origin and dissemination of *kanga* are strictly intertwined with the opening up of a new social niche for formerly enslaved people. In those years, the standard composition of a *kanga* was formed through the combination of four main design elements which reveal its cosmopolitan nature: bright colours, written text, European-style borders, and motifs from Indonesian batiks.[31] Local women originally sewed together imported European handkerchiefs to create wrappers, which became known as *leso ya kushona* (meaning 'stitched handkerchief' from the Portuguese term for handkerchief *lenço*). Later, they introduced the innovation of printing plain, factory-made cloth imported from India with blocks obtained from starchy vegetables, that were first carved with geometric designs and then dipped into vegetable dyes, thus creating what has been defined as *kanga za mera*, the first of *kanga* in archaic Swahili.[32] Resident Indian merchants improved the block printing technique on cloth imported from Southern Asia by making use of the tie-resist textile techniques from Gujarat.[33] During these early stages in the style's development, *kanga* was printed by hand, as the irregular positioning and the variations in the intensity of dye show.[34] By the end of the 1880s, however, changes in colonial export policies opened up the necessity for Dutch textile designers to look for other markets outside of the Dutch East Indies. Dutch companies started to export their printed batik to East Africa, adapting designs originally mass-produced for the Indonesian market to suit consumers' demand in East Africa. This was done with the mediation of Indian merchants, while at the same time introducing new synthetic dyes with more vibrant colour.[35] Such a variety of actors involved in both the creation and the marketing of the first forms of *kanga* reveals the depth of translocal connections in East Africa. At the same time, one cannot overlook the role of local women as producers and their agency as consumers, who shaped an international supply chain with their demand. The history of these confluences, as well as the innovations put in place by Zanzibari women and the adaptation of *kanga* as a marker of social status, all point to the modernity and the globality of such a garment.

Being the most significant indicators of class, status, and ethnicity thanks to its visual character, clothing in the coastal areas of East Africa is inextricably intertwined with social hierarchies, and at times has been employed as a means to achieve social upward mobility.[36] From the 1870s to the 1890s, the population of the island was constituted by the Arab ruling elite of Omani descent, the free Swahili population, enslaved people captured from the continental African mainland, and immigrant traders from Southern Asia.[37] Such diverse social strata were easily recognised by the way they dressed: female members of Omani aristocratic households typically wore a long silk scarf or cape, known as *ukaya*, over a knee-length shirt and pants, and an embroidered face mask known as a *barakoa*.[38]

At the other end of the social ladder were the rural Swahili and the enslaved population, both of which normally wore lower-quality garments. The latter made use of white wrapped cloths known as *merikani*, which women gradually started to dye with indigo, while the former wore "[a] simple dark cotton cloth of the poor, known as *kaniki*, or a piece of imported colored cotton cloth, called *kitambi*."[39] The most fundamental difference was undoubtedly that free women marked their higher status by covering their heads, or by wearing an *ukaya* that went from their shoulders to their ankles, and by wearing sandals.[40] This aspect is meaningful when taking into account that slaves were explicitly prohibited to veil – they often shaved their heads – and were forced to go barefoot to be distinguished from the free born.[41] These habits reveal that one's social respectability and positioning were highly dependent on being free and of Muslim faith. It is therefore not surprising that after the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar became effective in 1897, formerly enslaved people tried to assert their status by opting for clothing that could mark their belonging to an Islamic community of free people of Swahili descent.[42]

The abolition of slavery opened up the necessity for formerly enslaved Zanzibarians to establish their social positioning and practice an entirely new expression of style to signal their recently acquired identities. To effectively articulate their social mobility, liberated slaves put in place innovations in their way of dressing that allowed them to negotiate their space in society, resulting in the emergence of an entirely new fashion. *Kanga* had recently appeared on coastal East African markets, and formerly enslaved women started to buy them in bulk for a variety of reasons. Pragmatically, rich fabrics offered a tangible display of recently acquired wealth and a visible differentiation from the dress worn in slavery. Secondly, *kanga* could be wrapped around the body but also put on the head as a veil or to cover the shoulders as Swahili women used to do, thus allowing formerly enslaved women the opportunity to access previously forbidden markers of religious and social respectability. Finally, these women were affirming their agency and taking pride in being fashion-conscious and demanding as far as colours and patterns were concerned. At the same time, they were partaking in a cosmopolitan network of trade that signalled not only their social and economic empowerment, but also their belonging to a Swahili urban identity, marked through the involvement in transnational exchange on a global scale.[43] In this context, *kanga* was sported as a marker of social mobility that epitomised an identity as urban, freeborn Swahili, which was crafted by formerly enslaved women through the means of dressing.

Between flapper and *kanga*: a comparative analysis

With the understanding of *kanga* as a dressing style utilised by East African women to negotiate their mobility and identity in a rapidly changing context, it is possible to establish a connection between *kanga* and the flapper style that sets the ground for comparison. To achieve this, I will use the definitions presented in *The Modern Girl Around the World* and demonstrate their applicability to women who wore the kanga style in late nineteenth century Zanzibar. In so doing I set out to complicate the exclusive association of modernity to criticise the claim of universality that this fashion style acquires when it is defined as quintessentially as the "Modern Girl." By employing the methodology proposed by the MGRG, the heuristic device and the connective comparison, I propose that the flapper is only one of the possible outcomes of modernity – that, indeed, the *kanga*-wearing Swahili woman of the late nineteenth century represents an indigenous African modernity. As a result, the idea of modernity expressed by the Modern Girl is reframed and broadened to include any forms of visual manifestation that are not related to a Western model, but still embody the same themes.

A heuristic technique in sociology can be defined as "any procedure which involves the use of an artificial construct to assist in the exploration of social phenomena."[44] It serves as a means to demonstrate a hypothesis which has been elaborated *a priori*, and constitutes the starting point of the research. Instead of drawing conclusions from the observation of phenomena, the heuristic method formulates a theory and then looks at the object to establish whether it is applicable in the given context. The MGRG employs this method as a visual tool, arguing that "numerous iconic visual elements including bobbed hair, painted lips, provocative clothing, elongated body, and open, easy smile enabled us to locate the Modern Girl around the world in approximately the same years between World War I and World War II."[45] Employing this methodology in a different context, *kanga* can also be interpreted as a heuristic device signifying an abstract concept. The meaning attached to *kanga* is constructed in order to explain social phenomena that are peculiar to Zanzibari post-abolition society and that, more extensively, make Zanzibar part of the Indian Ocean world through translocal connections.[46] Communication strategies among women are another aspect that allows reading *kanga* as a heuristic device, because it has been used both metaphorically, but also quite literally as a device allowing communication among women. While *kanga* communicated a newly acquired social status, the inscriptions printed on the cloth also "spoke" directly to other women instead of the wearer.[47]

Another key component of the MGRG methodology is the comparative method. In sociology, the comparative method is used in order to compare "cases or variables which are similar in some respects and dissimilar in others," analysing how specific phenomena are distributed in different societies.[48] The MGRG uses this method in comparing the visual elements of what has been defined as "the Modern Girl," tracking its iconography on a global scale. The process through which the comparison is achieved has been called by the MGRG "multidirectional citation": "the mutual, though asymmetrical, influences and

circuits of exchange that produce common figurations and practices in multiple locations," resulting in a "continual incorporation of local elements with those drawn from elsewhere."[49] In so doing, they identified six elements characterising the modernity of fashion in a European and North American interwar context, associating them firmly with the flapper style.

Keeping in mind the fact that "a major methodological issue is whether the units of comparison […] and the indicators chosen to compare differences or similarities are genuinely comparable and can legitimately be used outside their specific cultural settings,"[50] I will first prove that the flapper and the *kanga* figure are comparable by applying to my case study the same six elements identified by the MGRG as typical of the flapper. By examining the six aspects which define the Modern Girl according to the MGRG – the modern, the girl, visual economy, nationalism, commodities, consumption, and the agency of the consumer – I will highlight the fact that these characteristics are not exclusive to that figure, but rather, can be situated within other cultural and temporal contexts. Following this assessment, I will consider how these aspects apply to the case of women wearing *kanga*, to include other expressions of style that are not exclusive of a Western understanding of 'modern' fashion.

