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'Anthropological investigation has very little interest for me': Notes from Moravian Missionaries in Australia

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Abstract: As some of the first people to spend extended amounts of time with Indigenous peoples, missionaries were well placed to provide information to European and colonial audiences on non-European peoples. Moravian missionaries arrived in Australia in the mid-nineteenth century and over the next six decades worked amongst numerous Indigenous groups in the South-Eastern part of Australia, in the interior, and in Northern Queensland. This paper will trace the contributions made by German Moravian missionaries to anthropological and ethnographical knowledge both in the colonies as well as in Germany. It will particularly focus upon the connections forged in religious and scientific networks through anthropological work. The paper contends that a unified German identity was forged through scientific work that transcended denominational boundaries. Moreover, the ability to disseminate ethnographical knowledge within secular circles, both in the colonies and in Germany, provided legitimisation to missionary work and embedded missionaries within global knowledge networks. Through examining the work of one individual missionary, Friedrich Hagenauer, the fragility of these global knowledge networks is explored.

Keywords: anthropological networks; missionaries; Moravian; nineteenth century; Germany

In February 1858, the 28 year old Moravian missionary, Friedrich August Hagenauer, arrived in Australia to begin a career amongst the Indigenous inhabitants of the Colony of Victoria that lasted five decades.¹ Hagenauer belonged to the Moravian Church, a missionary church originating from Germany that since the 1730s had established many missions around the globe in the hope of converting people to Christianity. Over the century prior to Hagenauer's arrival in Australia the church had developed a culture of collecting, detailing, describing, and categorising Indigenous peoples and the nature, minerals, flora and fauna of foreign lands. Moravian missionaries, as with missionaries in general, were some of the first European people to spend extended amounts of time with Indigenous peoples. They were therefore well placed to provide ethnographical information to European and colonial audiences and institutions, including museums and government bodies. Indeed, nineteenth century missionaries can be seen as proto-ethnologists and proto-anthropologists, providing scientific and pseudo-scientific material to 'serious' scientists in colonial, imperial, and international settings in a period when the scientific disciplines of ethnography and anthropology were just beginning to crystalise. Yet the driving reason for missionaries to work amongst Indigenous peoples was religious rather than scientific. Nevertheless, missionaries needed to be imbued with a sense of scientific curiosity to undertake their work well. They needed to enquire as to the habits of the people they worked amongst to know how best to engage with them. In order to communicate with non-Europeans, missionaries needed to be curious about their languages, and devoted time to collecting words, codifying languages, and discerning meanings. Ethnographical descriptions were also born out of a curiosity on behalf of missionaries that often went beyond the remit of their daily work. This made missionaries of great value to local and international scientific communities. Material objects were also collected, sometimes as a demonstrative action to signify the end of 'heathen' practices on mission sites, sometimes, however, as an activity of pleasure and curiosity. The collecting and documenting habits of the Moravians, as with most missionaries, were heterogeneous. Various objects were collected and different descriptions provided dependent upon whether the purpose of collecting was religious, general, scientific or governmental.

¹ This paper draws and builds upon unpublished material stemming from my 2007 Doctoral Dissertation. I received numerous grants to facilitate the research for the dissertation including from the DAAD, and travel funds from the University of Melbourne including the Ian Robertson Travel Scholarship, The Alma Hansen Scholarship and the Lizette Bentwitch Scholarship. I thank Stephan Augustin and Paul Peucker for their help whilst I was in Herrnhut, Germany, Peter Monteath, Matthew Fitzpatrick, Mark Padgham and the anonymous reviewers for their support and critic for this article.

This paper will trace some of the contributions made by German Moravian missionaries in their six decades of work amongst numerous Indigenous groups at different times on the seven mission stations that they worked on. These mission stations were often run in collaboration with other Churches and were spread over the South-Eastern part of Australia, the interior, and in Northern Queensland.² The paper will not engage in theological aspects of Moravian missiology, which since the eighteenth century had focused upon the ‘story of the cross’ (Hutton 1922, 187, see also Bintz 1979). Rather this paper will particularly focus upon the global connections forged in scientific networks through anthropological work. Missionaries were one of the best connected professions in the nineteenth century (Habermas 2008, 641), and the navigation of various connections across professional and religious realms led to multiple identities. The paper contends that a unified German identity was forged through scientific work that transcended denominational boundaries. Moreover, the ability to disseminate ethnographical knowledge within secular circles, both in the colonies and in Germany, embedded the Moravians within global knowledge networks, albeit often at the expense of academic acknowledgement of their religious work. As the focus here is on the role that missionaries played in expanding anthropological knowledge outside of their own religious sphere, it is apt to have Hagenauer as a central figure as he was a prolific collector of material pertaining to the lives of Indigenous Australians. His work is exemplary of the contributions that Moravian missionaries made to scientific discourses, especially through their local and international personal contacts. However, he is somewhat unusual amongst Moravians as he was not born into the Church rather became a member at the age of 22 after having prolonged contact with the Moravians. He was called to the Australian mission field in late 1857 and spent over 50 years of his life as a missionary with his wife in Australia. They were predominantly in Gippsland, in the Colony of Victoria. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Hagenauer would become a member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, and in this role helped introduce the so-called ‘Half-Caste Act’ of 1886 which contributed to the closure of mission stations in the colony. This paper is focused upon Hagenauer’s ethnographical contributions in terms of written and material objects. It does not delve into the contributions that Moravian missionaries made to ethnology and anthropology through photography and drawings, areas that Hagenauer was not active in, and ones that have only had limited attention from scholars.

