



Inter- twined

150 Years of Finnish-Namibian Relations

HISTORIES

Marjo Kaartinen, Leila Koivunen & Napandulwe Shiweda (eds.)

INTERTWINED
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Finland-Namibia
150 years of friendship
#FinNam150

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Marjo Kaartinen, Leila Koivunen &
Napandulwe Shiweda

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To the Reader

Marjo Kaartinen, Leila Koivunen and Napandulwe Shiweda

In July 1870, 150 years ago, after a long and tedious journey, the first Finnish missionaries arrived at their new missionary field in Owambo in what is now northern Namibia. This marked the beginning of an intricate relationship between Finns and Aawambo. The relations of these two people, one from the very far North, the other from the far South, formed into a remarkable and unique bond, which has not always been unproblematic but has always been intense. This has especially been the case in past decades, leading to the long-sought independence of Namibia in 1990.

These relations have resulted in many fascinating cultural phenomena, which we often forget to attribute to the cultural interactions that took place in the past. Thus, even in today's Namibia, Finnish influence can be recognized, for example, in the first names of many people. In Finland, the very image of Africa as a continent is strongly built upon the multitude of reports, books and interviews concerning the Aawambo.

Some two years ago, the then rector of the University of Turku, Kalervo Väänänen, returned from a journey to Namibia with the objective of instigating a historical project on these intriguing relations. After meeting with the representatives of the University of Namibia (UNAM), it was agreed that a collaborative project on the history of the relations of the two countries would be carried out. This book is the fruit of this initiative.

This book brings together a selection of essays by Finnish and Namibian scholars to shed light on the partly shared histories of the Finnish and Namibian people. Although the history of Finnish-Namibian relations has previously been examined in both countries, scholars in Namibia and Finland have mostly worked in isolation from each other. This collection of essays seeks to combine different perspectives to shed light on some questions and phenomena that bring these people and their histories together.

This volume by no means claims to offer a complete history of the relations, but rather presents a selection of various perspectives that introduce some recent scholarship to the reader. The short essays portray research conducted in Namibia and Finland by scholars of different backgrounds; mostly historians, but also archivists and records managers, fashion and textile designers, sociolinguists, cultural anthropologists and others. The examples show many points of shared interest. Therefore, the aim of this collection of essays is also to encourage future scholarly collaboration between Finns and Namibians. It is evident that by combining different linguistic skills and cultural knowledge and by making available previous research and materials located in both countries it is possible to reach a new level of understanding of our entangled histories.

To our Finnish readers we would especially like to explain some of our editorial decisions. We have decided to call what in Finland was historically termed Ovamboland (“Ambomaa”) as Owambo, to follow the common modern practice. This loses the colonial burden of the historical term. The singular form of Owambo people used is Owambo, in plural Aawambo. In a similar vein, Finnish first names are used in their Finnish form. Thus, Martin Rautanen is referred to as Martti Rautanen and so on.

Warm thanks are due to a number of people in Finland and Namibia who have contributed to making this book possible. Thanks to Rector Emeritus Kalervo Väänänen, everyone at the Embassy of Finland in Windhoek, Ms. Essi Huuhka, Dr. Robert Collis, Prof. Kenneth Matengu, Prof. Frednard Gideon, Prof. Lazarus Hangula, Dr. Martha Akawa-Shikufa, Dr. Kletus Likuwa, Dr. Vilho Shigwedha, Prof. Jekura Kavari, Dr. Romanus Shivoro, Mr. Evaristus Evaristus, Ms. Saara Kamati, Ms. Hendrina Jeremia and Mr. Sam Shaanika.

And finally, we would like to thank all our authors for their generosity of spirit in sharing their knowledge and for participating in this book project.

Turku and Windhoek, October 2019,
The editors

Behind the Memory of the Finnish Missionary in Namibia

Kim Groop

The image of the European mission in Africa has often been overshadowed by Europe's political and colonial past. This also holds true in the case of Namibia. For instance, the German Lutheran missionaries from the Rhenish Missionary Society will be remembered for the most part in relation to German colonialism. The Finnish missionaries from the Finnish Missionary Society (today the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission) have also been accused of using power in northern Owambo. Indeed, Andimba Toivo ya Toivo once mockingly stated that "you Finns colonized us". However, more commonly the Finnish missionaries have been remembered in relation to their dissociation from German, British and South African colonial agendas. In Aawambo cultural memory, the Finns are (rightly or wrongly) remembered as having been invited, and as friends against hostile surroundings and as those who "became a part of society". In some of my earlier research, I have studied the work of the Finnish Missionary Society in Owambo in northern Namibia, predominantly from a cultural memory perspective. I have thus taken particular interest in older Finnish work, which no one can remember in person, but of which stories are still told and retold, and which is communicated through various culture carriers such as mission buildings and mission related memorials, literature, hymns and so on. In this essay, I would like to "go behind" some of these memories. I wish to draw attention to the fact that there were a number of favorable societal and political circumstances in and around Owambo, and in particular the Ondonga Kingdom, that has favored a positive memory of the Finnish work.

Remembering the Helping Hand

The Owambo kings and chiefs wanted the missionaries to provide them with goods and services, such as weapons and ammunition, in order to help them

compete with their adversaries. They also sought alcohol and tobacco. In this respect, the missionaries may have been a disappointment to the Owambo leaders. The early missionaries provided the chiefs with a number of guns, but missionary trading policy did not permit large-scale trading. They gave them tobacco, but persistently refused to provide them with alcohol. However, the missionaries were valuable in other ways. For instance, they provided the kings and chiefs with healthcare and medicine. However, more importantly, they served as mediators between, on the one hand, the Owambo leaders and, on the other hand, the colonial administration and various European agents visiting Owambo. Indeed, the missionaries may have been influenced by German culture and German protestant ideas, but they were still against the idea of a German military presence in what they regarded as their domain. Because of Finnish advice to the Owambo leaders, Owambo largely remained a peaceful region during the era of German sovereignty and the colonial government found no reason to station troops further into Owambo than at Namutoni, where a fort was built. During British, and later South African rule, after World War I, this relative isolation would change. Owambo would in due time become a war zone between white apartheid rule and the SWAPO liberation movement. However, by this time, the Ondonga kings and some other Owambo chiefs were already Christians and the Finnish missionaries had established a good reputation.

While the Finns have sometimes been criticized for their intolerant attitude towards parts of the local culture, many Aawambo are rather unsentimental as regards to old culture, which they view as “a thing of the past”. There is generally a sense in northern Owambo that Finland helped Namibia in terms of human development. This development included schools, hospitals and church work, as well as the development of Owambo grammar and writing. It also indirectly included the establishment of postal services, telecommunication and roads to northern Owambo. In an interview with Nangolo Mbumba, in 2016, who is currently the Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, he stressed the importance of developmental aspects in the work of the missionaries. He also flagged the support that he and other politically-active church members felt that they obtained during the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1990. Mbumba even credited Finnish missionary work for national independence in 1990. Due to their active participation in the liberation struggle, the Aawambo would experience colonization and violence very concretely and in negative



Martti Rautanen and other mission workers visiting the king's house.
Photograph: Hannu Haahti (1911). The Finnish Heritage Agency.

terms. This experience, along with a past of poverty, sickness and internal unrest, provides a vivid backdrop against which the Finnish developmental efforts and the Christian faith is viewed today. In the midst of political tension, cultural change and the longing for development, the missionaries appeared as friends and reliable (though not always powerful) allies.

Transcultural Dimensions on Cultural Memory

I would like to draw attention to the hybridity of the missionary encounter, and, by extension, its legacy. The Finnish missionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from diverse cultural settings and language groups. Most were Finnish speakers, others spoke Swedish, and some spoke both languages. The field leader, Martti Rautanen, who was born close to St. Petersburg in Russia, spoke Finnish and Russian. He also learned to speak many other languages in Africa. Moreover, he married Anna Friederike Kleinschmidt, the daughter of a German missionary, whose grandmother came from the Nama ethnic group, and he wrote his diary in German. The missionaries were Lutherans, but most of them were also influenced by Pietism. In terms of specific doctrine, they considered the evangelical and Pietist theologian Gustav Warneck to be an authority and his influential book *Evangelische Missionslehre* was a well-read book in Finnish missionary circles. Although Pietism has often been criticized for its individualistic tendencies, and, consequently, of a certain isolation from the “fallen world”, it can also be regarded as facilitating a highly transcultural environment if studied, for instance, through its global reach and transfusion. Warneck, for example, did not view Western culture as crucial to Christianity. In line with this, it was natural for the Finnish missionaries to ally themselves with the Ondonga kings and acknowledge them as their rulers even before they had become Christians. Martti Rautanen called Kambonde kaNankwaya (who died in 1883), for instance, “our king” and “my friend”, though Kambonde was a “pagan”, a heavy drinker, and, for many other reasons, could have been described in rather unflattering terms.

The Aawambo, for their part, though guarding their cultural heritage, constantly interacted with the outside world. They willingly invited foreign elements into their midst if they found them useful, thereby subjecting their

own culture to foreign influence. In this respect, the Finnish missionary entrepreneurs should be viewed among a long list of cultural “influencers”. As concerns the results of the cultural encounter, the Aawambo and the Finns not only assumed “new” habits, but their customs and routines would also mutually influence each other. The Finnish missionaries learned from their Aawambo neighbours and adapted many of their practices, sometimes to the extent that they were misunderstood and criticized by Finns and other Europeans who were unfamiliar with the settings or particular needs in Owambo. The same goes for the Aawambo, some of whom, for instance, started to build houses based on missionary advice. Those Aawambo who became Christians entered a “new world” but also brought their culture into this environment. For instance, a new African-European dress style developed among Aawambo Christians and pre-Christian rites, such as the female initiation rite *ohango yokiitsali*, were amended and amalgamated with Christian rites such as the wedding and became a “new ohango”. In many customs within Lutheran Christianity in Namibia, the Finnish and Aawambo cultures meshed and evolved further to the extent that it is very difficult to separate them from each other today.

However, this transculturation can also be viewed as a transcultural memory phenomenon practiced, for instance, through the taking of names from the other side of the cultural boundary. To this also belongs a certain shift of meaning of, and commemoration at, previously “Finnish” sites of memory, whereby the memory has “traveled”, in reference to the theory of the mobility of mnemonic practices advanced by Ann Rigney and Astrid Erll. As an example of a transcultural memory, we can mention the old mission station at Olukonda, which was classified as a national heritage site in 1992. Martti Rautanen and his family are buried in the cemetery next to the old church. His gravestone bears not only his name, but also his nickname – Nakambale (the man with the hat). The indigenisation of the missionary’s name and its inclusion on his gravestone not only signals the Aawambo connection to the memory of the Finnish missionary, but it can also be taken as an example of how a (trans-) cultural memory is upheld and communicated to younger generations. Other missionaries had nicknames too, but the fact that Rautanen’s nickname was engraved into his tombstone has closely tied his memory to the Aawambo, and in particular to the Ndonga. The Nakambale Museum was inaugurated at Olukonda in 1995, as a joint endeavour between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia,

the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, the Government of Finland and the Government of Namibia. Interestingly, it is not only Finnish history in Owambo that is presented at this site, but also, to a greater extent, the cultural heritage of the Aawambo. What makes this a truly transcultural site of memory is that most of the images and many of the artefacts presented in the museum are the result of Finnish missionaries, who documented Aawambo culture and thereby preserved parts of it for future generations. Moreover, when Aawambo people, like Vice President Mbumba, talk about a site like Olukonda they not only regard it as an old Finnish mission station and a museum displaying Finnish missionary history and Aawambo culture, but above all they regard it in relation to its role in societal development and in the winning of national independence.

Memory Diplomacy

Lastly, we should not forget that memories are constantly changing. This concerns both recent, what Jan Assmann has termed communicative memories, and distant cultural memories. For instance, the memory of the distant past is moulded by more recent experiences and events. In the case of Namibia, the work by the United Nations in the struggle for independence should be mentioned. The UN Special Representative heading the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was Martti Ahtisaari, who would later be elected the President of the Republic of Finland. Ahtisaari had a different mandate and different tools at his disposal than the missionaries had in their era. Nevertheless, his contribution gave a new boost to Finnish popularity in northern Namibia. The continued Finnish presence in Namibia may also play a role in the bright and vivid collective memory of Finnish contributions in Owambo. In Aawambo discourse, Finns arrived in 1870 and over time many suffered, died and were buried in Namibian soil. They brought the Christian gospel and development, they helped Namibia in the fight against South African rule, and they did not abandon Namibia. This is considered alongside the other grand narrative; namely, that of independence from South Africa, in which Finnish missionaries are also viewed as allies.

We cannot know for certain what the continued Finnish presence in Namibia does to the remembrance of the Finnish past in the country. Critics could argue

that it has a checking effect on the free roaming of northern Namibian cultural memory; that it has stopped alternative (more independent) reinterpretations of the past. However, there are also other factors that affect the way the Aawambo remember their missionary past. Many people that I have spoken to have mentioned the way Aawambo used to dress in hides. This serves as an example of a “primitive past” to which they are happy that they do not have to return. The Himba ethnic group still lives in a largely traditional manner. They are poor and largely uneducated and they continue to wear hides. They serve as a constant “sobering” reminder to the Aawambo about where they come from. Though many Owambo are interested in bringing back some traditions from the past, they “know” that they used to live like Himbas and they are thankful that they have undergone the cultural and developmental change that their Himba neighbours have not.

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Omandongo: “The site of the forsaken mission station, and a reminder of the plights of pioneering times”

Romie Nghitevelekwa and
Napandulwe Shiweda

The history of Finnish-Namibian relations is incomplete without mention of Omandongo, which lies in the eastern part of Ondonga Kingdom in Owambo. This is the place where Finnish missionaries first arrived in Owambo, on July 9, 1870. Ondonga was then under the rule of *Omukwaniilwa* (King) Shikongo shaKalulu, who ruled from 1858 to 1874. According to Hans Daniel Namuhuja, the Finnish missionaries came at the invitation of *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu through the German missionary Carl Hugo Hahn, who had previously visited the area. Omandongo village was near the *uuwa* (palace) of *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu. Thus, it was fit for the missionaries to settle there. The day after their arrival, 10 July 1870, marked the first time that a sermon was held in Owambo. This site became the center of Finnish missionary work, locally known as *etumo*. This short account of Omandongo examines the remnants that testify to the work of Finnish missionaries in the area.

Omandongo: The Forsaken Mission Station and a Reminder of the Plights of Pioneering Times

In his memoir of Martti Rautanen, Matti Peltola refers to Omandongo as “the site of the forsaken mission station, and a reminder of the plights of pioneering times”. In describing Omandongo as the site of a forsaken mission station, Peltola is referring to the current absence of church activities at the site, unlike other mission stations, such as Oniipa, Olukonda, Oshigambo, and Nakayale. In any village with links to Christian history, let alone one as important as Omandongo,

the key social institution one would expect to see is a church. However, no church is currently present in the case of Omandongo. The only form of religious congregation present in the village is a synagogue, which is locally referred to as *oshinagoga*. A fully-fledged church is located in Onayena, several kilometers away from Omandongo. Other places in Owambo, where the missionaries lived, have fully-fledged parishes. Hence, Omandongo can be described as a forsaken mission station.

This forsakenness can also be attributed to other factors. For example, the lives of the missionaries were characterized by high mobility that was mostly determined by the location of the local ruler's palace. The site of the *Omukwaniilwa's* palace dictated the location of the capital of the Ondonga Kingdom. Following the history of Rautanen for example, he and his family moved from one place to another, at the request of the presiding *Omukwaniilwa*. For example, when *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu died, Rautanen was moved to Oniipa, which was close to *Omukwaniilwa* Kambonde kaNankwaya's palace. He and his family then moved to the palace of *Omukwaniilwa* Itana Nekwiyu, who lived in the eastern part of Ondonga. After the death of *Omukwaniilwa* Itana Nekwiyu and the ascension of *Omukwaniilwa* Kambonde kaMpingana, Rautanen moved to Olukonda. Such was the highly mobile life of the Rautanens, which had direct implications on the development of Omandongo into a fully-fledged mission station on par with others as we see today. Other accounts also link the forsakenness of Omandongo to the negative attitude of *Omukwaniilwa* Nehale lyaMpingana, who ruled the eastern part of Ondonga, while Kambonde kaMpingana ruled the western part.

The reference to Omandongo being a reminder of the plights of pioneering times is reflected in the tragedies that faced missionaries at the station. These include the death of Rautanen's son, Heinrich, in 1880, as well as the death of Liisa Roiha, the wife of the catechist Yrjö Roiha, who died of malaria in 1886. Both are buried at Omandongo. These circumstances are vividly described by Peltola.

Visible Legacies of the Finnish Missionaries at Omandongo

Despite the forsakenness of Omandongo, some remnants are visible. One of the most easily recognizable remnants of the legacy of the Finnish missionaries is the statue of Rautanen, who is depicted with a Bible in his hands. This is a new monument, erected in April 2019. This new statue joins the long-existing cross that represented the arrival, the work and presence of Finnish missionaries.



Memorial to Martti Rautanen and the cross at Omandongo. Photograph: Helena Manase (2019).



Cross that represented the arrival of the Finnish Missionaries. Photograph: Helena Manase (2019).

The Nakambale Primary School is another site that honors Rautanen's legacy. The school is named after the Finnish missionary. Another physical remnant of the Finnish missionaries is the memorial to *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu, which was erected in 1985. According to Namuhuja, the memorial was initiated by the late *Omukwaniilwa* Immanuel Elifas Kauluma (1975-2019), together

with his omalenga (senior headmen). The leading authorities in Ondonga (*omalenga and ooyene yomikunda*, village headmen), alongside the Ondonga people contributed to the cost of the memorial. The primary aim of constructing this memorial was to honor *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu and his role in enabling Finnish missionaries to spread Christianity in Ondonga. This is evident on the inscription engraved on the memorial, which reads:

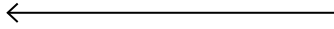
Here lies *Omukwaniilwa* Shikongo shaKalulu. He accepted Finnish missionaries in his kingdom to spread the good gospel. In the first sermon conducted by the Finnish missionaries, Shikongo is said to have stated that: “You did well to come here. All that you will tell us, we want to do it.”