The girl

The MGRG recognises that the definition of "girl" rests on a European understanding of this term, especially when it is used in opposition to the concept of woman to signify frivolousness, superficiality, and immaturity.[51] Drawing on an idea of "girl" established in the Victorian epoch, the MGRG articulates the following definition of the term:

> "Girl" signifies the contested status of young women, no longer children, and their unstable and sometimes subversive relationship to social norms relating to heterosexuality, marriage, and motherhood. […] Our research strongly suggests the historical emergence of "girl" as a modern social and representational category and as a style of self-expression largely delinked from biological age.[52]

This definition is clearly influenced by a Eurocentric perspective, as it takes European social norms as its reference points. This is evident in the parameters on girlhood established by "heterosexuality, marriage, and motherhood."[53] As the MGRG posits, the social category of "girl" emerged in 1880s Victorian England, to refer to young, unmarried women who were contesting traditional female social roles. The social destabilisation their independence caused was a result of their marital status, which challenged the socially-assumed equation of unmarried status with childhood, in opposition to the married woman. In a society where adulthood is not marked by the institution of marriage, such a dichotomy loses its value. Thus, the conflation of "girlhood" with a liminal status between childhood and marriage is dependent on normative presumptions which take Europe as its reference point.

The association of girl-ness with frivolousness or immaturity is additionally problematic, even more so when the term is applied in a racialized context.[54] In the case of

young, non-white women, cultural perceptions oscillate between excluding these individuals from the categories of modernity and thus of "girl-ness," and deploying infantilizing language regardless of biological age to downplay the intellectual development and social importance of women of colour.[55] For example, during the Jim Crow era in the United States, the word "girl" was meant as a racial insult when used in opposition to "woman" for adult Black females.[56] As the contributions to the MGRG show, the links between "girliness," "fashion," and "modernity" has been variously interpreted in different cultural contexts depending on existing racial hierarchies. For example, in Australia, white Australian flappers were portrayed as more properly fashionable than Aboriginal women because of their supposed uncivilised nature that made them unsuitable to modern displays of style.[57] On the contrary, in former colonial or racially segregated contexts (such as India and South Africa), women belonging to specific social categories actively took advantage of the attributes of the modern girl fashion to contest racist claims of a primitive, uncivilized femininity and engaging in a respectable view of modernity expressed through fashion.[58] Moreover, being a girl is defined by the MGRG as inherently modern: the flapper and her equivalents "denoted an up-to-date and youthful femininity, provocative and unseemly in its intimacy with foreign aesthetic and commodity influences."[59] Such an association is carried out through attributes that can be applied to *kanga*-wearing women as well, as they draw on aspects linked to fashion and modernity, such as the consumption of specific commodities and frivolous behaviour. One example of this is the consumption of specific commodities, which can be considered cosmopolitan in nature and allows the display of economic ability. Another one is frivolousness, a concept which is conveyed by the very meaning of the word *kanga* (guinea fowl in Kiswahili), which comes from the assumption that women behaved like a flock of birds when moving in groups, chattering and strutting.

As the MGRG's research shows, it is the conflation between girl-ness and modernity as understood from a European standpoint which made possible different reinterpretations and adaptations of the flapper style in contexts that experienced various degrees of Eurocentric influence, especially regarding race. However, defining "girl" as "a *modern* social and representational category *delinked from biological age*,"[60] opens the possibility of applying the concept to formerly enslaved women using *kanga* as a form of dress. In a context informed by slavery and Islam, clothes and the act of veiling attested the affirmation of one's own identity as an "autonomous social adult," in contrast to the "perpetual status as a legal minor" that was imposed on women during slavery.[61] Historian Laura Fair posits that the act of veiling in the first half of the twentieth century, which was carried out through the use of *kanga* as a headscarf, was still perceived as a political affirmation of emancipation and a display of social and economic ability (*uwezo*).[62] Taking into account the characteristics of "girl" which do not relate directly to age, the MGRG definition of girl ("[…] women who occupied an ephemeral free space between childhood and adulthood")[63] can be applied to *kanga*-wearing women of later nineteenth century Zanzibar. The invention of *kanga* signals a passage between a metaphorical childhood, represented by the status of slavery, and a self-asserted social adulthood, accounting for a symbolic rite of passage that can be compared to girl-ness.

Nationalism

A reflection on the meaning of "girl" and its link with sexuality in the Western world can shed light on the highly ambivalent relationship between girlhood and nationalism. As the MGRG notes, the nationalistic policing of girls who self-identified as modern in the realm of sexual transgressions (which include exerting agency over the choice of sexual partners, a display of sexual behaviours in the public space, or lesbianism)[64] can be considered the result of the Eurocentric process of nation building, which implies a delineation of female roles based on marital status. Secondly, the iconography of the flapper was widely depicted in European nationalistic propaganda as the epitome of modernity, thus creating a permanent link between a specific style and the visual representation of modernity itself.[65]

In order to detach nationalism from a Eurocentric, chronologically modern understanding of ethnic and social identity, I propose to consider it in a broader sense as a construct. Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community is one such way to understand the emergence in Zanzibar of "Swahiliness" as socio-ethnic belonging of formerly enslaved individuals to a legitimate community. According to Anderson, any *nation*-ness can be considered a "cultural artefact" that fulfils specific criteria, that is an "imagined political community."[66] In the decades following the abolition of slavery until 1915, emancipated slaves began to identify themselves as Swahili even if they would have been previously considered of another ethnic origin.[67] In pre-abolition Zanzibari society, class was deeply intertwined with ethnicity, with people of Arab descent forming the wealthiest strata of the population. The Swahili were a coastal freeborn community, while enslaved people usually came from various locations in the mainland. Consequently, in order to be integrated as freeborn people, the formerly enslaved started to adopt specific ways of dressing as a marker of their invented ethnic identity and, by extension, of their newly acquired social roles.[68]

A crucial role in the affirmation and legitimacy of the new social role of formerly enslaved people is played by respectability. Respectability (*heshima*) is a key notion in Zanzibar Muslim society, and it is strictly interwoven with honour, economic affluence, social reputation, and Islamic religious practices such as veiling.[69] During the second half of the nineteenth century until before the abolition of slavery, slaves of both sexes were forbidden to cover their heads, a denigrating public marker of their servitude; what differentiated visually enslaved women from poor but freeborn Swahili was the possibility for the latter to mark her social status by covering her head with a cloth and by wearing an *ukaya*. On the contrary, underneath those pieces of clothing that signalled both their ethnicity and their social status (free-born, Muslim, Swahili), poor Swahili women wore a wrapped cloth, either an indigo-dyed *kaniki* or a cheap, often imitation *merikani*, that was similar in quality to the clothes worn by enslaved people.[70] Having previously been denied the right to veil, one of the first changes in women's fashion in the post-abolition period was the emergence of veiling as a display of good Muslim faith and respectability, that simultaneously avoided the visual identification of formerly enslaved people as such. The overlapping of garments in use by both enslaved and free women allowed freed women to easily adapt their style to that of the Swahili freeborn community by adding caps and headscarves.