² The mission stations and periods of Moravian activity were: Lake Boga, Victoria (1850-1856); Ebenezer, Victoria (1858-1903); Ramahyuck, Victoria (1862-1908); Lake Kopperamanna, South Australia (1866-1868); Mapoon, Queensland (1891-1919); Weipa, Queensland (1898-1919); Aurukun, Queensland (1904-1913).

Hagenauer was the most influential of all Moravian missionaries in Australia. He has received much attention for his work, a consequence of which being that he overshadows the contributions of his colleagues of both genders who also collected, wrote, drew, and photographed aspects of Indigenous culture in their times as missionaries. Female Moravians, for example, also engaged in their own forms of collecting knowledge of Indigenous Australians. However, the associated materials overwhelmingly remained in the private domain, reflecting the broader contemporaneous role of women as helpers rather than leaders of mission (Ganter and Grimshaw 2015; Jenz 2015a). Hagenauer, in his role as collector, has been described as a destroyer of Aboriginal culture (Harris 1990, 201). Although there is an element of truth in this argument, the realities were nevertheless more complex. He opposed cultural practices that he deemed ‘to be an outrage on civilization and religion’ (Hagenauer c. 1885, 33), and tolerated, if not supported, those seen not to be in conflict with Christian norms and Western civilisation. This article places Hagenauer’s collecting habits in the foreground in order to provide a broader understanding of the contributions that Moravian missionaries made to global networks, as well as the dynamic and often fragile nature of those networks.

First Impressions

In his first encounter with Australian Aborigines in the Colony of Victoria in 1858 Hagenauer expressed surprise, expecting them to be uglier than they actually were. ‘The children were’, he exclaimed, ‘even pretty’ (Periodical Accounts 1858, 119). Hagenauer’s negative preconceptions of Aborigines can be understood in the context of the lack of success that Moravians, as well as other German missionary groups, had had in Australia up until the first half of the nineteenth century. Missionaries in disparate spaces across the continent had failed in their attempts to convert Aborigines, leading people to assume that the work to convert and civilise Aborigines was a very difficult, if not an impossible, task. The first Moravian mission in Australia, at Lake Boga in the Colony of Victoria, had also been a failure. Given the lack of success, the trope of the degraded heathen abounded within missionary texts, serving as both a call for material and spiritual support from the home-base as well as a warning of the difficulty of the task ahead. Initial descriptions of Aborigines by other Moravians followed Hagenauer’s tone. Adolf Hartmann, for example, expected in 1864 to find an ‘incredible ugliness’ in the Aborigines at the Ebenezer mission station near Lake Hindmarsh in the North

West of Victoria, and expected to have to ‘compose himself to come close to these beings’, and was pleasantly surprised by his first impression (Missionsblatt September 1864, 170). A year later Gottlieb Meissel wrote of his negative expectations of the state of Aborigines and his subsequent surprise at the sights he encountered at Ebenezer (Jensz 2010, 162). When a further Moravian mission was established in Queensland on the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1891, similar negative descriptions were disseminated in Moravian publications as an indication of the difficult work that lay before the missionaries (Periodical Accounts 1891, 376-377).

The importance of such negative images was bound up with the notion of the ability of Christianity to ‘raise’ these people in spiritual, material, physical, cultural and intellectual terms. That is, a clear distinction between Christianised (or civilised) and heathen (or uncivilised) was necessary in order to perceive and portray spiritual change. Differences between ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’ Aborigines were also constructed by anthropologists who wished to capture and convey images of the pre-contact Aborigines in a hope to tap into their essential nature prior to either having become influenced by Western customs, culture, or language, or having died out as a consequence of their interactions with Westerners (Jensz 2015b). Generally speaking, missionaries were interested in original states as a reference against which to measure how far Aborigines had ‘risen’, whilst anthropologists focused upon original states in order to capture the ‘essence’ of a (dying) ‘race’. Both groups shared the same curiosity in capturing aspects of the lives of Indigenous peoples, albeit for different ends.