Conclusion

Irrespective of the absence of a parish, Omandongo remains historically important in terms of the spread of Christianity in Ondonga, and Owambo in general. The arrival of the Finnish missionaries was of great significance for Omandongo; a significance which people in the area continue to identify with today. They derive pride from this historical event. Any history of the work of missionaries in Owambo is not complete without a description of the role of the *aakwaniilwa*, for they have shaped and reshaped missionary work.

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Ompampa and the memorial to Omukwaniilwa Shikongo shaKalulu. Photograph: Helena Manase (2019).



The Letters of Martti Rautanen to Carl Hugo Hahn, 1888–1895

Simo Heininen

Carl Hugo Hahn (1818–1895) was a pioneering missionary in today's Namibia. Born in 1818 near Riga, Hahn was the son of a Baltic-German landowner. He attended the Missionary Seminary of the Rhenish Missionary Society in Barmen. He was subsequently ordained and in 1841 he was sent to South Africa. In Cape Town he married Emma Sarah Hone, a young English missionary. After an apprenticeship in Windhoek, Hahn became the founder of the Herero Mission. The main station of Otjimbingue, founded in 1849, was 100 miles from Walvis Bay.

Hahn visited Europe in the 1850s and 1860s, including St. Petersburg and Helsinki and gave lectures on missionary work. At this time he met the director of Finnish Missionary Society, which had been founded in 1859. Back in Africa, he visited Owambo and encouraged Finns to send their missionaries to this region. The first ten missionaries, among whom were Martti Rautanen, arrived in Walvis Bay in February 1869. They received their practical missionary training in Otjimbingue, at Hahn's mission station. Rautanen became a boarder in the household of Hanna Kleinschmidt, the widow of the missionary Heinrich Kleinschmidt. The young Finn fell in love with Hanna's daughter, the 15-year-old Frieda. Three years later they were married by Hahn.

The missionaries arrived in Owambo on July 9, 1870. Hahn was their superintendent, but not for long. After some personal and doctrinal controversies with the Mission Board, he left the Rhenish Missionary society in 1873 and worked thereafter as the pastor of the Lutheran church in Cape Town. He died in the South African city on November 24, 1895.

A comprehensive collection of Hahn's papers is kept in the Cape Archives. The most interesting part is his diary from 1837–1860. This document has been published, as well as a collection of letters written by his wife Emma. These papers contain many dispatches from the missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society to their former principal in South African town Paarl, but also about eighty letters from Finnish missionaries and the Mission Board in

Helsinki. There are thirty letters from Rautanen during the last years of Hahn's life, from 1888 onwards.

It is no wonder that Rautanen wrote to Hahn, his former teacher and supervisor, who was now a retired senior missionary. They had much in common. They were both subjects of the Russian Empire, and had grown up in the Lutheran German milieu of the Baltic provinces. Rautanen was born in 1845 in the province of Ingria near St. Petersburg. His native language was Finnish, but he used German in Owambo, as this was the language of his wife. Their children were also given German names. Rautanen wrote his extensive diaries (now housed in the National Archives of Finland) in German. He was employed by the Finnish Missionary Society, but he did not feel comfortable in Helsinki. During his first furlough in Finland in 1891 he wrote: "The children miss Ondonga. I should rather like to return home today or tomorrow, because we take Ondonga to be our homeland." Even his wife Frieda wrote to Hahn: "Everything here is so unfamiliar and strange." For the first time in her life she was in Europe, and she could not speak either Finnish or Swedish. Winter was coming, and they longed for the warm African summer.

Like Hahn, Rautanen had problems with his own board in Helsinki. Yet both men acquired a leading position in the mission field. Rautanen recalls how Hahn had complained twenty years earlier in Otjimbingue that the young brothers did not understand him. Now he himself was the senior missionary in the field, who was trying to encourage the newcomers, the young brothers. He wrote: "You are the only person, who understands our situation as it is in reality, and you are the only one who has compassion for us." The board back in Helsinki had no real knowledge of the situation in Owambo.

Hahn and Rautanen also shared scholarly interests. Both were autodidact linguists, ethnographers and natural scientists. Both were also honorary doctors, although Rautanen would not receive his degree from the University of Helsinki until his eightieth birthday. Rautanen tells in his letters about his Oshindonga-German dictionary, about the the proverbs he had collected and his ethnographic collections, which are today located in museums in Europe and South Africa. After twenty years in Owambo he had acquired a profound knowledge of the country and could answer the questions of the ever-curious Hahn concerning the area's geography, history and languages. In one letter he gives a detailed description of the history of the Aawambo tribes. He collected

sayings and folklore, but he also translated the New Testament and, eventually, almost all of the Bible.

He describes how he invented new words:

I managed to create two important words, i.e. *Omunakalunga*, that is, who is with God, also godfearing, and *Omukenakonashanakalunga*, i. e. one who has nothing to do with God, being ungodly. These I have naturally created with the help of native Christians, and so must you if you are going to do honest work and want to get the message right and be sure that the words are not improper. The word *Omukenakonashanakalunga* is a somewhat long word but it is better than nothing or an alternative that does not say what it ought to say.

The correspondence between Rautanen and Hahn constitutes neither reports to the Mission Board nor to missionary friends in Finland. Rather, they are confidential letters addressed to a fatherly figure. Grand Old Man of the South West Africa Mission.

One of the main themes in the letters is the relations between the mission field and Mission Board. In almost every letter Rautanen criticizes the plans of the board. Mostly he adds that he is only lightening his heart: “Now enough of the complaints”, or “What is the use of complaining? I just had to lighten my heart.” The board consisted of elderly gentlemen of high social status: professors, civil servants, clergymen and rich merchants, whereas the missionaries were young men of humble origin (Rautanen’s father was a serf) without education other than what they had received from the missionary seminary. The first academic theologian did not arrive at the Finnish mission field until 1906.

Communication between the board and mission field was slow, and the missionaries had to make their decisions *in casu*, that is, they could not wait for instructions from Helsinki. During the tenureship of Carl Gustaf Tötterman, who was director of the board between 1877–1895, the relationship between the headquarters in Helsinki and the front line in Owambo was particularly strained: “Our brothers in Owambo” are mentioned in records of the board as if they were an additional and expensive nuisance, with whom the society could very well do without.

In his letters Rautanen blames the gentlemen (*Die Herren*) of the board for not only producing an incompetent mission strategy, but also for underestimating the entire gamut of the work. According to Rautanen, they were of the opinion that anyone will do for Africa, however ignorant and incompetent:

What kind of results can you expect in that case? Especially I wonder how the honorable fathers, despite knowing who these people are, are determined to send them here. To work with these kind of men is much more difficult than to be quite alone. You cannot find in Finland a theologian who would like to go to the mission field. Theologians accordingly have no interest in missions. That is why our work is in such a miserable condition. The gentlemen in the board think that only peasants and artisans are good enough to become missionaries and they themselves are too good.

The church in Olukonda, which was Rautanen's mission station, was ready in 1889, but they had no church bell and no harmonium. Rautanen commented:

I should not be ashamed of begging for money for the church bell from mission friends, but our board did not give its consent. This is a jolly society (*eine heitere Gesellschaft*). We do have a bell, but it is not worth its name. The good mission friend who gave it to us thought that it is good enough for the heathens. When are we going to see the Lord in the pagans and not black creatures? Many – at least our – mission friends tell us to love the heathens and throw them the rubbish. The missionaries are employed out of mercy, and a few extra pennies are enough for the heathens.

Rautanen was also annoyed by the censorship practised by the board. He had not only written to the Finnish missionary magazine, but also to another Christian periodical: "This article is no doubt going to be thrown away," he tells Hahn. He had been informed that the mission director had told the editor of the periodical not to publish anything that would cause offence among friends of the mission:



Olukonda church in 1899, Martti Rautanen in the middle. Photograph: August Pettinen. The Finnish Heritage Agency.



Dear uncle, what do you think he means by ‘offence’? Nothing else but telling how our real circumstances are here. We ought to give a favorable picture and not to show the shadows. When we are writing about our congregations, we must present their members as ideal Christians and not as they are, and we are not allowed to tell of the problems in our work. The Bible is praised because it presents the holy men as they are. Why should we in our work for the kingdom of God be treacherous and do everything in the twilight? I don’t know how matters are in other missionary societies, but ours is acting dishonestly, and the dishonesty brings the work of our society to ruins.

Martti Rautanen stayed in Owambo until his death in 1926 and served under five different missionary directors. The fourth, Joos. Mustakallio, was the first to visit the mission field in 1900. After this the relations between the missionaries in Owambo and the board in Helsinki gradually improved.

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The Impact of Finnish Missionaries on Traditional Aawambo Dress

Loini lizyenda

The change in dress brought by Finnish missionaries among the Aawambo people of Namibia is a crucial area that needs to be addressed when discussing Aawambo cultural identity. The beginning of Finnish missionary activities in Owambo from 1870 was one of the instrumental agents in the alteration of Aawambo traditional dress. The missionaries were from a different culture with their own distinctive dress code and values which defined them. Through contact with these missionaries, and partly with European traders, the cultural dress of the Aawambo changed not only in design but also in the materials used.

The pre-colonial costume of the Aawambo people was complex and fascinating, as it communicated information about a wearer's life and social status. The basic costume of the Aawambo people originally consisted of a leather loincloth, girdle and ornaments made from objects, such as oyster shell, reeds, ivory buttons etc. The transition away from this traditional dress occurred as a direct result of the imposition of the missionaries' values. This trend greatly affected the genuine representational meanings of the cultural identity and lifestyle of the clothing worn by the Aawambo people.

This chapter explores the costumes worn by the Aawambo people before missionary influence, with a focus on the basic dress for women. It will also examine the tactics and doctrine used by the missionaries to advocate for a change in the way the local people were attired.

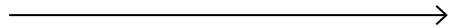
The Traditional Attire of the Aawambo People in the Pre-Colonial Era

According to A. D. Symonds, the Aawambo are a group of Bantu people found in north-central Namibia. There are eight Bantu sub-ethnic groups and all were initially agriculturist. Their basic clothing and household utensils depended on



Young Ovambo women in precolonial traditional clothing and hairstyle. National Archives of Namibia (undated).

Young Ovambo women pounding mahangu, wearing early missionary style clothing. National Archives of Namibia (undated).



what was available to them in their surroundings. According to V. Shigwedha, the “Aawambo were known to be highly artistic and skillful people”. They were skilled in leather tanning, metalwork, pottery, basketry, beadwork and woodcarving. These crafts were used to produce their clothing and adornments.

The costumes worn by the Aawambo were complex as they reflected specific information related to clan, gender and age group, as well as social and marital status. A traditional costume consisted of cattle or goat hide and ornaments created by ironsmiths, incorporating ivory buttons, oyster shells and ostrich eggshell. Shilongo describes how “the initial clothes of the Aawambo, in particular the women”, were “basically pieces of tiny leather from cattle that was meant to cover and conceal genital parts”.

Clothing for women consisted of a leather apron called an *eteta*, which was tied to the body with a belt that was also made from cattle hide called *ekwamo*. H. Tonjes describes how the belt was wound around the hips several times to serve as a pocket. The length and manner in which the leather cloth was hung on the body was determined by the person’s age, as well as their marital and social status. Younger girls, for example, wore the shorter *eteta*, which only covered the frontal parts of the genitalia. The *eteta* was longer for married women and also covered the backside area.

Coiffures and beaded ornaments also played a significant role in communicating information about an individual among the Aawambo. Beads were not only worn for decoration, beauty and status, but also served a ritual purpose. L. T. Nampala and V. Shigwedha discuss how some beads were also



believed to serve as protective talismans, while others were meant to attract fortune and luck. Thus, various types of beads were used in a woman's attire, which demonstrated her development from girlhood to womanhood.

Nampala and Shigwedha define the beads as "locally produced or found such as nickel beads, iron beads, ostrich eggshell beads, ivory buttons, and seed or grass beads from local plants. Others were obtained through trading such as glass beads and oyster shell beads". As mentioned earlier, hairstyles also complemented the costume in order to visually express the wearer's status. According to Shigwedha, hairstyles also reflected the wearer's sex, age and class.

Girls from the age of six began to plait their hair in preparation for puberty. As Nampala and Shigwedha show, the first hairstyle was called *onyiki*, which consisted of plaits decorated with seeds from the local plum tree. This *onyiki* hairstyle was later replaced by the *oshilendathingo*, whereby the hair was plaited with animal sinews that were twined to form several hornlike structures on the head. This hairstyle was for girls between 11 and 12 years of age.

Girls undergoing the puberty rite ceremony called *efundula* wore a new hairstyle. Coiffures for the *efundula* depended upon the sub-ethnic group one belonged to. The hairstyle changed once a woman had married in order to communicate her elevated status. The change of dress brought by foreign cultural interference caused cultural information and a dilution of skills. The traditional dress was a symbolic expression that encompassed one's lifestyle, role, skills and beliefs. A woman had to be precise in the way she dressed and this was also dependent upon her stage of life and status.

Finnish Missionaries and their Influence on the Traditional Attire of the Aawambo

Finnish missionaries were agents who imposed European dress styles on the Aawambo people through their mission work. As stated by Shigwedha, "the role of different missionary denominations in Owamboland since 1870, is crucial in understanding the circumstances that implemented the dramatic transformation of traditional fashion since the turn of the twentieth century." The change in attire was initially instigated by the missionaries, who regarded the traditional leather dress of the Aawambo to be an expression of paganism. The

missionaries felt the need to expose the local people to “appropriate clothing”.

The strategies used by the missionaries to ensure that the Aawambo wore “appropriate clothing” concentrated on clothing donations, cotton projects and sewing classes. According to Sabina David “the first converts who also played a major role in influencing other people in the community to abandon traditional costumes were not allowed to smear their bodies with the red ochre [*Olukula*] and were advised not to dress in traditional outfits when attending church services, instead they had to wear cotton clothes.” Changing the traditional dress of the Aawambo also entailed altering the material and skills used in the creation of this new dress code.

The limited access to materials in the region may have led the missionaries to establish their own cotton plantation. According to Nampala and Shigwedha, the Finns discovered that “cotton could be grown in Ovamboland if watered during the dry season. Cotton tools, spinning-wheels and hand looms were sent to Owamboland from Finland”. Hence, a cotton project was implemented with the objective of training the Aawambo people to make their own fabrics for clothes. According to Tonjes, the project proved futile due to the costs involved, as well as the local weather conditions.

Despite the failure of the cotton project, missionaries continued to emphasize the need for locals to change their attire by offering tailoring classes. The idea was that by teaching sewing skills to the locals, using donated cloth, locals would be able to imitate the missionaries’ idea of decent clothing. As Namapala and Shigwehda note, “Tailoring training did not stop as missionaries continued to receive cotton materials from Finland”. The acceptance of the dress code imposed by the missionaries acted as a proof of the commitment of the Aawambo to the Christian faith. Consequently, locals gradually abandoned their traditional dress, which relied on the local environment and traditional skills.

Tonjes clarifies this occurrence by stating that “many female societies [in Finland] have taken on part of this responsibility upon themselves by sending simple cotton cloth. It was also cheaper to import clothes than to produce them locally. The Christianized locals in Namibia became dependent on the imported clothes and cloth from Finland, which were distributed among the people. Sabina David informs us that “people eventually did away with traditional clothes and burned them. By doing so, they were persuaded to believe that they were abandoning paganism and evil objects for the righteousness of God the savior.”

Ondhelela skirt accessorized with a leather girdle and beaded waistband. Photograph: Loini lizyenda (2010).



The Modernized Traditional Dress of the Aawambo

The contemporary dress style of the Aawambo is identifiable by the striped cloth called *Ondhelela*, which is primarily a trade cloth used to make a gathered skirt or dress called *Ohema dhontulo*. The *Ondhelela* cloth has a background color of white, with either red, green, blue or black lines. Apart from the striped *Ondhelela*, locals could select from a wide variation of cloths. The cloths have been well received as they are able to absorb the traditional dye, which was formerly used on the leather. The practicality of the cloth led to its popularity. Compared to the preparation of the pre-colonial costume, which required the leather to be tanned or to undertake intensive beadwork, the use of imported materials from Europe was more time and cost efficient.

The *Ondhelela* or *Ohema dhontulo* is presently worn by every woman, irrespective of age or status at every traditional ceremony (weddings, puberty rites etc.). The dress is further accessorized with ornaments, such as beaded neckpieces, waistbands, girdles and bracelets. The absence of differentiation in the *Ondhelela* skirt or dress weakens the symbolic connotations that were once associated with each component of the traditional attire.

C. J. B. Okapilike and K. L. Nwadiolor argue that the missionaries had a negative influence on local people and their cultural dress because “most European missionaries were unable to emancipate themselves from the cultural,

emotional and social frame in which they were used to live and express; they tended to identify Christianity with European civilization.” In agreement with the above statement, I argue that it was unethical and demoralizing for the pioneering missionaries to teach the locals that their “traditional costumes and ornaments” were heathen objects.

The locals were dressed according to what was available to them in their native environment, and according to the skills that they had developed based on traditional practises. These skills and ornaments were important, as they defined who the people were, as well as their roles in their specific ethnic societies. Missionaries should not have emphasized the need to change the locals’ cultural attire in order to represent their conversion to Christianity. They should have rather focused on simply delivering the Christian message to the people.

Currently, more effort is needed to maintain Aawambo identity due to the imposition of an imported dress code. The imported European dress code and material serves a different function and skill, which has no similarity or relevance to Aawambo cultural beliefs or lifestyle. Other outcomes related to the introduction of imported Eurocentric material and clothing includes the loss of the indigenous knowledge that was expressed in the original dress. Traditional craft skills also remain underdeveloped due to them being substituted by acquired skills from Europe.

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Interviews

Shilongo Andreas Uukule, interviewed by Vilho Shigwedha, 11 October 2002
Uukwanambwa, Ondonga.

Sabina David, interviewed by Vilho Shigwedha, 25 February 2002, UNAM
Boardroom, Northern Campus.