However, in the period between 1890 to 1915, formerly enslaved people did not settle for the appropriation of key elements to show their respectability, such as veiling, by simply mimicking Swahili clothing. Rather, they sought to transform their dress to abandon the cloth associated with servility (*merikani* or *kaniki*) with the incorporation of *kanga*.[71] At first, the variation consisted of block-printing the white *merikani* with red or black dyes to create an altogether new product, the *kanga za mera* (first *kanga*). But as formerly enslaved people struggled to establish a new social identity, elements such as fashion consciousness and purchasing power served as an act of self-affirmation as urban, free Swahili women. This granted imported *kanga* an increase in popularity as a symbol of such status because it gave "bodily shape to these new identities."[72] *Kanga*, as a luxury item that could be worn as a veil, became the easiest, most immediate way to exhibit a newly gained respectability in the process of becoming esteemed members of the community. At the same time, the wearing of *kanga* reinforced the sense of belonging to a new social category, expressed through the urban, cosmopolitan concept of Swahiliness. *Kanga* emerged out of the post-abolition cultural politics of Zanzibar alongside Swahili identity, which was constructed by formerly enslaved people as a marker of the social role of free, Muslim members of the coastal society of Zanzibar and East Africa.[73] In this way, it is possible to argue that, like the flapper, the *kanga*-wearing woman visually expresses a "nationalist" identity deprived of its strictly European connotation, as an imagined community of urban, freeborn, Muslim Swahili, forging an entirely new identity which intermingles ethnicity and social status.

Commodities

Both the *kanga*-wearing woman and the flapper were recognizable by their engagement in commercial activities. In the study by the MGRG, the spread of commodities linked to the specific aesthetic appearance of the flapper is related to modern femininity's connection to capitalism.[74] In the 1920s and 1930s, what allowed women to define themselves as modern was "driven by the capitalist logic of supply, demand, and profitability."[75] Another trait besides consumerism that defined the flapper was her cosmopolitanism, achieved thanks to the purchase of those same commodities that circulated and were publicized worldwide.[76]

The similarities between the flapper and the *kanga*-wearing woman appear evident in the link between commodities and cosmopolitanism. The MGRG explicitly referred to "a close association between the Modern Girl and commodity capitalism in all contexts."[77] The process of the invention of *kanga* involved both local actors and global influences, in a cultural context which placed great value on cloth as a commodity.[78] Nevertheless, the connection made by the MGRG between the use of commodities, consumerism, and capitalism seems arbitrary, in the sense that they conflate consumerism with capitalism as an apparently exclusive and mutual relation. In fact, it is quite the opposite: coastal societies, especially in East Africa, show that it was possible for a highly consumeristic social environment to be characterised by the consumption of a very specific set of commodities even in a non-capitalistic society. This observation casts a new light on the relationship between fashion and Western modernity: their indissoluble link was in Western

industrial capitalism, which opened the field to consumerism and the spread of commodities associated to fashion. Yet, scholars working with dress, fashion, and modernity in Africa have demonstrated that consumerism is a phenomenon disentangled from capitalist society, thus undermining the foundations of the apparently unique bond of fashion and Western modernity.[79]

The invention of young women's urban Zanzibari identity through *kanga* also reflects a cosmopolitanism specific to this nexus point in the trade networks of the Indian Ocean. The ability to earn and spend money, and thus engage in the expansive global trade networks which characterized this region, became a key point in articulating the idea of respectability to redefine a former female slave's social position. Previously excluded from these economies, formerly enslaved women flaunted their freedom and independence through the purchase of garments, such as *kanga*, which underscored their participation in these formerly off-limit worlds.[80] In doing so, *kanga* became emblematic to publicly exhibit one's growing financial autonomy and personal emancipation, and to perform *uwezo*. Such a cosmopolitan attitude played a crucial role in establishing translocal connections, mainly through trading commodities such as cloth.[81] Cosmopolitanism, understood as an active engagement with other parts of the world, implies the capability of engaging with settings that go beyond the local by incorporating elements from a global context and adapting them to the local environment of Zanzibar.[82] Because *kanga* was an imported cloth, designed specifically for the urban Swahili market but inspired by various Southern Asian designs, *kanga* can be considered a very specific commodity that characterised social, cultural and gendered life in Zanzibar in the 1870s-1910s. By wearing *kanga*, formerly enslaved women visually signalled their cosmopolitanism and newly-achieved ability to participate in the global economy. Like the flapper, who increasingly engaged as a consumer in global trade networks, the *kanga*-wearing woman's liberation from slavery allowed her to make her economic freedom visible.

Agency and consumerism

The MGRG relates the agency of the flapper as a consumer to her participation in nationalistic policies or in class politics, whether to embody or contest them.[83] Yet, nationalism is not a category that could be properly applied to the context of Zanzibar at the end of the nineteenth century, because it is a product of European societies. However, many scholars of Swahili societies in East Africa have explored the role of consumption within social hierarchy. I thus argue that it is possible to analyse agency by taking into account the role that social hierarchies, rather than nationalism, play in that society. As Elisabeth McMahon explains in her study on respectability in Zanzibar, displays of wealth became increasingly important in order to affirm an ex-slave's *heshima*. *Kanga* thus provided the perfect combination of a dress that aligned with Islamic rules on clothing, was a global luxury item, and was a means to show agency and independence.[84] Laura Fair also points out that consumerism was practiced by former slaves to articulate their aspirations of upward social mobility.[85] To legitimate their newly acquired social mobility, formerly enslaved women could have simply appropriated the *buibui* from the ruling elites of Omani descent in order to affirm their respectability according to the Islamic faith. Instead, they invented *kanga* through an original use of fashion that involves translocal trade.

The agency of the consumer is a particularly interesting aspect of consumerism in Zanzibar, due to the interaction with translocal actors. MacKenzie Moon Ryan provides a detailed account on what she calls "the global invention of *kanga*," highlighting the strong influence that women had on the market.[86] According to Ryan, *kanga* was created by and for local women, in cooperation with Indian merchants, which simply improved a pre-existing block-printing technique performed by women to decorate imported plain cloth.[87] Further development in design came from Indonesian batik motifs, which Dutch textile designers under the suggestions of resident Indian merchants adapted entirely to suit the East African market.[88] Manufacturers also had to comply with exacting women's desires for variety of patterns and colours.[89] Ryan refers to German traveller Dr. Karl Wilhelm Schmidt, who recorded that new patterns came to the market every four weeks, and their price and success were highly dependent on customers' appreciation.[90] Such a frequent demand reveals how quickly fashion changed in urban Zanzibar, thus resulting in a fierce competition among women to wear the latest *kanga*. This influenced the market offerings, but also induced highly consumerist behaviour: a colonial officer explained that an average "Zanzibar girl"[91] possessed "two or three dozen sets at one time."[92] It becomes evident from these observations that women who wore *kanga* were very active in shaping the development of the style, using their agency as consumers to assert their preferences.

What emerges from the study of both *kanga* and flapper fashions is that consumerism, far from being a mere purchasing of items offered by the market, plays a key role in determining one's own agency as a social actor. This considered, affirming that the distinctiveness of *modern* societies lies in the fact that they are "increasingly organized around consumption"[93] casts a different light on the very meaning of modernity, especially in relation to fashion, in non-European contexts. In other words, if modernity can indeed be characterised by consumption as a distinctive trait, Zanzibari urban society could easily be defined as modern.[94]

Visual economies

The MGRG considers advertising, particularly of cosmetics, the channel of diffusion for flapper fashion.[95] Though the existing scholarship does not suggest that any form of commercial advertisement intended to sell *kanga* actually made use of pictures, illustrations, or representations of women wearing *kanga*, the style is visual in nature. At the turn of the century, several resident studio photographers took pictures of local women wearing *kanga*, and then circulated them as popular postcards.[96] But *kanga*, as an article of dress, is also visual because it is a "communicative genre."[97] *Kanga* can function as a non-verbal means of communication as it conveys messages that are subject to speech prohibition. Through the allocation of the text to a certain pattern, which is broader in size than the script and therefore visible for a longer time, the act of wearing a specific design could evoke the meaning of the script without actually needing to read it.[98] Thus, like the aesthetic iconography of the flapper, the *kanga* was meant to be "read" primarily as a visual medium.