Linguistic Collections

Hagenauer, as with his colleagues, was a curious man who used his religious, political and scientific connections to disseminate knowledge within the colonies and beyond. The Moravian Church had a long tradition of collecting, recording, and describing aspects of the lives and cultures of the people they worked amongst, and as such, Hagenauer sat within a long historical tradition (Jensz 2012a; Nipper 2003). In colonial Victoria, Hagenauer was an informant of Robert Brough Smyth, the Secretary to the Board of the Protection of the Aborigines (BPA). For his 1878 two-volume book *The Aborigines of Victoria* Smyth drew upon various sources from across the colony including Hagenauer, who had accumulated extensive knowledge in his 15 years of experience working amongst various groups of Aborigines on the Ramahyuck mission in Gippsland (Smyth 1878a; Smyth 1878b). At

Ebenezer, Hartmann provided Aboriginal names of native plants which had been examined and named by the government botanist Ferdinand von Mueller (Smyth 1878b, 172–3). German scientific circles applauded the publication of *The Aborigines of Victoria*, as it was seen to document the traits and customs of a ‘dying race’ (Behm 1880, 361). The British scientific periodical *Nature* lauded the publication as an “epoch-making” event in the progress of ethnological studies’ (Keane 1879, 549). Hagenauer demonstrated his willingness to contribute to a book he believed would be well received, providing information to Smyth, including word-lists and information on various languages.³ He stated in 1876 that: ‘I shall be glad to give you any information in any power whenever you need it’.⁴ Smyth used Hagenauer’s material in his book, and repeated almost verbatim his comments on the dynamics of the language and his finding that there were generally two words to express the same thing in the languages of Gippsland (Smyth 1878b, 44).

The collaboration between missionaries and linguists was a natural partnership given that language collection was one of the primary tasks of missionaries who needed both to find ways to converse with the people they worked amongst and also to find suitable terms for the translation of the Gospel into local languages. There were no dictionaries for languages spoken in the locations in which the Moravians worked in Australia, and their work contributed to the codifying and collecting of Indigenous languages. This linguistic work was often an arduous task as initially both missionaries and Aborigines had only a rudimentary grasp of their common language, English. In his book, Smyth made particular note of the help provided to him by missionaries, lauding the ‘papers contributed by the Rev. John Bulmer, of Lake Tyers in Gippsland, the Rev. A. Hartmann and the Rev. F. W. Spieseke, of Lake Hindmarsh, Mr. Joseph Parker, of the Loddon, and the Rev. F.A. Hagenauer, of Lake Wellington in Gippsland’ which he praised as being ‘of great value’ (Smyth 1878b, 2). Bulmer noted in one of his submissions to Smyth’s book: ‘I have found no words exactly to express mercy, justice, faith, and other words which it is so necessary for Missionaries to know’ (Smyth 1878b, 94-95), a comment which both demonstrates the difficulties connected to linguistic work and also the centrality of linguistic work for religious work.

³ Hagenauer to Smyth, 11 September 1876, Hagenauer’s Letterbook, Manuscript (MS) 3343, National Library of Australia (NLA), Canberra, p. 181-184.

⁴ Hagenauer to Mr Smyth [sic], 24 August 1876 MS 3343, NLA, p. 173.

Within the Victorian context, Moravian missionaries gradually phased out the use of Indigenous languages in religious services and schools and replaced them with English. This was at odds with the global practice of the Moravian Church of utilizing local languages in mission fields (Jensz 2009a). In colonial Victoria, Hartmann reasoned that no Aboriginal languages had been printed due to the ‘poverty of [their] language for abstract ideas’, with Indigenous languages seen redundant in the colonial setting in which Indigenous peoples were expected to assimilate.⁵ Hagenauer was more pragmatic. He suggested that because the mission increasingly became a place where the ‘remnants of various tribes all speaking different *patois*’ congregated, a common language was needed, which was English (The Queenslander, 26 July 1890, 159). Moreover, to him the acquisition of English was beneficial not only for external communication, but also for inner edification through the ‘blessings of English literature’ (Hagenauer c.1885, 34).

A different situation was found in Northern Queensland where the linguistic work of the Moravian missionary Nicolas Hey for the Nggerikudi language was revised and edited by Walter E. Roth, the Northern Protector of Aboriginals in Queensland. Roth was himself a prolific collector, relying upon missionaries to provide detail as well as opportunities whilst he was on official tours of Northern Queensland. His networks, as with those of Hagenauer, stretched beyond colonial and continental boundaries (Kahn 2008). Hey’s booklet was one of a series of 18 North Queensland Ethnography Bulletins which was initiated by Roth and presented to both houses of Parliament in 1903 (Hey 1903). In the Preface Hey justified the publication of the booklet, despite his imperfect knowledge of it, ‘on the grounds that the aboriginals are fast disappearing, and that the major portion of the continent is still a *terra incognita* to the philologist’ (Hey 1903, 2). In this case, language collection reflected common beliefs in the need to record before such opportunity was forever lost.