A Reflection: The Intersection of Trade Cloth and Indigenous Crafts Among the Vakavango

Maria A. N. Caley

Textiles can be intriguing and a medium to emphasize artisanal identity for fashion and textile designers. More importantly, textiles in Africa have a long history and cultural significance. Although some of the textiles found on the African continent originate from elsewhere, their adoption and existence are rooted in trade routes. The literature regarding trade cloth in Africa posits that manufacturers initially designed these textiles with their own aesthetics, which had nothing to do with the intended African market. The occurrence of trade cloths, now commonly referred to as African prints, represented a failed attempt to copy the traditional batik textiles of Indonesia. The printed copies of Indonesian batik textiles, produced by a Dutch manufacturer and rejected by Indonesians, found a new market in Africa. More textile manufacturers in Europe started to explore the new market in Africa by introducing more factory-printed textiles. This paper adopts and views the term trade cloth solely in terms of the purpose it served. These trade cloths were often transformed when accepted by indigenous groups in order to achieve a desired aesthetic or were renamed as a means of cementing the connection to the cloth. Ultimately, the trade cloths that were once foreign became embraced by Africans through a process of adoption and transformation.

Trade Cloth in Namibia

In the case of Namibia, unlike other parts of Africa, there is not a long history of the production of traditional textiles. Indeed, many of the textiles referred to as 'traditional' in Namibia only took root after being introduced by European traders. *Ondhelele* fabric, for example, was introduced to Aawambo by Portuguese traders from Angola, but has now formed a strong material culture

identity in Namibia. This goes against the common assumption that *ondhelela* was introduced into Namibia by Finnish missionaries.

In Kavango, trade cloths underwent similar patterns of transformation as they were being introduced and adopted. Early trade activities by *Vimbali* black slave traders in Kavango, who came from the Province of Bie in South East Angola, brought cloth and European goods to trade among the *Vakwangali*, an ethnic group from Kavango. The trade cloths that were introduced among the Vakavango were embraced and given local names. Kavango trade cloths, for example, were known as *lyosikwangali*. These cloths were stripped in appearance and were similar to the *ondhelela* designs used by the Aawambo. Other local names for trade cloths included *sikatu* or *sikato*, which featured navy and white stripes and the maroon-coloured *lyegeha* that was unpatterned. Further research is needed vis-à-vis the meanings given to each type of cloth. In this short article, I will limit my analysis to the meaning behind the *amakeya* cloth.

Amakeya Cloth

European and African traders were the main agents for introducing trade cloth among ethnic Namibian groups, but they were not the sole agents. Missionaries also introduced fabrics that were used to sew Eurocentric clothing for children at the mission stations. The Catholic mission at Sambyu in Kavango presents a fascinating story of the *amakeya* cloth that was introduced among the Vasambyu community. The *amakeya* cloth had red, black and white zigzag patterns. The story of the *amakeya* cloth is widely spoken of among the Vakavango. However, efforts to trace the history of the introduction of this cloth have been insufficient and, what is more, the cloth no longer seems to be visible among the Vakavango.

As stated, *amakeya* cloth was introduced into the Sambyu community by the Sambyu Catholic Mission. M. Kaundu explains that *amakeya* cloth was brought in by Sister Ntine, a Catholic nun from Holland, who brought the cloth to Africa in order to be made into skirts for the girls attending the school at the Sambyu Mission. Various narratives tell of how this cloth came to bear the name *amakeya*, a foreign name. One particular story states that the name was taken from an Afrikaans poem by A. G. Visser, which featured a woman named Amakeia. This

poem was well-known in Afrikaans literature. Amakeia is depicted as a heroic Xhosa woman who worked on a farm in South Africa during the colonial era. Amakeia fled to the mountains with a white baby when the farm was attacked during the Sixth Xhosa War of 1834-1836. The poem states that Amakeia and the baby were discovered at their hiding place by indigenous warriors portrayed as 'spies' and were both killed as she was not prepared to part with the baby. The relationship between Amakeia, the heroic Xhosa woman, and the cloth named amakeya of Vasambyu is baffling. Further research is need to ascertain why this name was chosen for this particular cloth.

It is intriguing how a cloth used in the Sambyu community came to possibly have an association with a Xhosa woman in a distant land. The relationship between the heroine Amakeia and the *amakeya* cloth seems to be a mystery, perhaps largely because of the way the cloth was presented to the Vasambyu community. *Amakeya* cloth seems to be the exception, when looking at the names given to trade cloths, in that it appears to have been named after a person. Other trade cloths were given names that either emphasized their aesthetic appeal or referenced a particular ethnicity, such as *lyosikwangali* in connection to the Vakwangali.

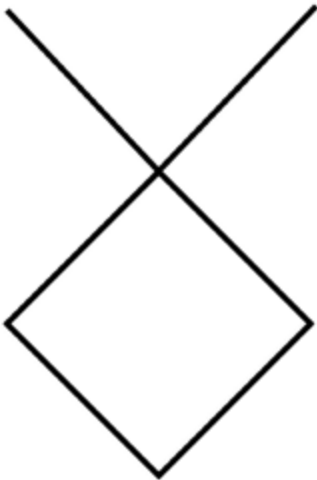
Many of the trade cloths disappeared from the market over the course of time, but a lot of them have recently been reintroduced by local Chinese textile trades. However, *amakeya* cloth has not been successfully revived by these new cloth traders. Kaundu explains that an attempt to revive *amakeya* cloth was made, but it had not taken root as the new design was not true to the original that had zigzag patterns that ran horizontally in red, black and white. The copy only features red and white stripes and the zigzag pattern runs vertically.

Indigenous Aesthetics and Trade Cloth

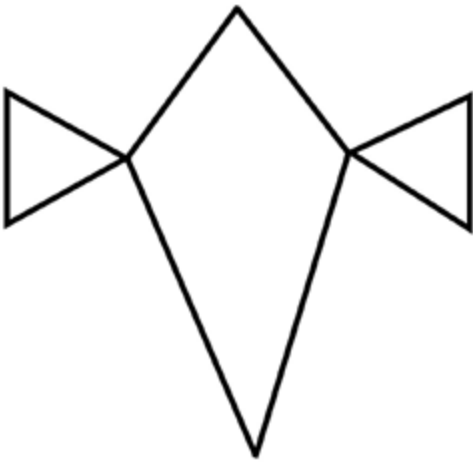
Cloth in Africa, including Namibia, has played a significant role in cultural practices and culture formation. Jennings states that cloth in African cultures was often used as currency, gifts, dowries, as well as symbols of power, artisanal identity, method of communication and spiritual protection. The trade cloths may have been foreign to the people, but they were embraced and even named with vernacular names to create a connection to the textiles. Shigwedha argues

that not all trade cloth were adopted. Traditional values dominated the design and color choices of the Aawambo community and therefore only the cloths they preferred were adopted. Furthermore, trade cloth among the Aawambo and Vakwangali communities were boiled and smeared in *olukala* or *rukura*, an ointment made of crushed wood pulp of *usivi* (*Ptercarpus Angolensis*) in order to achieve the desired quality and appearance. Shigwedha also argues that not all trade cloths were accepted by Namibian communities. In short, indigenous people were still influenced by indigenous aesthetics when selecting textiles from traders. The same can be argued about amakeya cloth, because the Vasambyu community preferred this particular cloth as it resonated with their indigenous aesthetics. The zigzag patterns of *amakeya* are similar to the patterns on indigenous crafts, such as baskets, woodwork and pottery.

Kavango basket-weaving motif



Holy Spirit motif



In the past, African crafts were perceived to be naïve and without much sound design aesthetic. The transformation of trade cloth among the Aawambo and Kavango communities undermines such a perception which reveals purposefulness and functionality. Moreover, indigenous craft making in

Kavango demonstrates an aesthetic of clean lines and geometric shapes, which can be universal. The composition of decorations on indigenous crafts are well placed and are often applied for emphasis. In her research regarding handmade products in Namibia, Pokela illustrates how basketry artisans often chose imagery of leaves, trees, stars and flowers when decorating their baskets. It can be argued that even in indigenous craftmaking, decorations are designed and planned in advance. Kaundu, who is also a craftswoman, explains that motifs often used in basketmaking have meaning.

She explains that the motif shown in the first figure (Kavango basket-weaving motif) represents the relationship of women in a polygamous marriage: sometimes they get along and sometimes they do not. The women are represented as getting along cordially where the lines meet. In contrast, they are depicted as being antagonistic where the lines drift apart. Kaundu furthermore explains that the motifs on the basket are generally called *mapi*. However, the weaver may choose to compose her own motifs in order to express something personal. The other figure shows another motif, designed by Kaundu, which represents the Holy Spirit.

Although indigenous craftmaking in Namibia is rooted in traditional methods of production, the postcolonial craftsmen and craftswomen have succumbed to the demands of tourists to depict 'exotic and romantic' ideas about the region. The 'exotic and romantic' ideas of tourists are often associated with naivety and not necessarily an indigenous style.

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The Architectural Designs of Finnish Missions in North-Central Namibia

Napandulwe Shiweda and
Romie Nghitevelekwa

Literary data concerning the history of the Finnish Mission in north-central Namibia from the late nineteenth century has been widely studied. Given the vastness of this field of research, this article focuses on the impact of Finnish architectural designs as embedded in structures built by the Finnish missionaries. North-central Namibia's former Finnish mission stations are characterized by a proliferation of buildings with thatched overhanging roofs supported by tree trunks/poles. These are buildings of particular historical interest as they are a lasting reminder of Finnish's presence in northern Namibia. This article analyzes this Finnish mission's form of representation, in terms of the building designs and the type of materials used to make them. This is because many buildings, if not all, were made in the same style and shape. Although they are some of the oldest buildings in the area, many still exist. This article examines whether these designs were originally Finnish or if they were appropriated from local Aawambo building styles.

Aawambo Building Styles

Like other aspects of Owambo culture, the architecture of Owambo is special. Africans have generally developed their own local architectural traditions and a common theme in traditional African architecture is the circular structures that made up their homesteads. This was also the case in Owambo. The traditional homestead in Owambo was generally composed of cattle kraals, several sleeping huts and other huts used for pounding millet, storing food and household utensils, etc. The different sections within the homestead were separated from each other by a wooden palisade or a millet-stalk fence. The



Martti Rautanen built a new mission house in 1893 with the parishioners at Olukonda. Photograph: Marjo Kaartinen (2018).



outer circular wooden palisade around the whole homestead protected it from invaders. The Aawambo use a wide range of materials, including thatch, wood, mud, mud brick, cow dung, to make their homes.

Aawambo architecture has been influenced by western designs since their contact with long-distance traders, explorers and later missionaries. Prior to western contact, the Aawambo lived according to their traditional lifestyle. However, in the late nineteenth century, European influence arrived in the area and became an important source of inspiration for many local. The arrival of the first Finnish missionaries in Owambo in 1870, not only replaced traditional religious ideas with Christian values and a western orientation, but it also created new forms of building. Minna Saarelma-Maunumaa points to colonialism as another important factor, which spread the European mode of life to the Owambo communities through the migrant labor system, and this continued under the South African regime (1915–1990). Hence, the influence of the settlers of German, British and Afrikaner origin, who had Aawambo employees working in their households, farms, mines, etc., rubbed off on them. Therefore, one can argue that the adoption of Christianity, together with the spread of European cultural patterns, has led to radical changes in Owambo lifestyle, including building styles.

Questions about the link between existing Finnish mission stations built by the Finnish missionaries in north-central Namibia, and understanding Owambo building patterns that take into account issues of style and design, have a significant bearing on the history of architecture in Finland.

Finnish Building Heritage and its Influence on Owambo Architecture

As an essentially forested region, timber has been the natural building material used in Finland as it has always been available and it is easy to work. Finnish construction heritage is largely a tradition of timber construction, whereby logs are laid horizontally in succession and notched at the ends to form secure joints. This is seen in the extant architecture from the Finnish missions in Owambo. The origins of the technique are uncertain. Although it was used by the Romans in northern Europe in the first century BC, other possible older



A new school building at the Ondangua station. The Finnish Heritage Agency.
Photograph: Hannu Haahti (1911).



The church building at Olukonda was inaugurated in 1889. Photograph: Marjo Kaartinen (2018).

sources are said to be areas of present-day Russia. Crucial in the development of the mission stations in Owambo, the Finnish missionaries adapted a similar building type, which comprised a rectangular plan that was clearly influenced by the architecture of their homeland. According to Kim Groop, the first church building in Owambo was inaugurated at Olukonda on 29 September, 1889. The church building was 17 meters long and 7 meters wide. It was built from sundried bricks, with a thatched grass roof and an earthen floor. Rautanen also built a new mission house in 1893 together with the parishioners at Olukonda. The house was built in the same style as the church.

Many Finnish Mission buildings were constructed of sundried abobe clay bricks. The larger buildings had a veranda, which followed the entire length of the house with an overhanging roof giving shadow to the veranda as well as the interiors. The roofs, which were often thatched, were supported by tree trunks and provided shelter. Although a number of changes to local architecture are indeed present, these largely include elements of both African and European origin. This notion is supported by Catharina Nord, who claims that these buildings were a hybrid of local architecture and western building types. The use of local materials and architectural forms, which were applied by the missionaries, clearly shows that the materials used remained of local origin.

This is particularly interesting because in seeking to document the historical origins of Owambo's indigenous architecture, one is referred to the local term for "traditional" square-plan structures - *ombaalaka* (from the English "barrack" or Portuguese "barracão") - that were inevitably attributed to a European cultural presence. More often than not these square buildings are largely believed to be the product of missionary influence. The square-plan structure of an *ombaalaka* was especially built to serve as a place of gathering within a homestead. This has direct influence on Aawambo homestead architecture, and, more particularly, the homesteads of the emerging elites (nurses and teachers) whose lives were influenced by the missionaries. Buildings within homesteads were referred to locally as *ongulu* (sing.) and were constructed in the same format as *ombaalaka*, often with a corridor and two doors; one facing east and the other west.

Common Forms of Finnish/Owambo Building Representation

In the case of specialized areas of construction, such as roof carpentry, brickwork and brickmaking, the effects of missionary influence remain evident in Owambo up to the present day. This paper strives to reflect on the ways in which aesthetics and building technology of these Finnish mission stations may represent the identity of a place, a people, or an era. There is a need to connect this to Owambo's cultural landscape and its many forms of intangible cultural heritage, especially through oral traditions that give different perspectives. For example Rev. Julius Mtuleni agreed that buildings found at Finnish mission stations were inspired by architecture in Finland at the time. He further states that although the missionaries were not trained architects, they had knowledge in building, and they managed to construct good structures. Additionally, they were seen as unique since all rooms (in the building) had two doors. Rev. Mtuleni attributed this pattern of building to the fact that the missionaries were coming from a war background (Russian occupation in Finland). The two doors allowed for an easy escape from the house if there were any attacks. Magdalena Kaanante claims that the roof was built from timber beams (probably Mopani or camel thorn) covered with sticks or millet stalks, and capped with a layer of clay. This way of building was seen in most, if not all, Finnish buildings. These types of roofs were so strong that one could walk around on them. Consequently these were the same roofs used to hide SWAPO PLAN fighters from South African forces during the war.

Conclusion

Further research is needed that should not only focus on the information obtained locally, but also from mission archives in Finland to support the significance of Finnish influence on Owambo communities. Despite the obvious element of influence and transposition between Aawambo and Finns, some Owambo architecture retained its traditional circular homestead form, and materials have remained local. However, with the advancement of new technologies in design and building materials some old structures have been

replaced. Most importantly, the missionary input appears to have had a direct effect upon the nature and form of indigenous building patterns. We believe that researching the work of missionaries in Owambo provides a tremendous opportunity, and should not be viewed in isolation from the activities of that time, especially since the current discourse on Finnish influence remains firmly grounded in the precepts of modernism, and not necessarily on the significance of alterations in material culture and local practices.

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Lessons to Learn from the Story of Rosa

Anna Rastas

On 8 June 1888, a Finnish newspaper, *Wiipurin Uutiset*, published an announcement about a girl of mixed African and European descent “who was born and baptised in Africa” and arrived in Finland with missionary K. A. Weikkolin and his family. The girl’s name was Rosa Clay (later Lemberg). As far as we know, she was born in 1875 in Omaruru in present-day Namibia. Based on what Rosa herself recited to Arvo Lindewal, who wrote Rosa’s first biography (*Rosalia* 1942), she was a child of a local woman, Feroza Sabina Hasara, and a Briton named Charles William Clay. She was still a small child when she was taken from her mother and, with her father’s permission, placed in a missionary school in Owambo run by the Finnish couple Karl and Ida Weikkolin. Later, they decided to bring Rosa to Finland. They promised her father that in Finland she would have the opportunity to continue her studies so that she could return to Africa as a missionary.

Rosa went to school in Finland and lived with the Weikkolin family, but she was expected to do housework and was forced to perform at church gatherings in various cities. She had to make money for the church by selling pictures of herself. In her memoirs, Rosa makes it clear that Ida Weikkolin was not as warm-hearted and altruistic a Christian benefactor as Ida presents herself in her own 1895 memoirs. For example, Rosa tells how Ida slapped her when she tried to refuse to sing songs for strangers in an African language that she did not even know. Rosa’s relationship with Karl Weikkolin seems to have been better.

Rosa received a good education in Finland. She became a teacher and worked in various schools, including in Tampere. Although her everyday life was shadowed by cruel racism, she also had many friends, and her talents as a singer and choir leader were praised in Finnish newspapers. In 1904, instead of returning to Owambo, which had been the original plan for her, Rosa, like many Finns in those days, moved to the United States. There, she married Finnish immigrant Lauri Lemberg and had two children. Rosa was active in Finnish immigrant communities, including as a choir leader and a Finnish-language



Rosa Clay was photographed by Charles Riis & Co. soon after arriving in Finland (1889). The Finnish Heritage Agency.

Rosa Clay as photographed in Sortavala in the 1890s (photograph: Impi Backman) and in Wyborg in 1899 (photograph: Fredrik Diehl). The Finnish Heritage Agency.



teacher in summer schools for the children of Finnish immigrants. She never returned to Europe, nor to Africa. She died in 1959 at a Finnish rest home in Covington, Michigan.

Almost everything we know about Rosa’s childhood in Africa and Finland is based on the first chapter of her memoir, *Rosalia*, which was published in 1942. It was published in Finnish in the United States and written by Rosa’s friend and fellow Finnish immigrant Arvo Lindewall. For various reasons, not everything in the book can be treated as historical fact. However, documents available in Finnish archives confirm many points.