Scholars of the Swahili coast have also demonstrated that societies engaged in translocal trade within the Indian Ocean region could be defined as consumerist, notwithstanding the absence of the specific kind of advertisement that constitutes one of the main aspects of Western consumerism during the Twenties.[99] The assumption of "visual economy" as the circulation of advertisements of distinct commodities is one of the most problematic aspects in the application of the multidirectional citation method: the MGRG defined the global Modern Girl phenomenon through the visibility of a specific set of features all over the world in forms of media such as movies and commercials.[100] The first weak point in such a claim is the fact that those characteristics are peculiar of a single style of fashion (the flapper) that has been adapted to different contexts. Yet, as the MGRG admits, "while the method of connective comparison reveals continuities in the visual representation of the Modern Girl across contexts, our research suggests that similar visuals did not always carry similar meanings."[101] This recognition leads to asking whether it is really a single style of fashion that conveys the idea of modernity, or rather if modernity is expressed through clothing. It is evident that the MGRG defines the idea of modernity through a single style, overlapping the concept of *modern* girl and the flapper style. As I argue above, the underlying premises on which the MGRG builds this connection reflects a set of Eurocentric definitions. Instead, I would argue that a more open approach would be to address the topic from another direction: rather than defining one style as modern, and then seeking out examples of that style in order to locate modernity (around the world), I argue that avoiding Eurocentrism requires seeking out modernity, in all its forms, and addressing the various styles, including *kanga*, which emerge in those contexts.

A key point for the MGRG was to connect the clothing of the Modern Girl with the specific visual and material commodities made available in the consumerist, capitalist society of 1920s Europe and the US. Prestholdt, borrowing from Jean Baudrillard's theory of object systems, affirms that in the "urban culturedness" of nineteenth century Zanzibar, "consumer objects can be incorporated as signs entirely divorced from the function intended by their manufacturers."[102] An example of this could be the fact that tokens of modern Western technology such as "clocks, airplanes, cars, glasses, furniture" or "rounded hunting horn and [arrays] of umbrellas" were drawn on *kanga* as decorative elements.[103] Yet the incorporation of Western objects in Zanzibari material culture did not imply the assimilation of the ideological basis attached to them by Western societies.[104] On the contrary, this process resulted from an interpretation of cosmopolitanism that extracts symbols from cultures around the globe without importing associated systems of values.[105] In this sense, according to Prestholdt, Zanzibar *mirrored* Western modernity. However, Prestholdt refuses to apply the term "modernity" to the historical context of Zanzibar, arguing that the concept of "alternative modernities" legitimates Western modernity as the norm from which non-Western variants take inspiration.[106] In his vision, modernity is "a bundle of specific cultural and ideological forms foundational to imperialism and colonization," rather than a universal(izing) global phenomenon.[107] While Prestholdt's interpretation has merit, describing Zanzibari cosmopolitanism as a peculiar trait of Swahili coastal society, without considering its intertwinement with modernity, does not offer an

exhaustive comprehension of the phenomenon. A true decolonization of modernity happens by reconceptualising the core of what modernity is, through common points that are not exclusively inherent to a Western set of values.

Conclusion: Reframing Modernity in Fashion

This paper has demonstrated that the study of translocal connections within the Indian Ocean world, and the re-building that Zanzibari society underwent after the abolition of slavery, can provide a tool to criticise the idea of the Modern Girl shaped in its visual form as the flapper style. The MGRG solidly identified the Modern Girl with the use of "specific commodities and explicit eroticism."[108] In so doing, they attached grounding characteristics of a modern girl, such as "consumption, modernity, and globalization" and the subversion of social norms to an image which is highly Western-oriented, corresponding directly to the flapper.[109] By identifying common points through the method of connective comparison between *kanga* and the flapper, I applied what the MGRG considered as grounding aspects of the modernity of the flapper to the context of women wearing *kanga* in Zanzibar in the 1890s. One of the first parallels that emerged from such comparative analysis was the use of fashion itself in order to convey specific meanings. The kind of message spread by a style of clothing can be different; what is important is the communicative intention of individuals that leads them to choose one corporal commodity to express certain values. At the same time, fashion was culturally linked to frivolousness in both Europe and Zanzibar; despite this, both flappers and women wearing *kanga* overtly challenged the existing traditional social order. For flappers, the explicit eroticism of the style and their open sexual behaviour subverted social norms regarding women as mothers and faithful wives.[110] For *kanga*-wearing women, the style redefined the social position of former slaves through the reformulation of dominant ideals of a Swahili, Muslim coastal society. In doing so, they both created and affirmed a completely new identity.

Another fundamental component of modern identity building is its declared cosmopolitanism. In both cases of *kanga*-wearing women and flappers, they expressed their cosmopolitanism through the consumption of specific commodities. These consumption patterns revealed connections beyond the local level, as well as an incorporation of the global within the community. This article illustrated that the process through which such cosmopolitanism is achieved corresponds to what the MGRG calls "multidirectional citation." This statement recalls Prestholdt's view that Zanzibar's cosmopolitanism was "a particular vision of the world that referenced trans-oceanic trends but made them relevant to the Zanzibari social environment."[111] Such a perception of one's place in the world requires agency, in both direct (women printing geometrical motifs on plain cloth to adjust it to their tastes) and indirect ways (actively choosing and selecting items, thus influencing the market).

Finally, this paper has demonstrated the need to detach fashion from its all-pervasive association with the rise of capitalism and the Western interpretation of modernity.

Conversely, my intention was to show that, thanks to its "powerful political language,"[112] clothing is one of the ways through which modernity can be studied from a non-Eurocentric, global perspective. By employing the connective comparison method, this paper illustrated grounding characteristics between the Western flapper in the 1920s and women wearing *kanga* in Zanzibari post-abolitionist society, in order to track more diverse manifestations of modernity in material culture. In so doing, my aim was to extend the idea of modernity beyond its limits as a mere adoption of a Western style. This could guarantee African fashion, especially *kanga*, an improved status, rather than depicting it as a deviation from an established norm grounded on Western ideology, values, and iconographic interpretations of modernity.

Notes

[1] Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, T*he Modern Girl Around the World. Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

[2] Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body. Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 40

[3] Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device. Collaboration, Connective Comparison, Multidirectional Citation," in *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 2, 22

[4] Ibid, 7.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid, 8.

[7] Sources on this topic include both literature exploring the connection between modernity and fashion, such as: Kurt W. Back, "Modernism and Fashion: A Social Psychological Interpretation," in *The Psychology of Fashion*, ed. Michael R. Solomon, 3-14 (Lexington, Toronto: Lexington Books, 1985); Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams. Fashion and Modernity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003); as well as literature concerned with the study of fashion in the context of Africa: Jean Allman, ed. F*ashioning Africa. Power and the Politics of Dress* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

[8] Literature on kanga is quite extensive, and it focuses on several aspects. Among them, the connection between dress and the construction of social and individual identity has been explored by Rosabelle Boswell, "Say What You Like: Dress, Identity and Heritage in Zanzibar," International Journal of Heritage Studies 12, no. 5 (2006): 440-57; Corrie Decker, M*obilizing Zanzibari Women. The Struggle for Respectability and Self-Reliance in Colonial East Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Laura Fair, "Dressing up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 63-94; Laura Fair, "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean. Dress, Performance, and the Cultural Construction of a Cosmopolitan Zanzibari Identity," in *Fashioning Africa*, ed. Allman, 13-30; Laura Fair, "Veiling, Fashion, and Social Mobility: A Century of Change in Zanzibar," in *Veiling in Africa*, ed. Elisha P. Renne (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013); Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa. From Honor to Respectability* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Maria Suriano,"Clothing and the Changing Identities of Tanganyikan Urban Youths, 1920s-1950s," *East African Culture, Language and Society* 20, no. 1 (2008): 95-115.