Much proficiency in Indigenous languages in Victoria had already been lost by the 1870s. This led Hagenauer to complain to Smyth that he was not able to collect all the information that Smyth had asked for, for when men were asked to provide grammatical variations for words they, ‘always changed the whole words so much that it could not be used and finally stat[ed] that the old people only knew this, which was of course only an excuse.’⁶ The

⁵ 4. Notes and Other Documentation, 21. Personal notebook of Adolph Hartmann, 1872, no pagination, Personal Papers Hartmann John Adolphus Hieronymus (PP HJAH), Moravian Archives Bethlehem, Pa, USA [MAB].

⁶ Hagenauer to Brough Smyth, 1876, 11 September, MS 3343, NLA, p. 183.

collection of words is contingent upon the circulation of knowledge within public spheres, with Hagenauer's dismissive comments showing little cultural sensitivity. Nevertheless, he, as well as his Moravian colleagues, collected, recorded and shared their linguistic findings amongst themselves, missionaries from other groups, as well as interested linguists and anthropologists outside of their religious spheres. The collection of languages is closely tied to ethnography, as languages contain cultural meaning, and as such it is difficult to establish a firm line between philological and ethnographical collections. In sharing their knowledge with missionaries outside of their own denomination, Moravians demonstrated their willingness to work within broader Protestant circles to promote Christian knowledge. In sharing their knowledge outside of religious circles, Moravians demonstrated their awareness of the significance of their work for contemporary science.

German Networks

Hagenauer moved in multiple circles, reflecting his various loyalties to culture, politics, and nation—a propensity common within German-Australian networks of the time (Fischer 1989). One community in which he was well embedded, was the German-speaking community of the Colony of Victoria. His membership of the *Detusche Verein von Victoria* connected him into a broad network of influential Germans in a supra-denominational environment (Home et al. 2002a, 700-704). In actively engaging within German-speaking networks, Hagenauer demonstrated his cultural and scientific loyalties to Germany. One particularly fruitful relationship for forging international scientific connections was the friendship between Hagenauer and the German-born botanist Ferdinand von Mueller, who he regarded as a 'dear old friend'.⁷ Mueller was a prominent figure in nineteenth century colonial Melbourne, being well known for his scientific, cultural and humanitarian undertakings, and his work as the colonial botanist (Voigt n.d.; McMullen 1997, 327). In their analysis of Mueller's motivations to collect, the editors of his correspondence suggest that Mueller was 'driven by a simple desire to add to the store of human knowledge' (Home et al. 2002a, 32). This seems also to have been the motivation of Hagenauer in his collection of flora and fauna of Australia. In 1886, for example, Hagenauer, through the efforts of unnamed Aborigines on the mission station, was able to locate the nest of a platypus with mother and two newly hatched young.

⁷ Hagenauer to Mr. Mac Donald, Ramahyuck, 28 May 1878, Hagenauer Letterbook, MS 3343, NLA, 732.

This was an exciting scientific discovery, as it was only two years prior that W.H. Caldwell had confirmed that the platypus belonged to the Monotremata order, that is, was an egg-laying mammal. Hagenauer sent specimens of platypuses to the Director of the Zoological Gardens, Albert Alexander Le Souëf, who himself had been educated in a Moravian school in Neuwied, Germany (McEvey 1974/2016). Hagenauer instructed Mueller in a letter that he should request Le Souëf to give to him ‘the nest with the mother and one young one for sending it to Professor Owen’, who was the Director of the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, London (Home et al. 2002b, 445-447). Hagenauer had taken ‘a deep interest’ in platypuses some 25 years previously, when Owen, through the efforts of Mueller, had classified the platypuses as ‘Vivimannalia’. Hagenauer’s interest in platypuses was renewed at Caldwell’s discovery. He noted that he himself was not ‘sufficiently at home in the Natural Science’ and relied upon Indigenous knowledge to find the nest, and noted implicitly the contributions of his Aboriginal helpers in declaring that ‘we discovered nest’ and a few days later ‘we found’ another nest (Home et al. 2002b, 446). Owen accordingly noted that science was indebted to Hagenauer for the acquisition that was achieved through his ‘influence with the natives’ (Home et al. 2002b, 446 fn.6). This episode is informative of how Hagenauer’s broader on-going intellectual curiosity contributed to scientific debates. However, it must be noted that the collection of zoological specimens was a rational activity devoid of conflicting emotions that may otherwise have arisen in Hagenauer, as explored below in relation to some of his anthropological writings. On a broader level it is informative of how missionaries used their local contacts to mediate specific local Indigenous knowledge within international scientific circles, and how such efforts were appreciated by scientists. It is also indicative of the silencing of individuals, as no contacts were named, rather homogenised in the use of collective pronouns.