Rosa’s story never drew much attention in Finland, although there were a few articles about her in newspapers and magazines in the 1950s and 1960s. Rosa arrived in the United States with a Finnish passport, but the Ellis Island archives hold an arrival document on which the word ‘Finnish’ was crossed out by immigration authorities and replaced with “African (Bl. [black])”. Still, as a person of mixed parentage in the Northern European immigrant community, her life was probably easier than many others of African descent. She was sometimes called “the only black Finn”, referring to her African roots, but also indicating her acceptance as a Finn in the Finnish immigrant communities. Because of racism in the United States, Rosa’s children decided to hide their African heritage.

Rosa’s life in the United States is better documented than her childhood because of her many activities in Finnish immigrant communities in multiple states. In 1993, the first U.S. study of her life was written by Eva Erikson, an emeritus professor of history who had been one of Rosa’s students in a Finnish-

language summer school. Yet, Erickson's study and Rosa's story in general remained overlooked in Finland until 2010.

In the early 2000s, during my research projects on the history of Africans in Finland, I collaborated with a Finnish journalist, Leena Peltokangas, to find out more about Rosa's life, both for my studies and for Peltokangas' radio documentaries. In 2010, Peltokangas' documentaries about Rosa and other early "Finns of African background" were broadcast by the Finnish Broadcasting Company. Rosa's story was also told in 2010 in Mia Jonkka's TV documentary *Afro-Suomen historia* (The History of Afro-Finns) and in an article based on Erickson's book, in Finland's largest newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. An English-language version of this article was published online. Thanks to all these journalistic documents many people in Finland got to know the story of the "the first Finnish African", as Rosa is often called, although her status as being "the first one" cannot be confirmed as a historical fact.

Since 2010, Rosa's name and story have been referred to in many of the social and cultural spaces that I enter during my research projects on the African diaspora in Finland. Her story seems to be particularly inspirational to artists and activists of African descent. The visual artist Sasha Huber has made a portrait of Rosa, whilst the dancer/choreographer Ima Iduozee named his performance celebrating Finland's 100th year of independence after Rosa. She has also been mentioned in many of the interventions by activists against racism. In early 2019, I was approached by an anti-racism activist who wanted to talk about an initiative to name a street after Rosa. As far as I know, none of these artists or activists have roots in Namibia. Yet, they identify with Rosa's story and see it as a part of their history in Finland, with 'their' meaning people of the African diaspora, whose lives are marked by colonial relations in a different manner than those of other Finns; people who see the world differently because of their position in racialized social relationships; and/or people whose Finnishness is questioned because of their background despite their contributions to Finnish society.

What has attracted my attention is that the artistic and activist projects related to Rosa do not necessarily seek to offer further information about Rosa's life. Instead, for many people, Rosa – or the figure of Rosa – seems to be a token. The rapidly-growing group of Finns of African descent can finally show that "we also have a history here" and that this history means that the white majority

must stop calling Finns of African descent and other racialized minorities “immigrants”. Rosa’s story is needed in order to identify and place the political struggles of many racialized minorities in Finland. She has been given a role as a pioneer: the first African who was granted Finnish citizenship (or, more accurately a citizen of the Grand Duchy of Finland), the first black teacher, the first black choir leader, etc. Even today, many artists and other professionals who belong to racialized minorities in Finland seek “other people like them” to create collectives in which they can share their experiences of othering, because, unlike in Rosa’s time, Finns today who have racialized minority backgrounds can join together and imagine their “future minority histories”. For these Finns, Rosa’s story as a person born in what is now Namibia is not as important as that she was an African and a Finn with African roots.

Nonetheless, the fact that she was brought to Finland from Owambo does matter. Her story reminds Finns of their colonial complicity, something about which people of the African diaspora, in particular, have tried to raise in discussion. Finns of an African background see things differently than Finns from a white-majority background, who grow up surrounded by the discourse of Finnish exceptionalism. In this case, this means the common idea that “Finns, who never had colonies, cannot be racists”. Closer, critical reading of texts, memoirs and other documents written by Finns during colonial times reveals that Finns, like other Europeans, had worldviews determined by colonial thinking and knowledge. Rosa’s herstory invites us to learn more about the histories of both Namibia and Finland and the mutual history of the two countries, although the events and relationships that connect the two mean different things for the peoples of each land. For example, reading the memoirs of Rosa and Ida simultaneously clarified for me the need for more critical reading about the encounters between Finnish missionaries and the people who lived in what is now Namibia. Even if these encounters were not as violent and harmful to these people as for those in many other African places, they were not based on equal rights. In addition, our knowledge of these encounters still shapes the way Finns see not only Africa and Africans but also themselves. We know little about how Namibians interpret these encounters.

Seeing how important the figure of Rosa has become for so many Finns of African descent inspired Peltokangas and myself to return to her story again, this time, to ask what we could learn from it. Our analyses, published in Finnish

in 2018, studied both power relationships and the various aspects of Rosa's personal herstory, including age, gender, race, nationality and class, all of which mattered. Her memoir as an immigrant in Finland and the United States also encouraged us to compare her experiences to those of migrants today.

Race mattered in various ways, and being an African of mixed Afro-European parentage had multiple meanings in Rosa's life. She was not the only child at the missionary station in which she grew up, yet the Weikkolins chose her as *the* child who should get an education abroad. Her father's background as a white European was probably at least partially responsible for this. As a child who was born into particular circumstances, Rosa had very little, if any, power over adults.

In Finland, few people were able to encounter Rosa as a person, instead of a representative of a different race. But, as a young woman there, Rosa was an educated person whose class position was better than, for example, that of my own great grandmothers of the same time, who never had the opportunity to go to school. After moving to the United States, Rosa, like many migrants today, had to settle for lower-paid jobs available to immigrants. Nevertheless, her education and previous class position became useful social capital among the less-educated Finnish immigrants, which – in addition to the fact that in the United States, Finns were considered 'less white' than some other European immigrants – probably made it easier for her to integrate into a form of migrant Finnishness.

For me, Rosa's story has not ended. She keeps whispering new questions in my ear. As an adoptive mother of two (now grown-up) children born in Ethiopia, I can hear her asking "Why is no one interested in what my childhood in Africa was really like? Or how my mother felt when I was taken from her? Or how I felt when I had to leave my birth country and continue my life with a new family in a strange world among people whose language I couldn't even understand?" I also think about her as a teacher, a peer, who reminds me of the Eurocentric epistemology underlying academic knowledge: "How is your worldview, and the knowledge on which your studies and teaching are based, determined by the colonial relationships that defined my life as well as the relationships between Finns and the people in my birth country?" I feel strongly that the next exploration of Rosa's story should be done together with, or, by researchers in her birth country. I feel that we owe that to the child who was taken from her mother long ago.

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Rosa Emilia Clay: From Omaruru via Sortavala to Chicago

Ellen Ndeshi Namhila and
Werner Hillebrecht

Our interest was stirred when we first heard stories about one of the earliest Namibians to travel to Finland, allegedly an Owambo girl by the name of Rosa. Who was she? How did she get there? What happened to her? Consequently, we started to explore her history, not knowing what we would find.

The first Namibian child to take this long voyage to the far north was Nangurosi, (also spelled Nanguloshi) who was taken to Finland around 1875 by the missionary Pietari Kurvinen and his wife. She was baptized in Finland as Eva Maria, and returned home in 1880. Little else has been written about her, although one could probably find out more. But the story of Rosa Emilia Clay, probably the second Namibian child taken to Finland, who did not return home but moved on to America, turned out to have often been told and was so colourful, contradictory and improbable that we soon started doubting everything we read.

Why would we as Namibians trace the story of a child who was taken to foreign countries and never returned? Is it just a colourful story? We live in an increasingly inter-connected world, where individual lives transcend national and ethnic boundaries, but we tend to forget that this is nothing new. An individual life is a mirror that can enlighten us in unexpected ways, and help us to overcome the narrow focus on national or ethnic narratives that negate the diversity of human experience. We have to overcome the narrow focus that fosters colonial, racist, chauvinist and xenophobic worldviews that ultimately lead to oppression, violence, wars and genocides.

The story of Rosa Emilia Clay entails transnational and transcultural themes. Her eventful life has been told in two biographies, a TV documentary, as well as several scholarly and popular articles and blogs. She has entries in the Finnish National Biography and on wikipedia.fi. Yet her story remains full of gaps, unexplained discrepancies, and narrow interpretations from specific

viewpoints: from the Finnish missionary perspective, from the Finnish immigrant community in the USA and from the African diaspora. We have unfortunately not yet been able to consult recent Finnish research about her biography that might have filled some gaps.

There has hitherto been virtually no knowledge of the Namibian side in her ancestry and upbringing, which forms the background to her later life in Finland and the United States. However, her early life is in no way unique, and in many ways finds a counterpart in another Namibian transcultural life that has been described in some detail and is the subject of ongoing research; namely, the life of Ada Maria Green (Kaera).

Omaruru

Rosa's story begins with her birth in Omaruru, a small settlement in central Namibia, allegedly on 31 August 1875. This information was provided in Rosa's first biography, written and published in Finnish in the state of New York in 1942.

The author, Arvo Lindewall, narrates a beautiful romance with all the hallmarks of a fairy-tale. Once upon a time there was a British nobleman, Charles William Clay, who was appointed Deputy Governor of the Cape Colony and who was responsible for South West Africa. During his official travels he came to Omaruru where he "met Feroza Sabina Hazara, a 17 or 18-year-old Arabian-Damaraland maiden. He was fascinated by her and soon believed himself to be truly and blindly in love. Her mother was Arabian and her father was a Damaraland Bantu native Negro. By religion they were Moslem and the girl, a rare and charming beauty, was half black, or what was considered a mulatto." And this love story ended in Rosa Emilia being born, according to Lindewall, as translated from Finnish by Eva Erickson, who published another biography in 1993.

Of course, everybody who knows a little about nineteenth-century south-western Africa can see that this romance cannot be true. Eva Erickson already pointed out that neither was what is today's Namibia ruled by the Cape Colony in 1874, nor was there ever a British Baron Charles William Clay. She might also have pointed out that it was virtually impossible for an Arabian Muslim woman to come to Namibia, and for a local black man to be converted to Islam in the 1850s. Therefore, the Finnish National Biography and the Finnish Wikipedia

(April 2019 version) inform us that her father “was a hunter and trader named Charles William Clay” and do not speculate about the identity and name of her mother. Is it possible to find out more information about Rosa? Did Arvo Lindewall invent those embellishments, did Rosa invent them, or was Rosa simply told these stories as a child?

There is a rich literature of memoirs about the turbulent history of Namibia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The country was the playground for a large number of white adventurers – itinerant traders and elephant hunters – who were more or less welcomed by the indigenous people, as they provided access to Western commodities, in particular, fire-arms and ammunition. With the exception of a few, who were very successful in business terms, and/or left written memoirs, such as Charles John Andersson, Thomas Baines, Frederick Green, William Coates Palgrave and Axel Eriksson, their lives are poorly documented and mostly forgotten. It turns out that two hunters and traders by the name of Clay are mentioned in the 1870s and 1880s. One was named Charles John Clay, and the second was named William Clay. They were clearly different people, and might have been brothers, but so far no evidence has been found to support this assumption. In addition, German missionaries had been in Namibia for a long time, and since 1869 also Finnish missionaries were also active in the region. So, maybe it is possible to find out a little more detail about Rosa’s history. Do other primary sources exist?

We actually found a documentary record of Rosa’s birth. The baptism register of the Rhenish Mission at Omaruru recorded the birth of “Emily Rose” in August 1875 (no day given) and her baptism on 17 June 1877 by the missionary Gottlob Viehe. Her father is recorded as Charles John Clay and the register column for the mother is left empty. There can be no doubt that “Emily Rose” and “Rosa Emilia” are the same. Why is her mother not named, although she must have been known by the father? There are actually many baptisms in this register in which the father, a white adventurer, is recorded and the identity of the mother is omitted. In all cases the omissions undoubtedly related to unmarried and unbaptized black women, whose names were not deemed worthy of being recorded by the missionary. Unlike the romantic story told by Lindewall, the register shows the harsh reality of a semi-colonial frontier society in which unscrupulous white men impregnated black women, but rarely cared about the consequences.

Incidentally, the same Charles John Clay had another daughter by an unrecorded mother baptized on 4 April 1886 (with the Finnish missionary couple Karl and Ida Weikkolin acting as godparents), while William Clay also had an “illegitimate” daughter, who was baptized on 6 April 1884. Were the names of the two Clays, who by all contemporary sources are mentioned as different persons, merged together as “Charles William”?

In the case of Emily Rose/Rosa Emilia, the father at least acknowledged paternity, and, according to the Lindewall biography, took her away from her mother and she was entrusted to an unnamed “English family”. Did the mother not want the child? Or did the father think his offspring was too precious to grow up with a poor woman whom he did not care about?

It has not been possible to identify the “English family” to whom Rosa was allegedly given soon after her birth, but only a few English-speaking married couples are known to have been in Omaruru at this time: Frederick and Catherine Green, James and Charlotte Gunning, John Hickey and his “Baster” wife who was named as Rosa’s godmother at her baptism, and maybe the Swedes Axel Eriksson and Oscar Lindholm, with their English-speaking wives. At the same time, there were dozens of white men who were unmarried but were in relationships with black women.

Omandongo

After about three years Rosa was allegedly entrusted to Finnish missionaries. The date and circumstances under which this happened remains uncertain. It is generally assumed that she was taken care of by Karl and Ida Weikkolin. Karl Weikkolin had arrived in Namibia as one of the first Finnish missionaries in 1869, but only married his wife, Ida Ingman, in 1879 during a holiday in Finland. Lindewall describes Ida as “basically spiteful, a liar” who “delighted in hurting and insulting others”. The couple returned to Namibia in 1880. They certainly passed through Omaruru, which was an almost unavoidable stopover on the road from Walvis Bay to the north. Was it at this time that the father gave Rosa to the Weikkolins? If so, why? Is it true that he wanted the little girl to get a mission education by the Finnish missionaries far north in Owambo? The Weikkolins continued their journey to the mission station of Omandongo in Eastern

Ondonga, Owambo. There might be correspondence and reports to the Finnish Mission board in Helsinki, or other correspondence or diary entries of (Finnish and German) missionaries at the time, that could shed more light on the matter, but apparently none have been consulted. Most of these possible sources are in Finland and Germany and have so far been beyond our reach.

So little Rosa grew up and went to school at Omandongo. Her mother's language was probably Khoekhoegowab (Nama/Damara), and as a toddler in Omaruru she might have learnt English and Khoekhegowab or Otjiherero, but she would soon have forgotten it and grown up with Finnish and Oshindonga.



The Sortavala Seminar choir visited Joensuu in 1897, Rosa Clay in the back row. The Finnish Heritage Agency.

Finland

In 1888, the Weikkolin family returned to Finland, due to Ida's ill-health. Thenceforth, we have some more definite information about Rosa's life. It is well-documented that on this occasion the Weikkolins took Rosa – then 13 years old – and their own son Hans to Finland. It is reported that Rosa's father gave his consent. The fact that the Weikkolins acted as godparents to another of Clay's children testifies to the fact that he had a cordial relationship with them. No mention is made of the mother's opinion.

When Ida Weikkolin's health recovered in Finland, the couple returned to Namibia in 1890. However, the children remained in Finland to continue their education. Ida Weikkolin later wrote about meeting Rosa's father again in 1890 at Omaruru, where he expressed his gratitude that Rosa was receiving an education. In the same book Ida also described Rosa's mother, without a name, as an "unhappy wild Mountain Damara", implying that it was a good thing to take the baby away from her.

One year later, Karl Weikkolin died of malaria near his new mission station Elim in Uukwambi, Owambo. His wife subsequently returned to Finland and apparently acted again as Rosa's guardian.

In his biography, entitled *Rosalia*, Lindewall relates that Rosa was very bitter about her guardian, whom she described as a cruel and unfeeling hypocrite who treated her as a servant. Rosa added that she resented being forced to perform at mission fundraising events in fake "African" attire. It seems that only one of the several mission-published brochures that Ida Weikkolin wrote, and none of the manuscripts and records in the FELM Archives (now held by the National Archives of Finland) has been consulted to find out more about Rosa's teenage years.

Rosa eventually finished her schooling, first in Vihti and later in Helsinki, and was educated as a teacher at the Sortavala Seminar, where her singing talent was favourably mentioned and promoted. Several portrait photographs and a group photograph from the Sortavala Seminar show her to have been a very beautiful young woman with an abundant tuft of Afro hair. These documents are held by the Finnish Board of Antiquities. She graduated in 1898 and had a traumatic first engagement as a primary school teacher at a rural school near Kuopio, where she was discriminated against because of her skin colour. But she also was granted

Finnish citizenship in 1899, probably the first (and for very long, the only) time this was achieved by an African. The three years she worked as a teacher in Tampere, between 1901 and 1903, seem to have been less stressful.

What happened next to Rosa seems to have been taken from Lindewall's biography without further fact-checking – at least in all freely accessible sources on the internet, including the Finnish National Biography and Finnish Wikipedia (last accessed 30 July 2019). It is told that during a holiday at Loviisa she met a Russian-born medical doctor who proposed to her, but shortly before the planned marriage he killed himself unintentionally through self-experimentation with a drug. Surely such a dramatic event should have left some local record that ought to be explored?

United States

Rosa must have found it difficult to deal with this trauma. It may be that she decided to leave Finland as a direct consequence of the unfortunate fate of her betroved. Irrespective of the reasons, she emigrated to the United States of America, as did thousands of impoverished Finnish people in those years. It is estimated that 300,000 Finns had emigrated from Finland to the United States by 1930. Many of these migrants were socialists and had been subject to political persecution under tsarist rule in the Russian Empire. This background might have helped Rosa to be accepted in the United States when she arrived in New York in 1904. The immigrant community may have been less discriminatory.

Although her marriage with a Finnish émigré and theater director by the name of Lauri Lemberg was problematic and she divorced after having two children with him, she embarked on a career as singer and actor in Finnish theaters with a socialist background in various towns. This part of her life is again better documented, and her biographer Erickson has been able to collect written and oral sources from contemporaries, and was able to interview her children and grandchildren.

Nevertheless, too many questions remain. But some may be answered by digging deeper into the sources. This is not an easy task, as her life spanned across four countries in three continents. Nevertheless, this is a story worthy of being told in greater depth.