Other authors have dealt with the cosmopolitan aspect of *kanga*, that involves translocal connections and global trade. See Sarah Fee and Pedro Machado, "Entangled Histories: Translocal Textile Trades in Eastern Africa, c. 800 CE to the Early Twentieth Century," *Textile History* 48, no, 1 (2017): 4-14; Sarah Fee, "'Cloths with Names': Luxury Textile Imports in Eastern Africa, c. 1800–1885," *Textile History* 48, no. 1 (2017): 49-84; Paola Ivanov, "Constructing translocal socioscapes: consumerism, aesthetics, and visuality in Zanzibar Town," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 6, no. 4 (2012): 631-654; Jeremy Prestholdt, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004): 755-81; MacKenzie Moon Ryan, "Converging Trades and New Technologies: The Emergence of Kanga Textiles on the Swahili Coast in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean*, ed. Pedro Machado, Sarah Fee, Gwyn Campbell, 253-86 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); MacKenzie Moon Ryan, "A Decade of Design: The Global Invention of the Kanga, 1876–1886," *Textile History* 48, no. 1 (2017): 101-32; Maria Suriano, "Local Ideas of Fashion and Translocal Connections. A View from Upcountry Tanganyika," in *Translocal Connections across the Indian Ocean*, ed. Francesca Declich, 163-89 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Finally, a linguistic analysis on kanga scripts has been carried out by Rose Marie Beck, "Ambiguous Signs: The Role Of The Kanga as a Medium of Communication." *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 68 (2001): 157-69; Rose Marie Beck, "Texts on Textiles: Proverbiality as Characteristic of Equivocal Communication at the East African Coast (Swahili)," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2005): 131-60; David Parkin, "Textile as commodity, dress as text. Swahili *kanga* and women's statements," in T*extiles in Indian Ocean Societies*, ed. Ruth Barnes, 44-61 (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005); Saida Yahya-Othman, "If the Cap Fits: Kanga Names and Women's Voice in Swahili Society," *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 51 (1997): 135-49

[9] Fundamental for this topic is an understanding of the concept of multiple modernities. For further readings on this, see S. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1-29; Susan Stanford Friedman, "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/Modernism*," *Modernism/modernity* 8, no. 3 (2001): 493-513; Jeremy Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity: on Consumerism in Cosmopolitan Zanzibar," *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 4, no. 2 (2009): 165-204.

[10] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," in *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 22.

[11] Ibid, 3-4.

[12] Ibid, 2.

[13] For the sake of simplicity, in the following pages I will refer to this cultural formation only as "flapper".

[14] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 2.

[15] I am grateful to reviewer Bella Ruhl for this formulation.

[16] Stanford Friedman, "Definitional Excursions," 497.

[17] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams. Fashion and Modernity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 62-63.

[18] Wilson, *Adorned in Dream*s, 62-63.

[19] Jean Allman, "Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress," in *Fashioning Africa*, ed. Allman, 2.

[20] Allman, "Fashioning Africa," 3.

[21] Ibid, 5.

[22] Ibid, 4.

[23] Back, "Modernism and Fashion," in *The Psychology of Fashion*, ed. Solomon, 2.

[24] Ibid, 3-4.

[25] Ibid, 2.

[26] Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity," 166.

[27] Ibid.

[28] For reference, see Beck, "Ambiguous Signs," 157-69; Beck, "Texts on Textiles," 131-60; Laura Fair, "Dressing up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar," *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 63-94; Fair, "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean," in *Fashioning Africa*, ed. Allman, 13-30; Fair, "Veiling, Fashion, and Social Mobility," in Veiling in Africa, ed. Renne; Ryan, "Converging Trades and New Technologies," in *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean*, ed. Machado, Fee, and Campbell, 253-86; Ryan, "A Decade of Design," 101-32.

[29] Examples of the multiple ways in which a *kanga* may be worn are found in the catalogue of the online exhibition "Wearing What Cannot Be Spoken," curated by Rose Ong'oa at Arkansas State University. https://www.astate.edu/a/museum/exhibits/wearing-what-cannot-be-spoken/index.dot.

[30] Ryan, "A Decade of Design," 101.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid, 103-109; Fair, "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean," 18.

[33] Moon Ryan, "A Decade of Design," 105.

[34] Ibid, 103.

[35] Ibid, 113.

[36] Fair, "Dressing Up," 63.

[37] The archipelago known as Zanzibar has been the destination of multiple migration movements, which determined the social composition of the island in ethnically based social strata. Persian sailors from the Shirazi Period (thirteenth-fifteenth centuries) had gradually founded outposts on the East African coasts and on the islands of Pemba and Unguja, intermarrying with the native bantu communities and thus creating the nucleus of Swahili ethnic and cultural identity. Later on, the Omani sultanate took possession of the archipelago at the end of the seventeenth century, and established the capital city on Zanzibar in 1840.

[38] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 15-16.

[39] Fair, "Clothing, Class, Gender," 72.

[40] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 16; Fair, "Clothing, Class, Gender," 74.

[41] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 17.

[42] Ibid, 18.

[43] Fair, "Remaking Fashion," 20; Fair, "Clothing, Class, Gender," 77.

[44] *Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2003), s.v "heuristic device."

[45] Ibid.

[46] For further readings on trade of cloth in the Indian Ocean region, see Machado, Fee, and Campbell, ed., *Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures, and the Material Worlds of the Indian Ocean*; Fee and Machado, "Entangled Histories".

[47] In this regard, the linguistic and social analysis performed by Rose Marie Beck in her study on the so called proverbiality of the *kanga* is particularly noteworthy. See Beck, "Ambiguous Signs,"; Beck, "Text on Textiles".

[48] *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, 5th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2006), s.v. "comparative method."

[49] *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*. 5th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2006), s.v. "comparative method."

[50] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 4.

[51] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 9.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid, 11.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid, 9.

[60] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

[61] Fair, "Dressing up," 87, 86.

[62] Ibid.

[63] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 9.

[64] Ibid, 16.

[65] See Ibid, 15-18.

[66] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 4.

[67] Fair, "Dressing up," 75.

[68] Fair, "Dressing up," 75.

[69] For a deep analysis of the semantic switch that the term *heshima* underwent after the abolition of slavery, see McMahon, S*lavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa*.

[70] Fair, "Dressing up," 72-73; Fair, "Remaking fashion," 16.

[71] Fair, "Remaking fashion," 17.

[72] Fair, "Dressing up," 76-77.

[73] Ibid, 76.

[74] Such commodities include: "[L]ipstick, nail polish, face creams and powders, skin lighteners, tanning lotions, shampoos, hair styling products, fancy soaps, perfumes, deodorants, toothpastes, cigarettes, high-heel shoes, cloche hats, and fashionable, sexy clothes." MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 18.

[75] Ibid, 19.

[76] Ibid. 15. Uta Poiger, the author who wrote about the German Modern Girl, refers to the phenomenon as a "cosmopolitan aesthetic." See Uta G. Poiger, "Fantasies of Universality? *Neue Frauen*, Race, and Nation in Weimar and Nazi Germany," in MGRG, *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 317-346.

[77] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 9-10.

[78] Allman, "Fashioning Africa," 3.

[79] Among others, contributions to the topic include: Allman, "Fashioning Africa"; Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity"; Machado, Fee, and Campbell, T*extile Trades, Consumer Cultures*; Fee and Machado, "Entangled Histories".

[80] Fair, "Dressing up," 79.

[81] Fee and Machado, "Entangled Histories".

[82] Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity," 170.

[83] Ibid, 20-21.

[84] McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation*, 64, 129.

[85] Fair, "Dressing up," 67.

[86] Ryan, "A Decade of Design."

[87] Ryan, "A Decade of Design," 103.

[88] Ibid, 113.

[89] Ibid, 119.

[90] Quoted in Ryan, "Converging Trades and New Technologies," 270.

[91] In my opinion, this spontaneous association between the term "girl" and consuming fashionable items cannot be ignored.

[92] Quoted in Ryan, "Converging Trades," 281.