Connections to Charlies Darwin and their Reverberations

Owen was not the only eminent scientist that Hagenauer had access to through von Mueller’s wide international scientific network. Through von Mueller, Hagenauer also became a correspondent of Charles Darwin (Jensz 2009b). Darwin used his connections with von Mueller to collect material for his writings. For his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (printed in 1872), Darwin used five broad sources including infants, the insane, responses to untitled photographs of various facial expression, works of art, and

finally, ‘races of mankind, especially ... those who have associated but little with Europeans’ (Darwin 1872, 13–15). The latter group was included in order to question the universality of the expression of human emotions. Through his extensive scientific contacts, Darwin was able to obtain information from Australia, New Zealand, Borneo, China, India, Africa and America. Darwin requested information from both Mueller and Robert Brough Smyth of the BPA, both of whom forwarded their requests to Hagenauer, whose responses were included in part in Darwin’s book.

Hagenauer’s connection with Darwin reverberated in his later collecting practices, as evinced by his description of a wooden ‘Primitive figure with flappers [sic] and lizard-head’⁸ that he collected for the *Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut*, the ethnographical museum that houses objects collected by Moravian missionaries (Nippa 2003). Hagenauer’s description of the figure was: ‘Aborigines’s [sic] idea about evolution (the missing connecting link in the Darwinian sense). Human figure.’⁹ This explicit mention of evolutionary theory within missionary collecting practices is indeed noteworthy and demonstrates Hagenauer’s scientific literacy. A similar figure is found in the *Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden*, which was donated by Professor Dr. Arthur Baessler, the South-Seas curator of the *Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin*. As Baessler refers to other objects that he had obtained from Hagenauer, and as the two carved figures are very similar, it is possible that this object was collected by Hagenauer. The description of the object is: ‘71. Is a female figure carved by an Australian, who himself does not want to believe in civilisation; it is meant to show a woman, whom he had loved (yet it is nevertheless carved with a knife).’¹⁰ Baessler’s description hints at the contradictory attitudes that Aborigines held towards ‘civilisation’, on the one hand not believing in it, and on the other utilising objects associated with it.

Almost eighty years later the object would be described as ‘*vermutlich Mensch-Tier-Symbolik*’ [presumably human-animal-symbol] (Guhr and Kästner 1976, Plate 3), which was

⁸ ‘Victoria’, Catalogue entry, Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut. Comment from UEI: Urmenschliche Gestalt mit flappers [sic] u. Eidechsenkopf. Idee der Eingeborenen über Evolution. Ein Verbindungsglied á la Darwin. This paragraph of the article draws upon unpublished aspects of Jenz 2007.

⁹ List to Bequeath objects to Herrnhut museum and Nieske museum by F.A. Hagenauer. No date. Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut. File No. 20. German original: Idee der Eingeborenen über Evolution (das fehlende Verbindungs Glied nach Darwinischen Weise). Menschliche Gestalt.

¹⁰ Baessler to Dresden court, Berlin, 1894, 9 November. 6 pages. German. Dresden Völkerkunde Museum: Akten of Sammlers [B]: German original: 71. ist eine weibliche Figur von einem Australien geschnitzt, da sich nicht an Civilisation gewöhnen wollte; es soll eine Frau dastellen [sic], die er geliebt hatte (ist jedoch schon mit Messer geschnitzt). [new number 19856].

a different description than either Hagenauer or Baessler had given. Hagenauer's text does not ascribe the name of the carver, however, at a later date the following was added: 'Der alte Philip u. sehr alte Jack hat [sic] dieses gemacht [old Philip and very old Jack made this].'¹¹ The Museum of Victoria has suggested that these figures were carved by Bullock Jack, who resided at Coranderrk (Museum Victoria 2004, 84). This corroborates another description of the object that is found within the reminiscences of a neighbouring settler of the mission, in which it is stated: 'Bullock Jack... in a fit of rage he had murdered his first wife, and could find no candidate for a second. So he carved wooden images of women and called these his wives.'¹² Bullock Jack was also known as Jack Narrowan and was a contemporary of William Barak, who himself was a well-known painter and leader of the Kurnai (Nippa 2003, 96–97). Narrowan, it is claimed, carved the figures as part of an Aboriginal cottage industry to supply the Europeans with Indigenous objects, and thus these figures were created for the pleasure of Europeans and sold for a profit (Nippa 2003, 96–97). What is of interest here is how the collecting habits of Moravian missionaries and their local and international partners catapulted such objects into international scientific circles that were thick with their own webs of personal connections.