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Martti Rautanen's Collection of Aawambo Artefacts in Finland

Leila Koivunen

The work of Martti Rautanen (1845–1926) is a prime example of the collaboration between mission workers and European academia that took place in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. Rautanen did not have any formal education in linguistics, natural history or ethnology, but during more than half a century in Olukonda, in the north of present-day Namibia, he contributed to these fields of research by collecting a variety of specimen, samples and vocabulary. In a similar manner to many other missionaries of the time, Rautanen assumed the role of a fieldworker in the general Western pursuit of knowledge and provided material for European museums and other research institutions.

Rautanen is known especially for his extensive literary work in documenting the Oshindonga language and in creating the first pieces of written literature by translating and composing hymns, an ABC primer, and, eventually, the Bible. He was interested in observing and documenting local cultures and folklore, but he also contributed to botany, zoology, mineralogy and meteorology. In 1885, Rautanen met the Swiss botanist Hans Schinz, who participated in a scientific expedition in the region. The two men undertook long trips together during which they studied local flora and fauna. Schinz proved to be an influence on Rautanen in terms of his future collections, as he showed his colleague how to systematize and organize data in a scholarly manner. Thus, after becoming acquainted with Schinz, Rautanen's observations and documentation methodology became increasingly detailed. Schinz was also influential in turning Rautanen's attention to the systematic collection of material culture.

Rautanen adopted several methods when seeking to increase his collection of artefacts. It is known that he received various objects as gifts when meeting with the local king, chiefs and other eminent persons. The Africans, in turn, received presents from Rautanen. In addition to these reciprocal gifts, which

carried symbolic value, a variety of everyday objects were received as a result of bartering. As many of the objects in Rautanen's collection were new and unused, it is likely that he also commissioned local carpenters to carve them for him. The collection also included amulets, adornments and pieces of clothing that the local people were forced to abandon when they converted to Christianity. The first conversions took place in the 1880s.

A Home Exhibition with Academic Visitors

Rautanen's first visit to Finland took place in 1891–1892, after twenty-two years of working and residing in Olukonda. He returned to Finland with most of the items he had gathered in Africa: minerals, plant samples and artefacts. Although the largest and heaviest objects had to be left in Africa, the artefact collection was still by far the largest to be found in Finland at the time. On his return to Finland, Rautanen undertook preaching tours to various parts of the country, during which he talked about his work in Africa to a multitude of people. As with previous returning missionaries, he is known to have presented items from his collection in order to demonstrate and illuminate aspects of African culture to a Finnish audience. The interest aroused by these objects was utilized to inform his audience about his experiences abroad and to gain moral and economic support for future work.

In addition to using artefacts in order to illustrate aspects of his talks, Rautanen also actively sought to attract the attention of Finnish scholars and scientific organizations to the entire collection as a means to find a permanent depository for it. Rautanen clearly felt that the collections he had amassed were his own property and did not automatically belong to his employer, the Finnish Missionary Society. In fact, Rautanen regarded his collections as a potential source for recouping some of the expenses he had incurred when his family had taken up residence in Finland. Since the Missionary Society could not pay for the artefacts and did not have a permanent museum to display them at the time, Rautanen had to think of other options. As a person with a scholarly-oriented idea of amassing collections, he wanted to find an esteemed organization that could keep his collections and preferably also pay for them.

To gain publicity for his collection and to better display it, Rautanen first arranged a temporary exhibition in an apartment in the center of Helsinki where he and his family lived. This little home exhibition, or “African museum” as it was called, was visited by groups of invited scholars, employees and members of local parishes, as well as friends and family members. The exhibition was also publicly advertised and it was free of charge for all casual passersby. According to one journalist who visited the exhibition, Rautanen gave detailed presentations of the artefacts, describing, for instance, how and for what purposes they had been made. He also mentioned that duplicates of some artefacts were available to buy. Some items were possibly sold to casual visitors and a small number of artefacts are known to have ended up in local schools, where they formed part of the teaching collections. Yet, it is clear that Rautanen regarded his collection as a systematic entity and wished to find an organization that would appreciate and preserve it in its entirety.

Among the first scholars to be invited to Rautanen’s home exhibition were the board members of the Finnish Geographical Society. It was subsequently visited by leading linguists and ethnologists of the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki. An especially important visitor was Ernst Gustaf Palmén, a professor of history who also acted as the director of the Museum of History and Ethnography at the university. Rautanen presented his collection to Palmén, who became convinced that it was the responsibility of the university to preserve the collection. In order to obtain the collection, Palmén had to apply for extra funding from the university administration. In his appeal he emphasized that, unlike previous collections held at the museum, the Aawambo artefacts had been systematically amassed and formed a “complete” entity. According to Palmén, this enabled interesting comparisons to be made between these artefacts and the “standpoints of prehistoric people”. Palmén was one of the early practitioners of Darwinism in Finland and sought to promote comparative approaches in historical and cultural studies. Thus, from his point of view, the collection was especially valuable because it provided comparative material on which to base arguments on human development and evolution. The collection was purchased for the university museum for the cost of 533 Finnish Marks, which was a significantly higher price than what was paid at the time for most comparable acquisitions. The Finnish Geographical Society purchased Rautanen’s collection of plants and received some mineral samples as a donation.

Aawambo Life Illuminated

Rautanen was requested to compile an object catalog and submit it with the artefacts. Entitled “Descriptions of Ndongan Ethnographic Objects from Ndonga” (*Selityksiä ndongalaisille etnografisille esineille*), the catalog consisted of detailed descriptions of each of the 127 artefacts purchased for the museum. It is quite likely that this amount covered most of the items Rautanen had amassed in the Owambo area. As mentioned, separate items were sold or donated to schools and possibly to friends and relatives. Rautanen is also known to have kept some items for himself to be shown in the context of public speeches. Some artefacts, for instance a model of an Ondonga household, which Rautanen had himself constructed, ended up being stored with the Finnish Missionary Society.

The object catalog was carefully compiled and it clearly shows that Rautanen considered himself to be an expert who was able to disseminate his knowledge to the Finnish public about the culture and living conditions of the Owambo area. Knowing that he would soon depart to Africa once again, Rautanen felt the need to share his knowledge and thus ensure that the objects remained comprehensible in the Finnish context. This was not always the case with late nineteenth-century collections: Rautanen’s Aawambo collection stands out as an early attempt to store contextual information in addition to the actual objects.

Rautanen divided the catalog into seven categories, according to the function of artefacts. The biggest category was weapons and it constituted 37% of all artefacts. Other categories included clothing and accessories (20%), pipes, snuffboxes and other “necessaries” (13%), dishes (12%), amulets (12%), tools (6%) and musical instruments (1%). After first giving the local name of each object, Rautanen described the meaning and purpose of each item, as well as the materials they were made from and the techniques used to produce them. At times, descriptions included information about the typicality or value of items. Certain descriptions included lengthy accounts or detailed anecdotes about the objects. As far as snuffboxes are concerned, for instance, detailed accounts were given about the connection of the use of snuff to Aawambo hospitality and practices of reconciliation. Another example shows how a description of *oonyoka* necklaces expanded into an account about the practices of exchange between the Aawambo and Herero peoples. The object catalog thus drew a vivid picture of the living conditions and everyday life in the region.



Martti Rautanen gave a vivid description of *oonyoka* necklaces.
The Finnish Heritage Agency.



Artefacts from the Rautanen Collection.
The Finnish Heritage Agency.



The Collection Ends up in Storage

Rautanen hoped that by selling his artefact collection to the Museum of History and Ethnography at the Imperial Alexander University he could ensure that it was accessible to scholars and the general public alike. However, the collection was acquired by the university at a very turbulent time. One year after the acquisition of the collection, in 1893, the university museum became part of a newly-founded national organization, which later became the National Museum of Finland. During the following decades the new museum did not have a permanent site, and, due to a severe lack of exhibition premises, practically all foreign artefacts were packed and kept in storage. The situation remained unchanged when the new purpose-built National Museum was opened to the public in 1916. It was only with the establishment of the Museum of Cultures in the center of Helsinki and the opening of its permanent exhibition in 2004 that a number of the objects collected by Rautanen could be placed on display. Unfortunately, the museum closed only a decade later and the artefacts of non-Finnish origin – including the Rautanen Collection – were put into storage once again.

After his short visit to Finland, Rautanen returned to Africa to undertake fieldwork in Olukonda in October 1892. During the following decades he participated in various collection campaigns organized by German ethnologists and ethnographical museums. These collections ended up in museums in Berlin and Leipzig, as well as in Natal in South Africa. Six hundred ethnographical

objects are associated with Rautanen. His collaboration with Hans Schinz continued and Rautanen sent botanic samples and meteorological observations to Swizz organizations for decades after the two had initially met in Owambo.

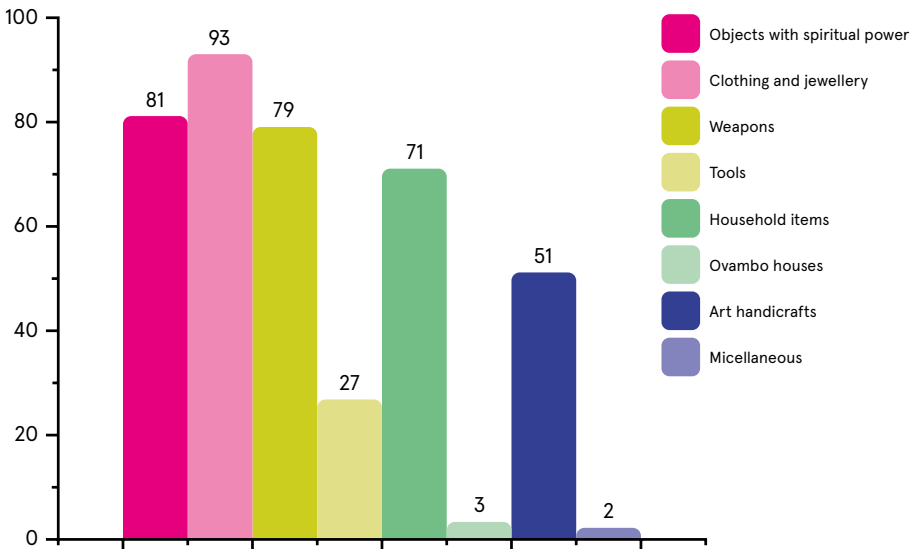
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A Joint Effort: Owambo Agency in the Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection

Kaisa Harju

The Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection is the second largest collection of Aawambo material culture in Finland. It contains over 700 objects and “natural samples” from Northern Namibia (formerly known as Owambo). Approximately 400 objects and 225 natural samples were amassed by the missionary Karl Emil Liljeblad (1876–1937) during his missions to Africa between 1900–1907 and 1912–1919 and his ethnographic field trip to Owambo between 1930–1932. The collection embodies different aspects of the everyday life of the Aawambo. It includes containers and dishes made from palm leaf, wood and calabash, as well as jewelry, hair pieces, amulets and belts for healing and protection, healer and diviner instruments, weapons, wands, agricultural implements, musical instruments, tobacco containers and wooden sculptures.



Aawambo objects in the Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection prior to his death (1900–1937).

The collection is closely linked to the life of Emil Liljeblad. However, it should be seen as a product of common effort, since many people took part in its formation. After Liljeblad's death, his eldest daughter, Aune Liljeblad (1905–1990), organized the collection. She also supplemented it with sixty-two artefacts and two natural samples, as well as writing the main catalog that contained information on objects. She eventually donated the collection to the University of Oulu. What is more, the collection was coproduced by the Aawambo. Its content was determined by status and the personal interest of Liljeblad, but also by the motives and customs of the Aawambo who decided (or in the case of spiritual objects might have been obligated to) to donate or sell their objects to Liljeblad – or withdraw certain artefacts from exchange.

This text will map the role of the Aawambo people in the Liljeblad Collection. The obvious challenge with this task is that Liljeblad wrote little about his collecting activities. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ethnographic collecting was considered a mundane part of colonial life and was rarely mentioned in letters or diaries. Even those who had a more scientific grasp of ethnography often saw objects mainly as a self-evident proof of cultural traits and were seldom interested in writing down the histories of individual objects. We simply do not know to whom each object in the Liljeblad Collection previously belonged or when or from which Owambo kingdom they were collected. Still, the collection itself provides physical proof of local agency. By looking at the content of the collection – what kind of objects it contains – and by comparing it to the fragmented historical evidence and previous research on collecting and Aawambo culture, it is possible to draw some general conclusions on how Aawambo people participated in the formation of the collection.

Traders, Friends and Converts

Liljeblad arrived in Owambo for the first time in 1900 as a missionary of the Lutheran Finnish Missionary Society (FMS). He was not the only Finnish missionary, nor the first to collect Aawambo objects from northern Namibia. Finns had amassed local artefacts – some just a few souvenirs and some formidable collections – since the beginning of the Finnish Owambo Mission in 1870. What is particular about Liljeblad as a collector, however, is that he

seemingly brought more Aawambo objects to Finland than any other individual missionary. Second, most of the objects in the Liljeblad Collection were gathered on his ethnographic field trip of 1930–1932, which was one of its kind in the context of the Finnish Owambo Mission.

One explanation as to why Liljeblad obtained fewer objects during his fifteen years as a missionary than his two years as a researcher might be that he was simply less active as a collector prior the 1930s. It was relatively easy for Finnish missionaries to obtain certain local objects even when they were not systematically amassing a collection. Exchanging material goods with local communities was an integral part of gaining more of a foothold for the Owambo Mission. Missionaries understood trading and reciprocal gifts not only as a mean to get necessary basic supplies, but also as a way to stay on good terms with converts and the Owambo kings, who had the power to expel Finns from their territory. It is likely that Liljeblad also received many of his objects gifts in connection to his missionary work.



Liljeblad in his study in Oniipa Missionary Station. Note the palm leaf containers under the table: this type of object might have been used as a household item at the mission stations and included in the ethnographic collection only at the point when Liljeblad returned to Finland. The Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection, University of Oulu.

Both elite and non-elite Aawambo were eager to exchange goods with missionaries. They directly affected the collection by deciding what objects were appropriate to convey as either gifts or payments. Liljeblad wrote that the Aawambo offered him items, such as knives, ostrich feathers and wooden cups. This type of transaction served at least two purposes. First, it served as a means of acquiring valued European goods. Second, the objects could be used as strategic gifts in order to strengthen social ties with Finns, who provided useful services, such as treatment for illnesses or paid work in the missionary stations. The Liljeblad Collection contains a high number of common household items, such as arrows, wooden cups and palm leaf containers. The Aawambo were most likely happy to trade such objects, as they were easily replaceable and did not hold any specific religious and social value. Some of the unused dishes, wooden tobacco containers and wooden sculptures were specifically designed and manufactured to be traded with missionaries. The collection also contains luxury items, such as omba (seashell) and ivory jewelry. Some unique gifts, like knives in copper sheaths, were also considered as fitting gift of honor from the local royalty. This likely explains why Liljeblad received this item as a token of appreciation from the king and Aawambo elite. Missionaries were sometimes a nuisance for the king, but they were also useful as advisers and traders. Thus, a good relationship and successful negotiations – marked by an exchange of gifts – were mutually beneficial.

The Liljeblad Collection contains more objects supposedly invested with spiritual power than any other Aawambo collection in Finland. It includes power-belts, amulets and instruments used by healers and diviners. Most of these items were collected during Liljeblad's ethnographic field work. However, Liljeblad was able to obtain some of them during his missionary period. After his resignation from the FMS in 1919, he displayed these objects as examples of the "witchcraft" of Aawambo people in an exhibition called "the Africa Room" in his Finnish parsonages in Kirvu (1920–1922), Simpele (1922–1924) and Ruskeala (1924–1937).

The Aawambo considered sharing religious customs with outsiders to be a taboo. It is likely that Liljeblad received objects with spiritual power mainly from Aawambo converts, who were obligated to give up all items that missionaries understood to be relics of "heathenism". The renouncement of "heathen clothes" was in some instances overseen by Liljeblad. These objects were then

either destroyed or added to the missionary collection. The Aawambo converts, who gave up the objects in order to become part of a Christian congregation, were not necessarily aware that missionaries would preserve the very same items that they were systematically eradicating from Owambo.

Collectors and Mediators

So far, I have spent two weeks in Engela. I was able to set my eagles free. Now they are flying from carcass to carcass. I myself sit here, surrounded by great friendliness, and dig now and then something deeper about life ...

Karl Emil Liljeblad to missionary director Matti Tarkkanen, Engela, 27 December 1930

In the 1930s, Liljeblad's main aim was to collect oral folklore about poetry, songs and spiritual customs from eight Owambo polities: Oukwanyama, Ondonga, Uukwambi, Ongandjerna, Ombalantu, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi and Eunda. This work later took form in Liljeblad's ethnographic manuscript "Afrikan amboheimojen kansantietoutta" [Folklore of the Aawambo People of Africa]. His ethnographic work was motivated by the salvage paradigm. Liljeblad believed that Aawambo customs would disappear in a few years due to "Christianization" and the "European way of life". He actively sought and purchased Aawambo objects in order to provide physical evidence of the dying customs that had been described in oral folklore. Most of the Aawambo were still non-Christian, but it seems that religious, social and economic change in Owambo made some Aawambo more ready to sell also objects invested with spiritual power. Liljeblad wrote in 1931 that he was now able to buy spiritual objects and rare "regalia" that were "previously thought to be almost impossible to get".

It is important to notice that Liljeblad did not collect ethnographic material alone. In the quotation above, "his eagles" refer to the Aawambo teachers, who collected mainly oral folklore, but also ethnographic objects for Liljeblad in 1930–1932. Liljeblad send each of his 25 assistants to different Aawambo communities to write down Aawambo customs. He paid both his assistants and informants, which likely encouraged them to participate in the research. He also gave his



Liljeblad in “the Africa room” in Ruskeala, Finland.
The Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection, University of Oulu.



Liljeblad also used photography for recording Aawambo customs and objects. This photo depicts artefacts used at a girl’s initiation ceremony, *Ohango*, in the early 1930s. The Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection, University of Oulu.

assistants a motivational speech, where he explained – at least to some extent – why folklore was collected. Liljeblad wrote that many of the assistants were enthusiastic about gathering ethnographic material. Since they were Christians working closely with the Finnish Owambo mission, it is possible that they shared a similar motivation for collecting with Liljeblad: preserving Aawambo heritage for future generations before it died out due to changes in religious beliefs.