[93] *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, s.v. "consumer society." Emphasis mine.

[94] Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity".

[95] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 12, 20.

[96] Ryan, "Converging Trades," 268.

[97] Beck, "Ambiguous Signs," 158.

[98] Even though the inscriptions vary at a faster rate than patterns, which on the contrary tend to be repeated, the fact that the inscription is hardly readable when the kanga is worn brings women to memorise the name of the kanga and associate it to a specific motif, in order to be able to "read" the garment without having to see the inscription. See Beck, "Ambiguous Signs," 162-163. See also Beck, "Texts on Textiles," 131.

[99] For further readings on consumerism in Eastern Africa, see McMahon, Slavery and Emancipation; Laura Fair, "Remaking Fashion," Ryan, "Converging Trades,"; Allman, "Fashioning Africa".

[100] MGRG, "The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device," 12.

[101] Ibid, 14.

[102] Cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard uses the word "system" to suggest that "individual objects do not function on their own but instead depend on a system that relates the larger meaning of the whole." Quoted in Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity," 177.

[103] Beck, "Texts on Textiles," 134; Ryan, "A Decade of Design," 117.

[104] Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity," 169-70.

[105] Ibid, 170.

[106] Ibid, 169-70.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid, 1.

[109] Ibid, 9.

[110] Ibid, 15-16.

[111] Prestholdt, "Mirroring Modernity," 170.

[112] Allman, "Fashioning Africa," 2.

II.

Methodologies

The Positionality of Global Historians: A Methodological Review

By

Aoibhín McQuillan

Abstract

This paper questions the perceived strengths and weaknesses of topical 'closeness' when comparing, analysing, reviewing, or recording histories that relate to the historian as both a commentator upon and an actor within history. Discussing the trends of historian involvement within global history, the shortcomings of the field, and the divisions that remain, this paper questions the act of 'disconnecting' global historians from the topics they explore. It uses the conclusions drawn by other global historians to explore how positionality impeded or facilitated their research. Referencing the works and positionalities of other global historians such as Anne-Charlotte Martineau, Elizabeth Leake, Christoph Kalter, and Haneda Masashi, this paper concludes that alternative intellectual definitions of global history add nuance to these variations of approach. However, this variation does not undermine the role of the historian as an actor and, therefore, the inherent need to contextualise the authorial voice, regardless of spatial or topical closeness.

About the author

Aoibhín McQuillan is a graduate of the University of Warwick with a master's degree in Global and Comparative History. Research interests include culture, diaspora, national identity within propaganda, and global history frameworks.

Global history as a field is largely used to explore the movements of peoples, objects, and ideas; the relationship between connectivity and the historians themselves is often influenced by these expanded boundaries of space and time. In history writing, positionality is the acknowledgement that our experiences and biases impact and permeate our understandings of reality. As historians, this extends to the ways in which we narrate and move through theories, themes, and sequences alike. Bias is arguably unavoidable, but this paper is focused on the positionality of the historian as an actor, shaping historical events as opposed to scrutinising them as a commentator and observer. In global history, when discussing people or objects, the relationships between individuals or communities, or the creation of concepts or theories, there remains the question of how to expand upon or reduce findings to their core impacts. The configuration of the historian within these queries calls into question the act of history-writing: how does the historian's bias influence the history they are able to produce? This paper explores the methodological strengths or weaknesses of a historian conducting research whilst positionally 'close' or 'distant' from their topic.[1] These impacts will be explored through the reflections of academics who have negotiated this closeness and drawn conclusions facilitated by their positionality to their respective projects.

To discuss positionality in history-writing and historiography, we must first explore the presumption of inevitability towards bias. The discipline of history has been cleft between different perspectives on truth-seeking, authenticity, and factualism.[2] This predilection in approaches underscores the main ways in which we relate to the act of history-writing. Is history a narration of 'fact', events, and evidence, or are more subliminal layers of abstract theorisation the more appropriate route with which to explore the past?[3] Of course, these divisions overlap in complicated ways – there is no science without a 'theory' to prove or disprove – but the essence of the argument remains pertinent. These concepts of fact-seeking narration and abstract theorisation mirror the question of positionality of the historian: should we be detached or entrenched? The resulting conclusion is drawn by the individual.

However, these choices of approach are further complicated when the researcher considers themselves a global historian.[4] Within this discipline, there is also a main collection of approaches to 'doing' global history that is based around actors, places, and spaces.[5] The vagueness of the global field has complicated the relationship of the historian and these ideas of being 'tethered' to historical events instead of interacting only briefly; in comparison, when excavating resources, historians of nations either acknowledge their position as one who belongs to said nation or as playing the role of outsider looking in.[6] With global history, however, there is on-going discussion of what it means to 'do' global history, either as a discipline or as a theoretical framework. For some, global is self-evident of macro history, whilst others combine their global interests with the micro instead. The movement of ideas, objects, or peoples has dominated the field, alongside a preoccupation with comparison.[7] An argument for the emergence of global history has been a counterpoint to the prominence of national and imperial histories, to reframe

events and concepts outside of these confining ideas of nationalism and colonisation.[8] However, the act of tethering global history and the role of global historians within the field of history itself has proven a persistent problem.

Jeremy Adelman, in "What is global history now?", provoked his peers to question their academic hegemony, a concern that illustrated his fears that global history was at risk of becoming a discipline of the privileged, English-speaking, few.[9] This Anglocentric interpretation of global history, arguably born in the late 1990s, was bolstered by the interest of White male academics – with reading lists filled with German scholars – and was largely cloistered in Western institutions.[10] Although this is partly due to the Anglocentric nature of academic publications and the legacy of the Westernisation of academia, much of global history was consequently dominated by Eurocentric language even when topics are presented as unrelated to Europe.[11] Global historian Dipesh Chakrabarty noted:

> European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought – which is now everybody's heritage and which affect us all – maybe renewed from and for the margins.[12]

This tendency towards Eurocentric language was also noted by Anne-Charlotte Martineau in her review of the *Oxford Handbook of International Law*:

> [The editors' overall ambition was to allow for 'a multipolar perspective' [that] […] not only […] flattens differences and reduces political projects to commodities, but also […] makes its own politics invisible. No attention is given to the historical prevalence of Western narratives or to issues regarding the production of knowledge.[13]

This skewed positionality of Eurocentric ways of doing global history should not be overlooked, especially in those endeavours specifically taken to focus on non-European or non-White narratives.[14] Across more general fields, research topics can often be correlated to positionality, either because many of these academics study their own histories or are invested in theorisations that directly connect to their world view.[15] Certain histories are acknowledged to be most insightful when written by commentators who are closely aligned with the topic; however, this assertion that certain histories can and should only be written by certain peoples is confining, both towards a 'global history' approach and to individuals who do not seek to study topics positionally connected to themselves.