Professional Help and Personal Interest

As the above indicates, Hagenauer was an avid collector. He collected material privately for his collection of curiosities at Ramahyuck (Hagenauer c.1885, 47). He collected for the Moravian Church and sent material objects for the *Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut*, including spears and shields, as well as kangaroos, koalas, black swans, and snake-skins.¹³ He also collected for secular German museums. His collecting habits were known outside religious circles, and honoured with positions such as that of *Bevollmächtigte* [authorised representative] of the *Museum für Völkerkunde Leipzig*, the title of which he received on 2 June, 1890 – being one of only five people in Australia to have been honoured with this position before 1901 (*Zwanzigster Bericht des Museums für Völkerkunde in Leipzig, 1882 1883*). This honorary position was steeped in prestige, its purpose being 'to advertise for new members for the museum, to raise and receive gifts of money and of ethnographical objects

¹¹ List to Bequeath objects to Herrnhut museum and Nieske museum by F.A. Hagenauer. No date. *Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut*. File No. 20.

¹² *Notes on Gippsland history*. Disher notes (post 1945). Strathfieldsaye Estate Collection 76/13, The University of Melbourne Archives. p. 22.

¹³ For example, catalogue numbers from the book *Catalogue of the Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut*; 3964 (black swan), 5382 (kangaroo), 2087 (koala), and 3975 (snake skin collected and donated by F.A. Hagenauer, no date).

for the furtherment and enlargement of the museum' (*Erster Bericht des Museums für Völkerkunde in Leipzig, 1873* 1874, 7). Such honorary titles underscore Hagenauer's own claims of being a person willing to assist 'Friends of Ethnology in word and deed.'¹⁴ Nevertheless, he was often disappointed when ethnologists undertook activities that did not treat Christian Indigenous peoples with sufficient dignity. He implied as much in his veiled negative comments when the learned Russian ethnographer and natural scientist Baron von Mikoluko (Maclean) visited Ramahyuck in 1881.¹⁵

For Hagenauer, the description of the 'heathen' habits of Aboriginal people was only important as a measure of how far these people had been, or could be, transformed through the Christian message. This he made explicit during his 1885 exploratory journey to North Queensland, undertaken with the aim of establishing further mission stations. Although he was well placed to provide anthropological data on peoples who had not had much contact with white settlers, he noted that he wished 'to make a few remarks on some of their laws and customs, but of course, without going into any details as that really is a field for anthropological investigation, and has very little interest for me' (Hagenauer c.1885, 30).

Such comments demonstrate Hagenauer's tolerance of anthropological work only to the extent that he needed it, or to the extent that it did not harm those people already converted to Christianity. Yet, in his time at Ebenezer Hagenauer was adopted by a man called Ngarrowan (known also as old Jimmy), with this adoption allowing him to participate in initiation rites, and making him a participant-observer (Hagenauer c.1885, 31). His Christian disposition and prudish nature were an integral aspect of his person (Cruickshank 2009, 95). They were so ingrained that he could not provide detailed information on the initiation rites he heard about in North Queensland writing that the 'immorality of that act is so great that I could not say a single word on the subject' (Hagenauer c.1885, 32). He declared that 'the sooner these awful ceremonies are done away with the better it will be for the poor creatures, and every effort should be made to counteract these practices both for the sake of humanity and civilization' (Hagenauer c.1885, 32–33). This episode points more broadly to the limited usefulness of missionaries to ethnography when the subject matter clashed with their religious, moral, or sexual norms.

¹⁴ Hagenauer to Connor, 20 June 1881, Hagenauer's Letterbook, MS 3343, NLA.

¹⁵ Hagenauer to Connor, 20 June 1881, Hagenauer's Letterbook, MS 3343, NLA.

Hagenauer wrote an official report to the Premier of Queensland on his 1885 journey to the North of Queensland in which he promoted his view for missionary and governmental cooperation in engaging Indigenous people in the sugar industry (Hagenauer c.1885, 46). Missionaries often went upon journeys of exploration, with this one being of particular interest as it was to parts of Australia where ‘wild’ Aborigines still lived, in contrast to the ‘civilised’ Aborigines of the southern colonies. Hagenauer’s description of this journey also reached a general public through being serialised in nine parts in the *Gippsland Times* from September until November 1885,¹⁶ with a booklet of the public report published in that year. According to the *Gippsland Times*, ‘the story of the journey will be also be published throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain, Germany and America at least’ (The *Gippsland Times*, Friday, November 6 1885, 3). This report is steeped in missionary rhetoric, nevertheless it reaches out to scientists, political economists and scholars of law in a rhetorical effort to help explain the customs and states of Indigenous peoples, indicating that Hagenauer was aware of the limitations of his own knowledge as well as his understanding of anthropological and general scientific methods, aims, and practices. For example, on first meeting a ‘large number of savages’ Hagenauer’s comments reflect his tender hope for salvation of these people through the grace of God. He also:

wished during these days that some of my scientific, anthropological, and also some of my missionary friends could be with us, for the former could certainly find a very great deal of first-class and direct reliable information unmixed with any small additions from white people, but adopted by the blacks elsewhere, and as to the latter, I am convinced that my impressions stated above would have become those of all the friends of missions to the poor heathen (Hagenauer c. 1885, 28).