It is evident that without the Aawambo assistants, Liljeblad would not have been able to gather such a vast corpus of Aawambo folklore. Due to scant historical evidence, however, it is more difficult to say for certain, what the assistants' precise role regarding the acquisition of objects. As a former missionary, Liljeblad knew the language and customs. He had his own established ties with Aawambo communities. Therefore, he could gain access to objects that were not available for travelers just passing through. Still, Liljeblad was, for example, able to purchase an onkiinda (a healer's basket with equipment) from a diviner woman only because one of his informants, Jairus Uugwanga, introduced him to the diviner. It is plausible to assume that the Aawambo assistants worked in this way as cultural brokers, who, while gathering oral folklore, had a formative role in connecting Liljeblad to suitable leads on objects. They might have even enabled Liljeblad to purchase the artefacts that were previously excluded from exchanges between missionaries and Aawambo.

Conclusion

The Karl Emil Liljeblad Collection embodies cross-cultural interaction and negotiated exchange between the missionary collector Liljeblad and members of the Aawambo community. It was formed as a joint effort. Although Liljeblad had ideas about what a collection should contain, this could not be realized without the Aawambos' active participation. They designed and manufactured the objects and decided what to exchange with Liljeblad and what to withdraw from transaction. Both elite and non-elite Aawambos were eager to trade and exchange gifts with Liljeblad, and the collection contains a high number of common household items, weapons and jewelry as a proof of bartering and cementing friendly relationships. The Aawambo also had a crucial role to play as producers of ethnographic knowledge during Liljeblad's ethnographic research

between 1930–1932. They worked as informants, collectors and mediators, and participated directly in gathering oral folklore, and also traced objects for Liljeblad. Without their contribution, Liljeblad would not have been able to gather such a broad collection.

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Relief and Salvation: The Famine Relief Activities of Finnish Missionaries in the Ondonga Region, 1908–1909

Essi Huuhka

When the first Finnish missionaries arrived in the Ondonga kingdom in 1870, their goal was to spread the Christian message and to create local parishes. Their work took many forms during the subsequent years. Popular imagery used to portray missionaries preaching to local people under the canopy of trees, but in reality the missionaries also had to take care of their households, socialize with the local people and the local king, provide medical aid, trade, learn the local language and then translate religious texts, and write dozens of letters to Europe – among other things. The Finnish missionaries also distributed relief, which peaked in the years of famine in 1908 and 1909 that occurred when the crops failed.

In this text, I concentrate on the famine in Ondonga at this time as an example of relief carried out by Finnish missionaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, poor relief was a continuous part of the work performed by the Finnish missionaries in German South West Africa. Poor relief included distributing famine food, objects and other goods, such as pearls, tobacco or clothes, for the needy local people. At that time, German South West Africa had just endured the Herero and Nama genocides and the German interest in Owambo was increasing. In May 1908, the military officer Victor Franke visited Ondonga and the Finnish missionary Martti Rautanen worked as his interpreter and guide during this visit. Some months later a serious famine hit the region.

The Finnish missionaries first came into contact with the Aawambo in the 1870s. The mission stations became places visited by the local population for a variety of reasons. They were places for socializing, getting medical aid (especially after the first medical doctor, Selma Rainio, who was later known as Kuku, arrived in 1908), learning to read and write, learning about Christianity, becoming acquainted with western lifestyles and also to trade with the



Local people gathered at the mission station in 1911.
The Finnish Heritage Agency. Photograph: Hannu Haahti.



missionaries. In this regard, unsurprisingly, many local people who suffered hunger when the crops failed, also looked for support at mission stations. This happened in 1908 and 1909.

The food that was distributed was usually millet plant (*omahangu*). The Finnish missionaries used to buy food from nearby regions where food was less scarce, but in 1908–1909 they also received supplies from the German administration. This was linked to Franke's visit to Ondonga some months earlier. Rautanen wrote to Franke and asked if it was possible to receive some famine food in the north of the region. This was the first time German famine food was sent. They mainly sent flour, rice and preserved vegetables, but the local people and the missionaries criticized the quality of the food. The missionaries wrote in their letters that many Aawambo would have rather eaten omahangu than rice. Another practical problem was that the missionaries had to transport the food from Outjo to Owambo, meaning a long journey with the missionaries' ox wagons.

The missionaries described their concrete actions in the letters they sent to Finland to be published in the missionary society's periodical, entitled *Suomen Lähetysseuran*. In their letters, the missionaries described their organized efforts to distribute relief. The missionary Anna Glad, for example, wrote about how she wrote down the names of the receivers. She probably abandoned this practice later as she noticed it was impractical. Another way to distribute food in an orderly manner was to organize the people in lines and to call them one by one. In their letters, missionaries also wrote that the portions were quite small, but they were convinced that it was better than nothing. These letters need to be read in context: they were meant to be read by so-called "missionary friends", meaning those Finns who were interested in the missionary work and who were potential donors. Consequently, the missionaries needed to create an image that underlined the reasonable character of their efforts.

In order to make ends meet and also to prove to the donors and the board of directors of the Finnish Missionary Society that their actions were rational, the missionaries wrote about how they categorized the Aawambo according to need. This was necessary in order to convince the readers and supporters that aid was only distributed to those who really were poor and were suffering from a scarcity of food. Thus, the missionaries distinguished between the deserving and those in less urgent need of food. In general, the question of being able to accurately

identify a real need for sustenance had been at the center of discussions relating to poor relief for centuries, and the same discussion is relevant in the twenty-first century. For example, Martin Luther wrote about deserving and less deserving poor and the principles of poor relief in the sixteenth century, and it was still a relevant question at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, in the case of the famine relief in Ondonga, it is interesting to note that the categorization was not connected to the recipients' religious convictions. This meant that food relief was given to local Christians as well as non-Christians. This is noteworthy because usually a distinction according to the religious belief was the most relevant factor for the missionaries.

The relief by the Finnish missionaries can be understood as a necessity, as they had to get along with the local people. In this regard, they also undertook general trade with the indigenous population. Thus, providing food exchanges and also distributing emergency aid during the food crises was a natural form of their everyday work. However, their relief work also had a religious background. It was based on the teachings of the Bible and old philanthropic traditions. In Europe, Christian philanthropy has long roots and Christian charity was also a common phenomenon in Finland. The Grand Duchy of Finland was a rural land in the late nineteenth century. During the severe famine of 1866–1868 around eight per cent of the population died of hunger in Finland. Eastern and northern parts of Finland were still relatively poor at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, the missionaries had personal experience of poverty and food shortages even before they arrived at their mission station in southern Africa.

The religious background and strong Christian faith of the Finnish missionaries could be a reason why they decided to help both local Christians and non-Christians. The idea of brotherly love and the stories and teachings of Jesus in the New Testament underline the model that no distinctions should be made between worthy recipients. Furthermore, the missionaries viewed the famine as an act of God. The Finnish missionaries understood the biological and geographical reasons behind the famines, but ultimately they believed that it was God's will. Famine and relief depressed many missionaries and many wrote in their letters about how exhausted they were, but they trusted that God had a reason for his actions. Leaning on God and their faith gave the missionaries strength and a motive to push forward.

Christian values guided the practical and religious work by the missionaries at every level. Preaching in general was an important part of the daily missionary work. Religion was also present in the situations in which food was given to the poor. It can be argued that the Finnish missionaries fed both the bodies and souls of the receivers, because the distributed food was combined with the religious message of Salvation. After the missionary hospital was built in the early 1910s, evangelists also worked there. Thus, evangelism was also part of the famine relief. In their letters the missionaries described how they delivered speeches, sang hymns and organized full religious services when people gathered at the missionary station. The missionaries could also speak to the needy on an individual basis. Only after this religious prelude was the food distributed. Even though the recipients of relief were effectively compelled to listen, the missionaries understood this as a functional method and they thought that it could eventually lead to conversions.

To conclude, the Finnish missionaries had many differing motives for undertaking their famine relief. The most significant factor was probably their Christian faith and religious worldview. Poor relief traditions and local circumstances also created the preconditions in which the missionaries worked. Even though the Finnish missionaries offered help, their actions and food stocks were limited. Nevertheless, given relief played an important and vital role, especially for those Aawambo who had no other source of nutrition at the height of the famine. The Finnish missionaries offered both secular relief and religious salvation. It remains unknown how many Aawambo were converted as a direct result of receiving food relief during the famine. Nonetheless, crises like the famine of 1908–1909 created situations that made the Finns and Aawambo come together.

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The Finnish Medical Mission in Owambo and Kavango, 1900–2010

Kalle Kananoja

Finnish missionaries played a leading role in the development of healthcare in today's northern Namibia until the independence of the country in 1990. During South African colonial rule, Finns were for a long period practically the only people to practice biomedicine among the Aawambo. As elsewhere in colonial Africa, medical practices were socially and politically contested in South West Africa. Missionary medicine not only shaped healthcare, but also the identities and cultural practices of the Aawambo.

The Finnish medical mission gradually took a political role in the ideological contest between South Africa's apartheid regime and the Swapo resistance movement during the guerrilla war (1966–1988). Warfare and healthcare became intertwined with apartheid politics and aggression. Thus, the Finnish missionaries became politically conscious in the fight against South African oppression.

The Early Development of the Medical Mission

When the first missionaries arrived in Owambo, local concepts of illness differed from those held by the newcomers. Magical beliefs connected to illness, death and childbirth were vastly different to European concepts of health, and were not easily eradicated. Healthcare was an important part of missionary work, even before the arrival of the first trained medical doctors and the formal establishment of clinics and hospitals. Despite their rudimentary medical skills, the reputation of missionaries as healers spread widely among the people. These early activities undermined the authority of traditional Ovambo healers and also helped establish trust between the Ovambo and the missionaries.

Dr. Selma Rainio arrived in Owambo in December 1908 and settled in Oniipa. Rainio worked alone, meaning that in practice she also assumed the duties of a

nurse and a pharmacist. A few years later, trained nurses began to arrive from Finland. Onandjokwe Hospital, constructed in Oniipa in 1910 and inaugurated on 9 July 1911, was gradually extended with both smaller and larger buildings for dwelling and healthcare purposes. Inpatients and their families stayed in huts erected for the purpose.

The provision of healthcare services was not only about medicine, but also about religious ambitions and proselytizing. Providing medicines that could heal attracted locals to the missionary hospital, where the missionaries soon approached them with their religious aims. This strategy succeeded in the long term. Even people who wanted to have little to do with missionaries in general could be approached by means of medical care.

Early missionary medicine often sought legitimation through grand displays of Western medical technology. Vaccination and surgery represented the most spectacular forms of specialized knowledge possessed by missionary doctors as they sought to cure African bodies. Medical work was suffused by the religious convictions of physicians and nurses, and educational endeavors formed a central part of the medical work of missionaries. This included the training of African auxiliaries to serve in mission hospitals.

Health training formed an integral part of the medical mission and was a matter of necessity, since only by training local people was it possible to satisfy the needs of the rapidly-expanding health services and to raise general standards of health. Schools made use of the Selma Rainio's textbook on hygiene, written in Oshindonga. Health education and advice on cleanliness were offered to hospital patients. The first hospital workers were men, but women began to be employed later. The training of auxiliary nurses started at Onandjokwe in 1930. Educational standards were gradually raised as more textbooks began to be produced in Oshindonga. In 1961, the training school of auxiliary nurses was officially recognized by the South African Nursing Council. The official training of midwives began in 1965.

If the healing practised by the missionaries had already undermined traditional medicine, the arrival of doctors and nurses was even more significant. Many Ovambo leaders began to rely on the modern biomedicine offered in Onandjokwe Hospital. Sometimes patients had to stay for longer periods in the hospital, and were in constant contact with missionary proselytising. Yet, writing in the late 1960s, Dr. Hannu Kyrönseppä noted that traditional disease concepts

still held sway among many patients, who did not have complete confidence in modern medical science.

The construction of Onandjokwe Hospital did not mean that healthcare ceased at other mission stations. Instead, medical services were still provided by missionaries at other stations as they had been before the arrival of Dr. Rainio. Missionaries often turned to her for advice, but continued to treat people with medicines and practices that were perhaps not completely up-to-date.

Medical help gradually expanded into other regions. Linda Helenius, a nurse, established a small out-patient clinic among the Kwanyama, in 1922. A little later, an in-patient hut with a couple of rooms was also constructed. Dr. Rainio performed her last years of service (1936–1938) in Engela, where the hospital then consisted of a two-room out-patient clinic, as well as eight huts for in-patients and four additional huts for patients who suffered from infectious diseases. In 1933, Helenius established another base for medical work in Eenhana, assisted by an Ovambo auxiliary nurse named Rakel Kapolo. In the 1930s, the clinic network also spread to western Owambo, where Nakayake Hospital was established in Ombalantu. Medical services in Owambo expanded even further in the 1950s. Due to a shortage of medical doctors, clinics were usually run by nurses.

Medical Work in Kavango

The Finnish Missionary Society began its work in the Kavango River region in the 1920s with the establishment of a mission station in Nkurenkuru. Finns began medical work in Kavango in 1951, when a nurse was placed at the mission station of Mpungu on the western border of Kavango. The first Finnish doctor, Anni Melander, arrived in Kavango in 1952, when she moved from Onandjokwe to Nkurenkuru. Two or three Finnish nurses had also worked in the State Hospital of Rundu in Kavango since 1953. The Royal Catholic Mission was also active in Kavango and competed with the Finns in the provision of healthcare services. There were several Catholic mission hospitals in the area. In addition, the Dutch Reformed Mission was working in Maseru from the early 1960s.

After Melander's death in 1957, medical work in Kavango was led by Dr. Håkan Hellberg, who wrote a lively memoir of his work in the region, and whose spouse Marita served as a nurse. When they arrived in Nkurenkuru, the clinic



Selma Rainio as photographed by Daniel Nyblin's Atelier (ca. 1900–1920).
The Finnish Heritage Agency.

officially offered fifty hospital beds, but in reality they only had three actual beds. Most patients slept on a mat on the floor. The number of in-patients was often between 40 and 60, although Dr. Hellberg sometimes found it difficult to differentiate between patients and their family members who stayed in the hospital. A substantial number of patients came from the Angolan side of the border, sometimes speaking languages that were barely understood by the Kwangali-speakers in Nkurenkuru.

Healthcare under South African Rule

After the First World War, South West Africa was administered by the Union of South Africa. South African healthcare practices were discriminatory and led to a deterioration in the health of the local black population. As elsewhere in colonial Africa, the South African medical administration primarily strove to sustain the labor supply of black people and to protect the health of the whites. This led to the low quality or total absence of healthcare infrastructure, such as hospitals. The medical staff stationed in the north were there to handle the recruitment of men for labor contracts, conducting examinations and giving immunizations. Missionary societies were left to provide healthcare to local people.

Onandjokwe Hospital continued to offer curative treatment and primary care. Patients commonly suffered from malaria, venereal diseases, influenza, leprosy and various injuries. Malaria was rampant during the heavy seasonal rains. Vaccination campaigns against smallpox, the plague, diphtheria and poliomyelitis were carried out in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1958, a fire in Onandjokwe Hospital destroyed huts and other buildings. These were replaced with modern inpatient wards, a maternity ward and a clinic, as well as a ward for infectious diseases and a tuberculosis ward.

Healthcare services continued to expand elsewhere in Owambo. In the 1960s, there were 28 clinics and small hospitals throughout Owambo. South Africa subsidised the Finnish medical mission irregularly and insufficiently from the 1930s, making a small contribution in relation to the number of people living in Owambo.

In Owambo, the first government hospital was only opened in 1966 in Oshakati. Designed according to the ideology of the apartheid regime, white

patients were offered a higher standard of care than blacks. Furthermore, white and black staff were accommodated separately and not allowed to socialize outside work hours. Finnish nurses found this intolerable and gave in their notices quite quickly, and also refused to register as white nurses.

The Finnish missionaries' view of South Africans and apartheid were divided between criticism and acceptance. In the 1960s, the missionaries generally kept a low profile regarding apartheid as South Africa funded the medical mission and could control the missionaries' presence in the region by refusing to issue visas. The South African government depended on the medical mission's contribution to healthcare in Owambo, yet it was afraid that the missionaries would meddle in political issues. At the same time, OPO/SWAPO accused missionaries of being against the liberation movement.

Altogether, health services were extremely fragmented under South African rule, and varied in quality and accessibility in different areas. Finnish missionaries gained the trust of local leaders and the liberation movement, and openly began to support SWAPO's aims from the early 1970s. This strained relations with South Africans, who labeled the Onandjokwe Hospital "a terrorist hospital," as Catharina Nord has shown. The hospital received patients who had been involved in war-related incidents, and suffered from injuries caused by landmine explosions or shootings. However, nothing indicates that Onandjokwe Hospital was part of a warfare organization, and although wounded soldiers came for help, the hospital mainly cared for civilian patients.

The Finnish Medical Mission's Legacy in Independent Namibia

With the independence of Namibia in 1990, the new government had to remodel and reorganize the apartheid healthcare system. Superfluous hospitals were closed down and others were renovated and refurbished in order to modernize existing services. Many of these, especially in Owambo, were old missionary hospitals or clinics. The Finnish government financed the total replacement of Engela Hospital. The goal was to provide access to all Namibians within a 3-hour walking distance. High priority was put on maternal and child healthcare provision.

Onandjokwe Hospital, now run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia, was renovated and celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011. As reported by the *Finnish Medical Journal*, the hospital has suffered from a lack of resources, including staff. The number of Namibian medical doctors in Onandjokwe, as well as in other public hospitals, has remained low. The hospital has focused on improving the conditions for HIV-positive mothers. Another Finnish project has focused on eye diseases and eye disorders and the provision of affordable glasses for patients.

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Step by Step, Brick by Brick: The First Decades of the Onandjokwe Hospital

Heini Hakosalo

This chapter discusses the Onandjokwe Hospital – its facilities, equipment, personnel, patients, diseases and treatment methods – during the first decades of its existence. The development of the hospital was influenced by a variety of different actors and by different and sometimes conflicting religious, humanitarian and political interests.