Ideally, a range of academic positionality is to the benefit of historical discussions. As Michael Erdman argued, awareness and variety of positionality within historiography deepens the richness of historical narratives. History can be examined through several lenses, providing accounts of pertinent events either first-hand or through a variety of dialogues and records through which much historical analysis is based:

> [The historiographical nexus between history and power] explains to citizens how the state has shaped their views of themselves through historical narratives. To foreigners, it charts the path that identity and belonging have taken over the course of the state's existence. It helps to combat the vilification and essentialization of groups of people by both demonstrating the fluidity and

malleability of the historical Self over time, and highlighting the dialogue that exists between writers and readers of history.[16]

Positionality is a vital aspect of both historical analysis and historiography, as those who produce and present historical research become the narrators and authorities of both the past and its influences upon present and future. Deconstructing bias is only part of this process as understanding the benefits and shortcomings of approaches allows for a greater understanding of the role of historians as actors within history. However, whilst bias can be deconstructed, it cannot be fully removed.[17] Therefore, an awareness of positionality permeates the tone of a research project from its conception, and an understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the historian's situation is necessary. The main weakness of positional distance is the difficulty of grasping the subliminal details that may be more readily understood if immersed in the culture, place, or events. There is a nuance to history-writing that 'armchair' research may not adequately provide, where an understanding of culture, atmosphere, identity, and intangible practices become some of the most impactful concepts upon both the individual and the historical narrative. 'Armchair' research refers to the contextual disconnect that can occur between the academic and their chosen topic, wherein they do not interact directly with the location, peoples, or events that they are studying; often, 'armchair theorising' does not rely on primary sources at all and instead discusses the subject through secondary and abstract perspectives.[18]

Variations of positionality have complicated the field of global history; should those as 'close' as possible be deemed authorities over more 'distant' academics? This dilemma presents the shortcomings of 'closeness', as the bias that permeates these avenues of historical research can be both consciously and subconsciously rooted in personal experience or vendettas.[19] In these incidences, the intimacy of positionality can compromise the project as surely as an 'armchair' approach shapes the scope and insight of a 'distant' topic.[20] This entanglement is, arguably, poor history-writing, as theory is based upon opinion instead of evidence, but the case can be made that all historical discussion is rooted in exploration of theory more than evidenced towards fact. It is clear, then, that the historian must be fully aware of their positionality and its impact upon the scope, direction and conclusion of their research. Positionality, therefore, becomes a framework in itself.

The idea of 'digging where you stand' has become a question of who has the authority to declare themselves the commentator of particular events or people.[21] This can be seen in recent historiographical movements to redefine and re-establish interest in local histories that exist beyond the colonial narrative, such as the rising prominence of African Studies.[22] The value of this focus should not be discarded, as undoing the narratives of imperial history is a long and necessarily arduous process. The positionality and closeness of the historian become a pivotal part of this endeavour, both as local actors participating in decolonising institutionalised history-writing and in circulating alternative perspectives to those of both colonisers and external voices. Consequently, positionality can be a necessity when doing history, as the involvement of the historian's self is acted upon to strengthen,

instead of tarnishing, the argument or narrative. However, this question of 'authority' and the positionality of the historian can become problematic for those global historians studying histories that are removed from themselves. As historian Christoph Kalter argued, distance from research is both a strength and a weakness.[23] Whilst Kalter expressed a belief that his 'non-connectedness' was beneficial – "as an outsider, nothing seemed self-evident" – he did not deny the pitfalls of navigating a society with which he had little knowledge of before his project; there were language issues, despite his previous confidence in fluency, and a "lack of intimate knowledge […] extended to the entire web of intellectual, social, and political references that constitute a national culture."[24] There was also backlash as Kalter was accused of lacking nuance: "I, as an armchair historian, (comparatively) youngster, and foreigner could not possibly understand what had been at stake".[25] Furthermore, his "privilege", as a foreign academic with funding that was unavailable to local researchers wanting to study their shared topic, "[flew] into everybody's face, including my own."[26] Kalter concluded his self-critique by remarking that his work was subsequently published in English – "the lingua franca of Anglocentric academia" –despite Portugal being both the topic and locality of his work, and Portuguese being the language his counterparts published in.[27]

The linguistic divisions of accessibility, in all history-writing but especially in international or global history, is something that may never be reconciled.[28] It is impossible for a global historian to learn enough languages to a high degree of fluency and cultural understanding to navigate any region they are studying. There is a need for collaboration, either with other historians or with translators, which begets a 'local' perspective. The necessity of a local representative, either through the historian themselves or by collaboration, extends beyond signposting resources; understanding how these localities function, what questions should be asked, and how to build relationships that beget trust and truths instead of suspicion that impedes exchange. Lynn Hunt commented that "[h]istory writing in the global era can only be a collaborative form of inquiry, whether between types of approaches or between scholars from different parts of the globe."[29] A defence of Kalter's publishers printing his work solely in English does not withstand scrutiny, financial limitations or outreach aside, as works should be accessible to the subject. History-writing should be both a portrait and a mirror, to us in the broader sense but also to the subjects as the usefulness of the outsider perspective on history-writing is diminished when its accessibility is so skewed. As a global historian, Kalter felt pressured by his fellows to promote the 'transnational' elements of his research instead of the national. The reality that many historians who identify as 'global' are Anglo-speaking further problematises specific trajectories of doing history. Whilst global history is often perceived as 'transcending' the nation state, the impact of regionalism and identity should not in turn be neglected upon the basis of a skewed lens.

In relation to this, the practical and logistical impacts of positionality, especially methods of resource gathering, have become increasingly divisive regarding which historians can study what histories. Whilst the digitalisation of archives and expanding

communication opportunities have facilitated distanced networks to flourish, the increased gentrification of access has barred many researchers from the available resources even though they have been made accessible online.[30] Furthermore, as highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling between localities is a substantial barrier for research purposes. [31] ot only could academics no longer visit archives and facilities, but political and economic logistics problematised international border-crossing, as noted by global historian Elizabeth Leake in her article "(In)accessible Stories and the Contingency of History Writing."[32] Leake's project constantly evolved due to the resources she had available as, when travelling through war zones within Afghanistan, she was forced to accept that certain exploration would be impossible due to the very real danger to life or because records and communities had been destroyed.[33] To most researchers, issues of travel and access are defining influences upon the realities of carrying out their projects as it requires funding, and it takes time, in addition to the networking and language skills necessary. When researchers can neither access their resources remotely or travel to their locations, their resources are significantly diminished and their progress impeded. The impact of the climate crisis on the future of these ventures is also of serious concern, as not only must long-distance travel be sensitive to pollution and be cost-efficient, but many locations, peoples, and resources will be lost to the devastation of natural disaster and neglect in favour of life-preserving ventures. Positionality therefore becomes less about what historians feel they want to be studying and more about what they feel is available to them. Many global historians, as demonstrated by Kalter, who are White, European, and well-funded can therefore travel to these locations of interest even when local historians cannot be funded to study a subject of comparative proximity. The logistics of positionality are called into question; do we study the histories we are a part of because we feel our input is valuable or because it is the history we had access to?

The strength of researching histories removed from our own experiences and bias is evident.[34] Most global historians are interested in the themes, connections, and 'bigger pictures' of history. Whilst their own cultures, identities, and experience might involve themselves with the research content, this is rarely at the centre of the project. Furthermore, in studying our own histories closely, we may not realise things which to ourselves as locals are common or expected but would be vastly different to someone with an outside perspective. The assumed baseline of communal knowledge remains and could impede the clarity of publications. Thematically, detachment is also a significant aspect of doing global history. It can arguably be a strength as Kalter claimed, as it allows for a disassociation of perception, where everything becomes 'new' and open for analysis. A disconnect from personal experience would therefore prove beneficial, even if only brought about by the commentary of international peers. As both Chakrabarty and Martineau noted regarding Eurocentric dialogue within the field, positionality can work to conceal shortcomings if research lacks external evaluation.[35] The multiplicity of global and world history approaches may prove beneficial to identifying these weaknesses within intellectual communities. Although these variations of approach have existed in various incarnations for decades, they often remain divided by these conflicts in focus and differences in language.

Consequently, positionality is transformed from a strength or a weakness into something to be negotiated.[36] Acknowledging the positionality and bias of the historian to the research is a methodological process that, whilst all academics must partake in it, is particularly evocative when related to the global historian's propensity to study further 'afield' from themselves. These wider questions of ability in positionality call for a readjustment of how global history is perceived.