In this extract, as in other instances of his writings, the complementary roles of religion and science are underscored when they work together in the civilising mission.

¹⁶ See: ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland,’ *Gippsland Times*, Monday 7 September 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part II,’ *Gippsland Times*, Wed. 9 Sept 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part III,’ *Gippsland Times*, Wed 16 September 1885, 3-4; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part IV,’ *Gippsland Times*, Friday 25 September 1885, 3-4; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part V,’ *Gippsland Times*, Wed 30 September 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part VI,’ *Gippsland Times*, Friday 9 October 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part VII,’ *Gippsland Times*, Monday 19 October, 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part VIII,’ *Gippsland Times*, Wednesday 4 November 1885, 3; ‘The Rev. F.A. Hagenauer’s Visit to North Queensland, Part IX Concluded,’ *Gippsland Times*, Friday 6 November 1865, 4.

Scientific Use of Missionary Reports

Hagenauer's detailed descriptions of the state of Aboriginal people in his reports from his journey to Queensland had political consequences in that they contributed to the establishment of Aboriginal reserves for missions (Cruikshank and Grimshaw 2010). Other reports of Moravian missionaries' journeys in Australia contributed to scientific debates, such as missionary contributions to the *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt* (*Mittheilungen*), the pre-eminent German geographical publications of the time. The Moravians' collaboration with the scientific journal was in line with their broader tradition of actively engaging in scientific debates and providing material of interest to scientific and academic periodicals as well as ethnographical museums. The *Mittheilungen* utilised not only Moravian reports, but reports from many other missionary groups, demonstrating the broader usefulness of missionary reporting for the international scientific community. Within Australia, Mueller himself was a correspondent of the editor of the *Mittheilungen*, August Petermann, sending him various other missionary travel texts that contained scientific information beyond the shores of Australia (Voigt n.d., 111). Moravian missionaries in Australia also contributed to the *Mittheilungen*, yet their reports were stripped of their religious connotations to become messages for secular science.

From the eighteenth century Moravian missionaries had mixed the genres of travel narratives and mission histories within their writings. They were praised in the secular press for their scientific observations and descriptions, yet their religious descriptions were decried as emotive and irrational (Jensz 2012b, 468). The perceived divisions between emotive religious and reasoned scientific descriptions deepened during the course of the nineteenth century as the professionalisation of scientific study led to the marginalisation of missionaries from scientific circles, including ethnography (Harries 2005). By the end of the nineteenth century, scientific journals became increasingly sceptical about missionaries' ability to provide material free from ideology (Higham 2003).

The Australian Moravians' contribution to the *Mittheilungen* was a report on a missionary journey to the interior of Australia on their way to establish a mission at Lake Kopperamanna, South Australia, in 1866. This contributed within the *Mittheilungen* to a broader discussion as to the habitual and economic nature of the interior of Australia dating back to the 1850s. After the failed Burke and Wills expedition in 1860–61 missionary groups, including the

Moravians, took an active interest in the conversion of Indigenous peoples in the interior, with scientific journals utilising missionary reports for their own aims. The Moravians provided the editor of the *Mittheilungen* with excerpts from their missionary periodical, the *Missionsblatt*, as well as reports, diagrams and maps especially drawn for the *Mittheilungen*. Within the pages of the *Mittheilungen*, the Moravians were subsumed under the rubric of ‘German missionaries’, and thus their national identity was privileged above their confessional or denominational identities, in keeping with the latent nationalistic and patriotic ideals evident in the periodical.

The focus of the ten-paged article entitled ‘A river delta in the Centre of Australia’ was hydrological observations, complimented by short ethnographical observations, included on the marriage customs of the Dieri, as well as information on the zoology, botany and geography of the centre. Within the first-person account the broad range of material described reflected the general, rather than specific, scientific expertise of the missionaries. The significance for science lay in the confirmation of Howitt’s hypothesis that Cooper Creek was part of a larger hydraulic system (*Mittheilungen* 1867, 440). And, as the account was focused upon the scientific, rather than the religious, it omitted explicit reference to the primary aim of the missionaries to convert Aborigines to Christianity, and portrayed missionaries as handmaidens of science rather than of God.