First of all, there would not have been a hospital without Aawambo people supplying the patients, staff and the supporting community. The king of Ondonga had donated the land on which the hospital would stand, and his successors offered patronage and protection. Second, the hospital was owned by the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS), which paid the salaries of the Finnish staff and contributed towards the building and running costs. Third, the Finnish missionaries posted in Owambo relied on the services of the hospital, and the missionaries' meetings had a say in its affairs. The individual who left the deepest mark on the early history of the hospital was Dr. Selma Rainio (1873–1939), who founded the hospital in 1911 and ran it until 1932. She was succeeded first by Dr. Anni Melander, who worked at Onandjokwe from 1932 until 1938, and then by Dr. Aino Soini, the physician from 1938 to 1947. Fourth, the colonial powers also had a stake in the hospital. During the German period, prior to 1915, the hospital was minuscule and the German presence in the area relatively weak. The administration of South-West Africa (SWA), established as a South African mandate in 1920, had a firmer grip on the region and showed more interest in the Finnish medical mission. The administration subsidised the hospital on a more or less regular basis, and the Finns – somewhat grudgingly – delivered the statistics and reports it requested in return.

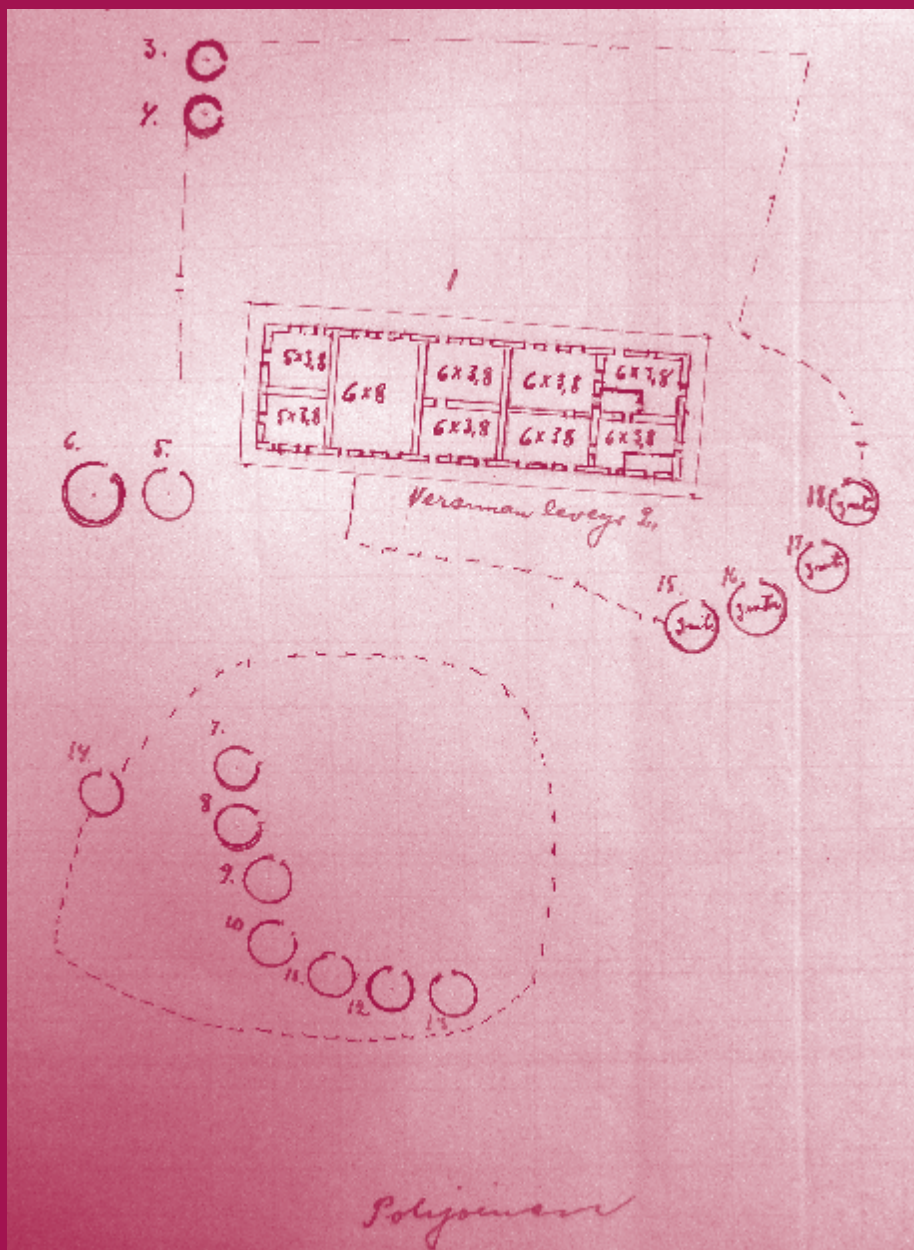
Facilities and Equipment

In 1904, when Rainio was still a medical student in Helsinki, she received a letter from Hilma Järvinen, a missionary posted in Ondonga. Järvinen expressed her joy over Rainio's decision to work in Africa one day and added sanguinely: "If you come, Selma, then of course there will also be a hospital." Järvinen was both right and wrong: there would indeed be a hospital, but it would be the result of a long and painstaking process rather than a foregone conclusion. Rainio arrived at the Oniipa Station in December 1908. She had a room at the station, but no facilities for medical work. Patients started coming as soon as she arrived. Their numbers were increased by a famine prevailing in Owambo that year. She saw them on the porch or in the yard, and a few huts were hastily erected for those too weak to return home.

Rainio devised a plan for a hospital. It comprised two buildings, one primarily intended as a dwelling for the Finnish staff and the other for the patients. The plan was mailed to the FMS Board for review in July 1909. Six months later, the Board agreed to finance one of the houses. The chosen site was a slightly elevated, treeless spot, 700–900 meters from the Oniipa Station. A missionary man was appointed to oversee the building work. This phase, too, took longer than expected. Rainio was able to move in January 1911, and the hospital was inaugurated in July 1911.



The inauguration of Onandjokwe Hospital on 9 July 1911.
FMS Archive, Finnish National Archive.



A drawing of the hospital in 1911. The drawing was made by Rainio and was included in the 1911 inspection report (FMS Archive, Finnish National Archive). The carriage shed lies outside the picture, and the round huts are – according to the ledger – somewhat misplaced with regard to the house.

The building was constructed of adobe brick and had an overhanging, tin-plated roof, supported by tree trunks. Its nine rooms included a kitchen and a dining room, the living quarters of the doctor and the nurses and a guest room. An examination and operating room were situated at one end of the house. Rainio was delighted to finally be under her own roof and was initially well pleased with the site: “Our house lies on an open ‘hill’ with a wide view to all directions. A cool breeze can be felt even at noon, with no trees or bushes to block it.” The downsides became apparent with time. Most importantly, it would prove difficult to find enough food and water for the cattle of two major mission stations so close to each other.

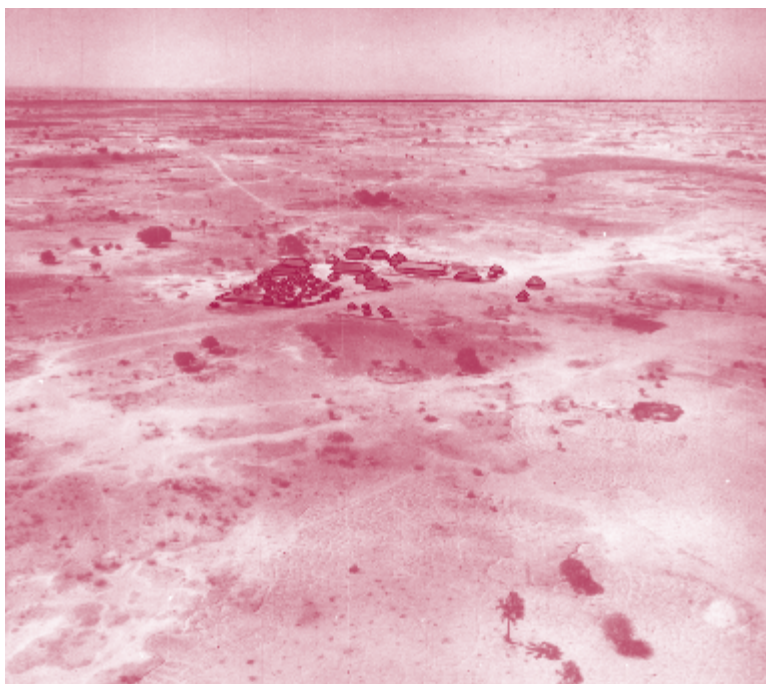
The next major undertaking was the construction of an outpatient clinic in 1912. Rainio, having learned her lesson, neither sought formal approval from the board in advance, nor asked a male missionary to lead the construction work. Rainio and her housekeeper, Selma Santalahti, oversaw the process themselves and also took part in the hands-on construction work. Rainio complemented Santalahti’s workmanship and referred to the building, with some pride, as “the clinic built by women”. The clinic had four rooms: an examination room, a pharmacy, an operating room and a maintenance room.

Rainio had placed her first native inpatients in small round huts because nothing else was available. The “hut system”, initially intended as a temporary solution, became a long-standing one. The small, round huts had a thatched roof and a door but no windows or furniture. The hospital provided the patient with a palm leaf mat or two, a blanket and some firewood. Patients cooked their own meals, either bringing the food with them or getting it from the hospital. In 1911, there were seven inpatient huts. In 1925, the number of huts was 23, including two huts for lepers at some distance from the others. Their number further increased in the 1930s. Onandjokwe inpatients were housed in huts until 1958, when a fire destroyed much of the hospital and led to its modernization.

The hut system had both economic, hygienic and social advantages. Huts could be built quickly and cheaply from local materials. The roof was easy to renew, and the interior walls could be repainted with clay when dirty. A badly deteriorated or defiled hut could be taken apart and replaced with a new one. In the aftermath of the devastating 1915–1916 famine, all the patient huts were taken down at once and gradually replaced with new ones. A further advantage was that a hut could accommodate the family member(s) who often accompanied a



Onandjokwe inpatient huts just before a storm.
FMS Archive, Finnish National Archive.



An aerial photograph of Onandjokwe Hospital in 1940, with the outlines of the major buildings accentuated. FMS Archive, Finnish National Archive.
Image enhancement: Ella Kantola.

patient to the hospital. Their presence added to patient sociability and wellbeing, and significantly reduced the workload of the salaried staff. In fact, it is doubtful that the small and overburdened Finnish nursing staff would have been able to cope without the contribution of the patients' family members.

A long-awaited new operation room was finished in 1939. The old one had been inadequate for some time. It was small, dark and difficult to keep clean. The roof was made out of lath and sealed with clay, and a sheet had to be hung between the roof and the operating table to prevent debris from floating from the roof to the operating area. As the main source of light was a large, east-facing window, operations had to take place during the morning hours. During night-time emergency operations, a person was needed to hold an electric torch. The need for a new operation room became more pressing when Melander replaced Rainio and surgical activities increased. FMS refused to pay for the building, but the SWA administration came to the rescue: Mrs. Hahn, the wife of the Native Commissioner, gave birth to their firstborn at Onandjokwe and the grateful father donated building materials for a new operating room.

The hospital was equipped in much the same way it as was constructed, that is, slowly and gradually. Rainio arrived in late 1908 with a set of medical instruments and a microscope. Mission supporters sent linen and bandages. When Rainio was returning to Africa after her first furlough (1919–1922), she managed to persuade the FMS Board to pay for six hospital beds (excluding mattresses). That she considered this a major achievement is an indication of the scale of FMS investment at the time. In 1932, the hospital equipment included a centrifuge, two scales and a steam sterilizer. By her second furlough (1933–1936), Rainio was already a minor celebrity in Finland and received many donations, including medical instruments, an X-ray machine and a generator. Various labor-saving devices also found their way into the hospital in the course of the 1920s and 1930s: they included a typewriter, a sewing machine, a telephone, a wringer and, last but not least, a mechanical mill for grinding grain.

Human Resources

The physician was the self-evident centre of the hospital. The Onandjokwe physician was also a station manager, a personal physician to all Finnish

missionaries and their families, and the head of the Finnish medical mission, which comprised not only the Onandjokwe hospital but also several dispensaries at various mission stations and a small hospital at Engela Station. When Melander arrived in Onandjokwe in 1932, she found a hospital that was in many ways different from the ones in which she had worked in Finland. However, it is clear that Onandjokwe was no longer a makeshift arrangement, but an institution with its own institutional culture and well-established practices. Melander thus wrote to a friend: “She [Rainio] has accomplished quite a feat here, having brought these buildings into existence and having organized the work. It’s like a machine that runs by itself, I just step in and take Kuku’s place. Of course there are things I would like to change, but these changes, too, need to be considered very carefully.”

A sole doctor can do little without nurses and other helpers. Rainio learned this the hard way during her first six months at Oniipa, when much of her time went into tasks that required no medical expertise whatsoever. The arrival of Selma Santalahti, a capable woman with some nursing training, in June 1909, was highly welcome but not sufficient to solve the workpower issue. The first trained nurses, Karin Hirn and Ida Ålander, came from Finland in July 1911. Shortage of trained nurses was a recurrent concern in Rainio’s correspondence. The number of Finnish nurses working at the hospital between 1909 and 1947 varied between two and four. Many of the nurses soon “wore out”, that is, they lost their physical stamina because of malaria or other diseases and overexertion.

The lack of trained nursing staff was, to an extent, compensated by Aawambo people being trained on the job. Rainio’s very first assistant was a young man called Silvanus, who worked at the hospital from 1909 until 1911, when he left to work in the mines. He was followed by many other male and some female auxiliary nurses and orderlies. The evangelist was a local man, as were the driver, the foreman and the cattle herders. The numerous “station children” also helped around the house and the hospital.

Regular training of native nurses started relatively late. Rainio was initially not keen on the idea, as she had come to believe that there were features in the local culture and society that made professional nursing and Aawambo people, and especially Aawambo women, a poor match. Rainio’s extreme workload probably played a role too; she was not eager to take on new tasks. But neither did she object when Karin Hirn launched the first nurses’ training course in 1930



The nucleus of the hospital staff: Selma Rainio standing and Selma Santalahti sitting. FMS Archive, National Archive.

and regular three-year courses in 1934. Rainio contributed to them by giving lessons on anatomy and physiology, and the health education handbook she had written in the Oshindonga language was used as a textbook. Towards the end of her life, Rainio gave credence to native nurses and regretted that she had not delegated them more responsibility earlier.

Patients and Treatment

When the nucleus of the hospital first came into being, Owambo was a population-rich area with practically no biomedical health care provision, but patients had no trouble finding the hospital. The number of patients varied considerably from year to year, but the general trend was upwards. In 1910, for instance, there were 4609 outpatient visits and 148 inpatient stays. In 1936, the hospital treated 5186 outpatients and 746 inpatients. The number of “beds” in the inpatient huts varied between 40 and 60 in the 1930s and 1940s.

Malaria was ubiquitous. Rainio was criticized in private for assuming that everyone suffered from malaria and that every disease was complicated by it. In 1911, the largest single disease category in the hospital records were various forms of severe anaemia, usually caused by intestinal parasites. Venereal diseases, tuberculosis, influenza, leprosy, tuberculosis, anthrax and plague also received a lot of attention in reports and correspondence. Drought and crop failure were accompanied by hunger-related conditions. These were particularly common in 1915–1916 and in 1930–1931.

Rainio mainly relied on medication to treat patients. She ordered drugs from Germany and Capetown, and asked and often received free samples from pharmaceutical companies. The SWA administration supplied quinine and Salvarsan, both of which were used in great quantities. The 1930s saw the introduction of insulin, still expensive and rare, and sulfa drugs, the first efficient broad-spectrum antibacterial family of drugs. Onandjokwe also played a role in implementing preventive measures. The staff vaccinated against smallpox and influenza, isolated lepers and TB patients and were affected by administration-imposed quarantines and disinfection campaigns.

Some diseases were more obviously political than others. During the interwar period, there was an evident correlation between the increase of labor

migration on the one hand and an upsurge in VD and TB cases on the other hand. This explains why the administration willingly subsidised the treatment of these diseases at Onandjokwe. Leprosy also became a political issue, as the administration forbade the Finns to treat lepers coming from the Angolan side of the border. Rainio found this restriction hard to live with, for both humanitarian and public health reasons.

Melander's arrival in 1932 heightened the relative importance of surgery at Onandjokwe. Rainio, who had no specialist surgical training, was reluctant to undertake major operations. This was a constant source of anxiety for her, and she started stressing early on that her successor must have a thorough education in surgery. Melander and Soini indeed took pains to acquire surgical skills before coming to Owambo. In the late 1930s and the 1940s, surgical activities were further boosted by the new operation room, as well as by the fact that some of the new nurses had experience of working in an operation room, and by an obliging district surgeon who could be consulted and asked to partake operations.

Making a Difference

In a 2014 article, Catharina Nord compared the outlook of Onandjokwe Hospital and Oshakati State Hospital (1966). The latter came into being within a short period of time as the result of a strategic and political decision. It was constructed from pre-fabricated elements imported from South Africa, and made no concessions to local customs or architectural traditions. Onandjokwe, on the other hand, was constructed mainly of local materials, and was a hybrid building that mixed features from Europe and Ondonga. My review of the early history of Onandjokwe fully supports Nord's view of the hybrid character of the hospital complex. Without the luxury of steady, plentiful resources, the hospital evolved gradually, and, as it were, organically. Chronic scarcity allowed for little top-down long-term planning and required a readiness to adapt to local circumstances.

The significance of the Finnish medical mission in general and the Onandjokwe hospital in particular is highlighted by the scarcity of healthcare provision in Owambo at the time. None of the other European doctors occasionally working in the region – the district surgeon, a doctor employed by

the diamond company, an Anglican missionary doctor – had a hospital at their disposal. The closest hospitals were in Windhoek and Swakopmund, hundreds of kilometers away, and they excluded black patients. Onandjokwe was no doubt a pioneering venture. Whether it had an impact on the overall health of the population is more difficult to ascertain, given the complex nature of such questions and lack of reliable population statistics from the period. However, as Notkola and Siiskonen (2000) point out, it seems highly likely that the preventive measures carried out by the Finnish medical mission did contribute to the clear drop in mortality that became evident in the 1950s.