According to historian Haneda Masashi, the Japanese model of 'world history' is the overarching collaboration of the main histories of larger regions – i.e. continental histories – and differs greatly to 'European' world history, which focuses on trends of humanity itself.[37] Masashi reasoned that, in America, "world history is macrohistory […] transregional, transnational, and transcultural."[38] Global history is defined as a separate endeavour from world history; Masashi argued that Japanese *guroobaru hisutorii* specifically was dependent upon taking "a bird's eye view".[39] Therefore, positionality regarding the historian's own field of research becomes a moot point as, regardless of spatial proximity, the historian should strive to detach themselves. Masashi then asserted that "it is important that historians themselves develop multiple identities as a citizen of a given nation state and as a resident of the Earth", acknowledging that identifying with nation-states and regions is natural and to be expected but should not confine the historian to specific themes or localities.[40] Masashi's discussion of positionality in world/global history concluded with the assertion that the field existed in natural multiplicities, formed around the various perceptions of what it is and how it should be done, and that a collaboration of these approaches was a necessary and core aspect of doing global history.[41] Global history, as an independent field, has continued to grow and evolve; exchanges between varieties of these 'regional' methods as well as between geographical regions, institutions, individuals, and languages will continue to bolster these exchanges of perspective. Collaborative use of internal and external perspectives should be utilised to further understand the impacts of tethering and positionality within the roles of historians as commentators and historians as actors.

To Masashi, positionality is an unavoidable part of intellectual exchange, rooted in an individual's and a region's origins of ideas; considering Kalter, Erdman, and Leake, positionality as a methodology is also rooted in cultural, linguistic, and practical relations between the historian and the content of the project itself, not just the approach taken. The insights provided by, or disconnect stemming from, this positionality of the historian as both commentator and actor shapes the ways in which we 'do' history. Acknowledging our positions as actors and historians in our research, the process of formulating these works, and the conclusions reached, contextualises both our theories and the role of these publications. In global history, this tethering of the self to historical narrative is therefore inevitable, both methodologically and within the content itself, and should not be conflated as strengths and weaknesses that can always be overcome. Instead, the relationship between global historians and tethering becomes an exploration of how we perceive the authorial voice within both theory and narrative.

Notes

[1] This paper does not aim to present a finite conclusion on this topic but, rather, to provoke an internal examination within the reader to explore their own positionality and their own ways of history-writing.

[2] This is often regarded as the difference between history as a humanities discipline or as a scientific endeavour.

[3] The various national institutes of academia that formalised the study and practice of history configured their own means of determining how we go about 'doing history'.

[4] Global history could also be presented as an approach within another field rather than a discipline depending on how we categorise it. For more information on the discussion surrounding the role of global history within history, see Pamela Crossley, "Why Do Expectations Persist That Global History Should Be History?" *Cromohs (Cyber Review of Modern Historiography)* (2021).

[5] The use of the phrase 'doing' global history throughout this paper reflects the idea that global history is simultaneously a field as well as a framework with which to explore projects and resources. This turn of phrase, however seemingly inane, is outlined in Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

[6] This process, a configuration of positionality, is visible in other historical fields as well, upon the basis of language, region, class, race, gender, sexuality, or ideology. It is an inevitability of humans relating to each other. See L.P. Hartley, The Go-Between (London: Penguin Books, 1953).

[7] Including the meetings, exchanges, and collisions of said ideas, objects, or peoples.

[8] Barry K. Gills, and William R. Thompson, *Globalizations, global histories and historical globalities* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[9] The article also questions the European, post-Brexit 'naval gazing' of how national and international relations skew the various perspectives of globalisation and global history. See Jeremy Adelman, "What is global history now?," aeon Jeremy Adelman, *aeon* (2017), https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment.

[10] Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). The reasons for the dominance of German historiography are expanded upon in David Lindenfeld, "Review: 'Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World' by Dominic Sachsenmaier" *H-Soz-Kult* (January 2014): 1.

[11] John V. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing: A New History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

[12] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 16.

[13] Anne-Charlotte Martineau, "Overcoming Eurocentrism? Global History and the Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law," *European Journal of International Law* 25, no. 1 (February 2014): 330.

[14] For more information, see Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: The Untold History* (London: Hurst, 2020).

[15] Reclaiming histories, either from colonial narratives or classist hierarchies that suppresses other voices, has been a long endeavour that has dominated much of African and Asian history-writing,

amongst many others. In global history, this is particularly prevalent, as much of these discussions revolve around themes of travel and exchange. See Toyin Falola, *Decolonizing African Studies: Knowledge Production, Agency, and Voice* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2022). See also Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil T. Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, *Critical Race Theory: The Key writings that Formed the Movement* (New York: The New Press, 1995).

[16] Michael Erdman, "Historiographic Positionality and the Role of the Social Scientist: An Application of Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Phenomenology to the Study of History Writing in Turkey," *ESR Journal* 1, no. 1 (2016): 13.

[17] Even a 'scientific' examination of data provokes a response, in some manner. If history demanded a total removal of human insight, then it would, inevitably, become less human, as history is recorded not only through the content of the words but the hand that is writing them.

[18] Christoph Kalter refers to himself as an 'armchair' historian, in reference to his positional disconnect from the local historians in Portugal throughout his research there. See Christoph Kalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider," *Fifteen-Eighty-Four: Academic Perspectives from Cambridge University Press*, June 2, 2022, https://www.cambridgeblog.org/2022/06/the-history-of-others-or-the-historian-as-a-privileged-outsider/.

[19] Whilst positional closeness can be a strength – the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, on the intersection of race and gender springs to mind – there are also evident shortcomings as the authorial voice can 'intrude' on the subject. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99; C. Behan McCullagh, "Bias in Historical Description, Interpretation, and Explanation," *History and Theory* 39, no. 1 (2000): 39–66.

[20] Emotional investment in a topic, just as 'armchair theorizing', should not necessarily be deemed a 'wrong way' of doing history, provided the historian acknowledges their bias and situation.

[21] This phrase originated to counter bourgeois narratives of economic history with 'on the ground' perspective from workers. However, the idea has since grown to generally allude to a more 'history from below' or subaltern historical approach. See Sven Lindqvist, "Dig Where You Stand," *Oral History* 7, no. 2 (1979): 24–30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40178565. For more information on subaltern studies, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ranajit Guha, ed., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[22] Falola, *Decolonizing African Studies*.

[23] Kalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider".

[24] Kalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider".

[25] Kalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider".

[26] FKalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider".

[27] Kalter, "The history of others, or: the historian as a privileged outsider".

[28] And consequently, of positionality.

[29] Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (London: W. W. Norton, 2015), 151.

[30] Nicholas Loubere and Ivan Franceschini, "Beyond the Great Paywall: A Lesson from the Cambridge University Press China Incident," *Made In China: Chinese Labour In A Global Perspective* (July-September, 2017): 64–66, https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.032397069454328; Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They

Cast,"*The American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (April 2016): 377–402, https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/121.2.377.

[31] This is in reference to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which saw national lockdowns sweep the globe. Businesses, schools, and institutions were closed for many months and travelling between regions, as well as internationally, was prohibited or made extremely difficult.

[32] Elizabeth Leake, "(In)accessible Stories and the Contingency of History Writing," *Histories of the Present*, May 27, 2022, https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/inaccessible-stories-and-the-contingency-of-history-writing/.

[33] Leake, "(In)accessible Stories and the Contingency of History Writing".

[34] This is, in itself, a questionable venture, as bias is not only shaped by our past but our perception of present and future. Therefore, we can form a biased view of any period of human history, and bias should be examined not as absolutes, but as variations of intimate compromise.

[35] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Anne-Charlotte Martineau, "Overcoming Eurocentrism?".

[36] The importance of positionality in deconstructing Eurocentrism is that many participating historians are in fact European themselves and therefore their own positionality lends an acknowledgement of improvement and broadening that global history, and wider academia, needs to advance.

[37] Haneda Masashi, "World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians," *Voyages, Migration, and the Maritime World: On China's Global Historical Role*, ed. Clara Wing-Chung Ho, Ricardo K. S. Mak, and Yue-him Tam (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 23-36.

[38] Masashi, "World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians," 26.

[39] Masashi, "World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians," 32.

[40] Masashi, "World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians," 34.

[41] Masashi, "World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians," 34.