A similar process occurred in social Darwinist debates centred on the intellectual capacities of Aborigines. In the 1870s, the Aboriginal school children at the Ramahyuck mission station received the highest marks possible in the colonial examination for a number of years running. The scientific world was taken by this seemingly remarkable achievement for a group of children which according to contemporary views were supposed to be of low intelligence. The ripples caused by this announcement reached far and wide. However, reporting within the scientific community erased mention of the missionary engagement in the school. Drawing on the 1889 *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales* the venerated British periodical *Nature* reported on the insight of the Reverend John Mathew of Coburg, near Melbourne, as to both the origins and intellectual abilities of Aborigines, the latter of which, Mathew was quoted as stating, were ‘anything but despicable’ (*Nature* 1890, 186). To support his thesis, he explicitly referred to the longitudinally excellent results from the ‘aboriginal school at Ramahyuck.’ ‘But,’ Mathew suggested, ‘the limit of the native’s range of mental development is soon reached; and he has

an inherent aversion to application' (Nature 1890, 186). Given that Matthew's paper was 115 pages in length, the direct quotation of the school results at Ramahyuck indicates the importance of this information for contemporaneous scientific discourse (Mathews 1889, 335–449).

The British social Darwinist Benjamin Kidd was also suitably impressed by the examination results and used them as evidence that the intellectual capacity of 'lower' or 'inferior races' was equal to that of the 'civilised' races. The example from Ramahyuck contributed to his argument that the white race possessed no inherent intellectual superiority. His influential 1894 'Social Evolution' received much popular attention, and led to Kidd becoming an 'instant celebrity' (Crook 1984, 1). The historian D.J. Crook has noted that Kidd's book was well received by the public and was quoted in church services, yet it also received much criticism from scientists, religious leaders, and academics, who were all offended in various ways by Kidd's methods and theoretical constructs (Crook 1984, 3). One critic of Kidd was J.E. Hutton, a member of the Moravian Church, who fervently disagreed with Kidd's conclusions that the examination results reflected the aptitude of the children, rather suggested that their 'wonderful progress ... may have been due, not to their great intellectual ability, but rather to the exceptional zeal of their teachers', who were 'inspired by love' rather than a salary (Hutton 1922, 295). The irony in this remark is that at that time the teacher at Ramahyuck was an employee of the Education Department. Hutton's concluding comments on Kidd's argument were concessionary to Kidd, yet appallingly dismissive towards the abilities of Aboriginal people. He stated: 'To some extent, however, Mr. Kidd was right. At Ramahyuck the missionaries proved that, given a fair opportunity, the Papus were not quite as stupid as the colonists had previously imagined' (Hutton 1922, 295). As this debate indicates, the results of Moravian missionary work could be taken up by anthropologists in ways that conflicted with Moravian's own self-perceptions, and ways which sometimes frustrated or even angered Moravians. Whether Aborigines may have responded similarly to Moravians recording or utilizing knowledge about them remains undocumented.

Conclusion

Missionaries provided important information for anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists, zoologists, botanists, geologists and many other scientists in the nineteenth century. Given their close proximity to Indigenous peoples over long periods and their curiosity for their

customs, languages, and habits, missionaries acquired knowledge that was not so easily accessible to the transient collector. The dissemination of this knowledge to the international scientific community was contingent upon personal networks. As such, the ethnographical and anthropological work of female missionaries in Australia did not circulate in international circles, rather remained in the private sphere, and still awaits detailed examination. As elucidated here, Hagenauer was a well-connected man who used, and was used, by his local and international connections to contribute to scientific knowledge. The networks formed by these connections were fragile, resting upon personal relations, hampered by distance, and constrained by the information that missionaries were willing to collect or pass on. As with many of his German-speaking peers, Hagenauer had multiple loyalties, being culturally loyal to Germany, politically loyal to the British crown, and maintaining a national loyalty to Australia (Fischer 1989, 91). His ultimate loyalty, however, was to religion, beyond denominational or political boundaries. This affected his ability to be useful to anthropology and ethnology insofar as religion always took precedence over science. Indeed, he freely admitted that he was willing to help friends of anthropology, however, was not personally interested in the field of study. Nevertheless, his contributions to science—as with those of his Moravian peers—were often stripped of their religious connotations, and were internationally recognised (particularly in Germany), with scientific circles utilising missionaries as proto-ethnologists and handmaidens of science. Yet, perhaps more telling is not how Moravian missionaries contributed to anthropology, rather how anthropology (and other sciences) used the work of missionaries to their own ends, coming to conclusions that furthered the development of the discipline and added to the pool of human knowledge whilst ignoring the religious motivations and components of missionary work that were necessary for the production of such knowledge.

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