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The Contribution of Finnish Missionaries Towards the Development of Oshiwambo Language and Culture

Petrus Angula Mbenzi

Oshiwambo is a Bantu language which belongs to the larger Niger-Congo phylum. According to S. Shifidi, Oshiwambo is one of the major indigenous languages in present-day Namibia with about a million speakers across the country. The Aawambo people make up half of the Namibian population, which is approximately 2.4 million. Furthermore, W. Zimmermann and P. Hasheela, Shifidi (2014) and P. Mbenzi confirm that the Oshiwambo language consists of about twelve dialects (Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Oshingandjera, Oshikwambi, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbandja, Oshimbalantu, Oshivale, Oshikwankwa, Oshikafima and Oshindombodhola). Speakers of these dialects understand each other because the morphology, syntax and semantics are similar. The differences are only in pronunciation and intonation. In addition, Oshiwambo has been serving as a medium for religious, socioeconomic, educational and some other administrative purposes for years. The Oshindonga and the Oshikwanyama dialects have been accepted as standardized written languages.

In ancient times, Oshiwambo was mostly used in oral form, but the arrival of Finnish missionaries led to the genesis of Oshiwambo in written form. The first group of Finnish missionaries arrived in Owambo on 9 July 1870. The aim of the Finnish was to convert the Aawambo to Christianity. Despite their primary aim of preaching the gospel, the absence of literature in Oshindonga prompted them to graphize, standardize and modernize Oshiwambo in order to use it to attempt to convert the Aawambo to Christianity. In addition to evangelizing, the Finnish missionaries offered training to the Aawambo in various fields, such as nursing, carpentry and education. The Oshindonga language was used as the means of instruction in these training programs. This article focuses on the efforts by the missionaries to graphisize, standardize and modernize the Oshiwambo language in general and the Oshindonga variety in particular.



Pietari Kurvinen developed the first Oshindonga primer.
Photograph: F. Springmeier. The Finnish Heritage Agency.

The Graphization, Standardization and Modernization of Oshiwambo

The first Oshindonga primer was developed by Pietari Kurvinen, one of the first missionaries to arrive in Ondonga in 1870. This primer was called *Okaambeendee* and appeared on 19 January 1877. It became available in Ondonga on 8 October 1877. Pietari Kurviven handed a copy of *Okaambeendee* to King Kambonde kaNankwaya of Aandonga, who was very pleased with the publication.

Another missionary, Liina Lindström, developed a grammar of Oshindonga in which she explained the morphology and the syntax of Oshiwambo. This was a pioneering contribution to the linguistics of Oshindonga. In 1942 Birger Eriksson also wrote a ten-page article in which he proposed a grammatical structure for Oshindonga that could be taught in schools.

The greatest contribution to the areas of lexicography, phonology, syntax and morphology of Oshindonga was made by Emil Toivo Tirronen. Tirronen produced an academic paper entitled *Phonology of Oshindonga* in 1958. In 1954 he produced an Oshindonga grammar book called *Elaka lyoomeme II*. In the ensuing years (1958–1960), Tirronen produced a series of Oshindonga grammar books for standards 1 to 3. During the same period, Tirronen, produced a new series of Oshindonga grammar books entitled *Elaka lyOshindonga*. This new series was produced for standard 1 to 6. The desperate need for Oshindonga grammar books for the junior secondary phase prompted Tirronen to develop a grammar book of Oshindonga for forms 1 to 3 (now grades 6 to 8) entitled *Elaka lyoomeme*. This book appeared in 1965.

In 1977 Tirronen produced a grammar book entitled *Oshindonga shetu* for junior and senior secondary phases. The book included the phonetics and phonology, syntax, morphology and semantics of Oshindonga. The last chapter of this book was also devoted to literary aspects, such as figurative language, poetic devices and literary genres. In addition to his contribution to the linguistics of Oshindonga, Tirronen made a contribution to the lexicography of Oshindonga. As a teacher and principal at Oshigambo High School, Tirronen had been collecting Oshindonga lexicon for over thirty years, which he developed into a dictionary. Sadly he passed away in July 1981 before the dictionary was published. Nonetheless, his daughter, Anni Karo, and other people prepared

the dictionary for publication. This Ndonga-English Dictionary was published in 1986 and it is the most comprehensive dictionary of Oshiwambo.

The Finnish missionaries developed various religious books in Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama respectively. The first hymn book, *Omaimbilo ga Piangula m'Oshindonga*, was compiled by the missionaries Tolonen, Skoglund, Reijonen and Veikkolin and was published in 1877 and printed in Finland. It comprised 57 hymns freely translated from Finnish and German origins and songs from Swedish *Pilgrimssånger*. The second hymn book edited by Rautanen and Reijonen, *Omiimbilo Noliturgia. Joshindonga* was printed in 1884 in Helsinki. It consisted of 56 songs and also contained a liturgical formula and other forms of church celebrations. The book *Okaramata k'omiimbilo* was completed in Finland in 1892.

The fourth edition, which had a run of 3000 copies, was printed in Helsinki in 1901. It comprised 204 hymns that had mostly been translated or written by Rautanen and edited by Pettinen and Savola. Rautanen not only translated the German hymns, but he also wrote lyrics to the old songs in Oshindonga. He thus became a remarkable poet, since 67 of his lyrics are still used in the present hymnal of the ELCIN. The fifth edition, *Omaimbilo gegongalo lja Kristus*, was published in 1921 with 335 hymns. It was edited by Rautanen, Tylväs, Liljeblad, Saari, Petäjä, Wäänänen and Alho. The following edition of the hymnal was compiled by Heikki Saari in 1933 with the assistance of the local pastors Sakeus Iihuhua and Martin Hepeni. It was the first hymn book edition printed in Oniipa Printing Press.

This edition also had a print run of 3000 copies. The translations from the Finnish song collection *Siionin Virret* (The Psalms of Zion) formed a part of the above-mentioned book. Saari compiled a book that mostly consisted of songs from the Finnish Pietist movement (Herännäisyys). The book *Omagalikanondjimbo* was published in 1936 by Herättäjähdistys. Many of these translations have been retained in the present hymn collection.

In Oukwanyama, where the Finnish missionaries started their work in 1921, A. W. Björklund put a lot of effort into compiling a hymn book in Oshikwanyama. The work was based on the books published by the Rhenish Mission in 1917–1918. These editions were reprinted in 1921, 1929 and 1930. There were 144 hymns from the Germans and the remaining forty-eight were Finnish contributions. In 1944, Björklund managed to get the book printed in

Windhoek in Meinert Press with a help of Major Hahn. In 1949 the first hymnal, *Ehangano*, meaning league, federation, association, society or union in English, was published. The name expressed the idea of the unity of different language groups. The book was a collection of both Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama hymns. It was edited by the committee of Alho, Saari, Kyllönen, Leonard Auala and A. W. Björklund, who was later replaced by K. Harjanne. It consisted of 640 hymns including 180 in Oshikwanyama and some of them written by an Owambo teacher, Gabriel Taapopi.

In 1950 Hukka wrote the entire *Ehangano* using this new system and thenceforth it was used in the training of the hymns in the church. The hymnal preceding the present edition of *Ehangano* was called *Omaimbilo*. It was printed for the first time in 1955 and in its final version in 1967 after several renewed editions. The work was initiated by E. Pentti, who died in 1959 in the middle of the process. It was continued by M. Kantele and G. Taapopi and was corrected by T. Tirronen, J. Mufeti and T. Ndevaetela. It was printed in Windhoek with a print run of 20,000 copies. It includes 665 hymns, including five from the Kavango hymnal that was published in 1960.

The present hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia is still called *Ehangano*. It was published by the ELOC Printing Press in 1987 and marked the first time such a text provided both staff and tonic sol-fa notation. The book was mainly edited by Magdalena Kambudu and T. Pennanen in collaboration with T. Ndevaetela.

In addition to the production of hymnal books, the missionaries also translated the bible into Oshindonga. L. Tolonen translated the catechism (*Katekismusa kashona*) and hymns into Oshindonga in 1877. In 1877 Martti Rautanen (Nakambale) started his Bible translation project, which he completed in 1882, but it was only published thirty-one years later. This Bible translation is referred to by the Aawambo as *Ombiimbeli yaNakambelakanene* (Nakambale's Bible). Nakambale initially translated the New Testament into Oshindonga (Matthew in 1891, Mark in 1892, Luke in 1895 and John in 1896). Nakambale's entire translation of the New Testament into Oshindonga appeared in print in 1903. He completed the translation of the Old Testament in 1923. The whole Bible was only published in 1954, because it went through a series of revisions as several missionaries and locals called for the work to be closely scrutinized. The publication was also stalled by a reform to the orthography of the Oshiwambo language.

In 1883, B. Björklund produced a reader for Oshindonga. Moreover, in 1884 and 1886 respectively T. Reijonen translated a liturgical book into Oshindonga (*Omiimbilo nOliturgia*). At the same time he also translated an Easter book entitled *Omeevangeli Omanene agehe gomumvo aguhe*.

Furthermore, the Finnish missionaries contributed to the preservation of Oshiwambo orature and culture. Rautanen collected numerous artefacts during the 1880s when he was a missionary in Ondonga Kingdom. Helmi Haapanen compiled a book of Oshiwambo proverbs called *Omayeletumbulo gAawambo*, which appeared in 1958. Similarly, Emil Liljeblad collected a number of Oshiwambo proverbs most of which appeared in Matti Kuusi's book entitled *Ovambo proverbs* in 1970. In addition, Liljeblad collected information on Aawambo magic, rituals and ceremonies and published his results in a book. Some of the proverbs included in this book were collected by Rautanen, Reijonen, Penttinen, Savola, Koivu, Laurmaa, Aarni, Närhi, Hynönen and Tirronen. Matti Kuusi also collected many Oshiwambo riddles and published a book entitled *Ovambo riddles* in 1974. Other primers and reading texts, such as *Kaandje* and *Shimbungu*, were produced by Toivo Tirronen and Joel Nakumbuata in 1962 and 1963 respectively. Erkki Laurmaa produced a history book entitled *Afrikauuningininomutenya* in 1949.

Another contribution in the field of literature and culture was made by Ernst Dammann and Toivo Emil Tirronen. They collected songs, praises, taboos, folktales and rituals. Their book, entitled *Ndonga anthologie*, appeared in 1975.

The Finnish missionaries also produced the first newspaper, entitled *Osondaha*, in the Oshindonga language. The first issue appeared in 1901. In the ensuing years, *Osondaha* was renamed *Omukwetu*. This newspaper was later published in two other languages: Oshikwanyama and Rukwangari.

Thus, the Finnish missionaries deserve credit for developing the Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama languages. The materials developed by Tirronen were translated into Oshikwanyama for primary and secondary schools respectively. The teaching of Oshiwambo at the University of Namibia today is attributed to the efforts of Tirronen, who developed a comprehensive grammar for Oshiwambo. We thank the Finnish missionaries for keeping Oshiwambo alive in written form and for promoting the use of Oshiwambo for instruction in various sectors, such as religion, nursing and carpentry. Their contribution to Oshiwambo continued after independence because Minna Saarelma-

Maunumaa obtained her doctorate degree in Oshiwambo personal names in 2003, while Riikka Halme obtained her doctorate degree in the tonal system of Oshikwanyama in 2004.

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The Finnish Mission's Relationship to Anglicans and Roman Catholics in South West Africa, 1919–1937

Kati Kemppainen

Until World War I, the monopoly of the mission work in Namibia (then German South West Africa) was held by two Lutheran missions: The Rhenish Missionary Society and the Finnish Missionary Society. The German regime practised a very anti-Catholic mission policy. Thus, The Roman Catholic mission had very little room to operate in the region. The same applied to the Anglican Church: as long as the area was ruled by Germany, the Church of England could not launch its own mission activities there.

However, an increase in the number of Roman Catholic missionaries towards the end of the nineteenth century put pressure on the German regime to mitigate its anti-Catholic legislation. The change in the restrictive policy occurred after the Herero Uprising of 1904–1907, which caused tremendous societal change in the country in general. Until this event, Catholic missionaries had had to restrict their activities to areas inhabited by European migrants, mostly in Windhoek and Swakopmund. After 1907 they were allowed to establish mission stations among the native population, although still with some restrictions imposed by the German colonialists. The Roman Catholic missionaries were very interested in Owambo and Okavango, but the former region remained closed to them. The mission work carried out in Owambo was strongly guarded by German officers and also by the Finnish missionaries. In Okavango, the Roman Catholic mission gained a permanent foothold in the 1910s.

As a result of World War I, the mission situation changed dramatically. Germany lost its colonies and the mandate of South West Africa was given to South Africa by the League of Nations. An important change took place when the Church of England was allowed to start its own mission: the Damaraland Diocese was established, with its first bishop being Nelson Fogarty. The

mission work was entrusted to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which advocated the High Church form of Anglicanism.

The new South African regime ended the monopoly of the Lutheran mission in Owambo. Since the area was heavily populated, other denominations were also motivated to begin missionary work in this region. Moreover, there were locals who had converted to either Roman Catholicism or Anglicanism during their working periods in Hereroland. This was one more argument used to pressure the government to open Owambo to other denominations. In July 1924 the government announced a territorial tribal division: the Finnish Mission was to keep Ondonga, Anglicans were allowed to settle in Oukwanyama and Roman Catholics were granted Uukwambi and Ongandjera. In addition, the Finns were allowed to keep the mission stations and schools that they had already established on the other tribal areas. However, expansion was limited to Ondonga.

These developments shocked the Finns deeply, because only the previous year had they been assured that their monopoly would remain intact in Owambo. Both the individual missionaries and the leadership of the society considered this as an insult against their status, legacy and long working history in Owambo. They might be able to accept the arrival of other mission societies, but not the restrictions that were put on their work and plans. As a result, the attitudes of the Finns grew more anti-British and more pro-Germany. They felt they had been deceived by the colonial powers, as they practically saw Owambo as their own property.

The Finnish Missionary Society engaged in a variety of tactics to advocate their agenda. The crisis should be solved, in their opinion, in a way that benefitted them best. The missionaries, led by Reinhold Rautanen, tried to persuade the tribal kings not to allow anyone else to settle on their territory. This was not a very successful initiative. Consequently, they had to abide to the decree to reinforce their existing work among the tribes that were handed over to other missions.

The management of the Finnish Missionary Society also undertook a serious campaign to guarantee its status in Owambo. The indifferent attitudes and strategies used by Roman Catholic missionaries did not surprise the Finns, but the arrival of the Anglicans was far more hard for them to understand since they were also Protestants, and they had not anticipated that they would act this way. There was a so-called “missionary comity” established within the international Protestant missionary movement, which was supposed to prevent missionaries from entering areas that were already occupied by other Protestant missions.

Thus, the arrival of Anglicans infuriated the mission director of the Finnish Missionary Society, Rev. Matti Tarkkanen. He immediately contacted Bishop Fogarty, the head of the Anglican missionary society and the Archbishop of Cape Town. Since these contacts were unsuccessful, he turned to the National Lutheran Council of America, which was known to be strictly confessional. The secretary of the Council, Rev. John A. Morehead, was eager to defend the freedom of a Lutheran mission when it was endangered, and therefore informed the Lutheran world about the incident in Owambo.

Tarkkanen also contacted the International Missionary Council, whose chairman, John R. Mott, sympathized with the Finns. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, was contacted via the Archbishop of Sweden, Nathan Söderblom, who was an influential ecumenian of the time. Understandably, the Archbishop of Canterbury was not keen to act, but showed only a polite and reserved attitude. The World Alliance in Finland was keen to help, but not even the skilled diplomacy of Rev. Aleksi Lehtonen had any positive results. The Anglican counterpart pleaded to the sovereignty of the Bishop of Damaraland over his diocese.

During his inspection tour of Owambo, Tarkkanen tried to influence Gysbert R. Hofmeyr, the administrator of South West Africa, but again without any results. The meeting between Bishop Fogarty and Tarkkanen was a total failure, and the crisis in Owambo culminated in a personal power struggle between those two individuals. Apparently, the arrival of Roman Catholics was not deemed to be as important as the arrival of Anglicans. The situation in Owambo was broadly reported in Finland by the major church magazine *Kotimaa*, as well as by mission magazines.

Finnish missionaries did not blindly obey the rule of tribal territorial divisions, even though they normally tended to emphasize their loyalty to the local colonial government. Tarkkanen encouraged his missionaries to intentionally overlook these restrictions. Thus, the situation in Owambo escalated, as all the parties were dissatisfied with the restrictions. Since the colonial government was also aware of the dire relationship between the missions, it was predictable that they would try to abolish territorial tribal divisions in 1926. The era of total missionary freedom now commenced, but not even this satisfied the Finns. Their desire to achieve the freedom to work did not, however, extend to other missions.

The immediate consequence of the freedom to work was positive for the

Finns. They were allowed to continue using their existing resources, whilst other missions were unable to take advantage of these opportunities and to expand their work. What, however, was the long-term impact of missionary freedom? The situation in Owambo developed quite interestingly, since each mission had distinctive advantages. According to the Finns, the Roman Catholic mission possessed the best material resources and had sufficient levels of staffing and solid finances. In theory, the Anglican mission was supported by the government, but apparently this did not materialize in practise. The Finns had gained a solid foothold by the 1920s, helped by their knowledge of the local culture and language.

The other missions did not become a real threat to the work of the Finnish Missionary Society in Owambo. The Anglican mission only remained in Oukwanyama and was minor in scale. They developed a cordial relationship with the Lutheran Finns and were able to co-exist in the area. This was not the case with the Roman Catholic mission. They mostly concentrated their efforts among the Ombalantu and Uukwambi tribes, but were met with animosity. The Finns kept an eye on the Catholic mission and accused them of suspicious work strategies, such as having a below-standard level of baptisms and trying to entice new pupils with the prospect of receiving clothes and sugar. They were also accused of neglecting Christian education and being far too tolerant of supposedly pagan practises. Rumors also circulated about the doubtful morality of Roman Catholic missionaries and their liberal attitude towards alcohol. Actual personal contact between Roman Catholics and Finnish missionaries, however, was rare.

The Finnish missionaries were keen to find out news about their rivals, but they were also clearly influenced by speculation and rumors. When it served their own aspirations, the threat of other missions was often exaggerated. This occurred when there was a need for extra funding for some purpose. Tarkkanen had to remind the Finnish missionaries that competition alone could not justify the expansion of their work.

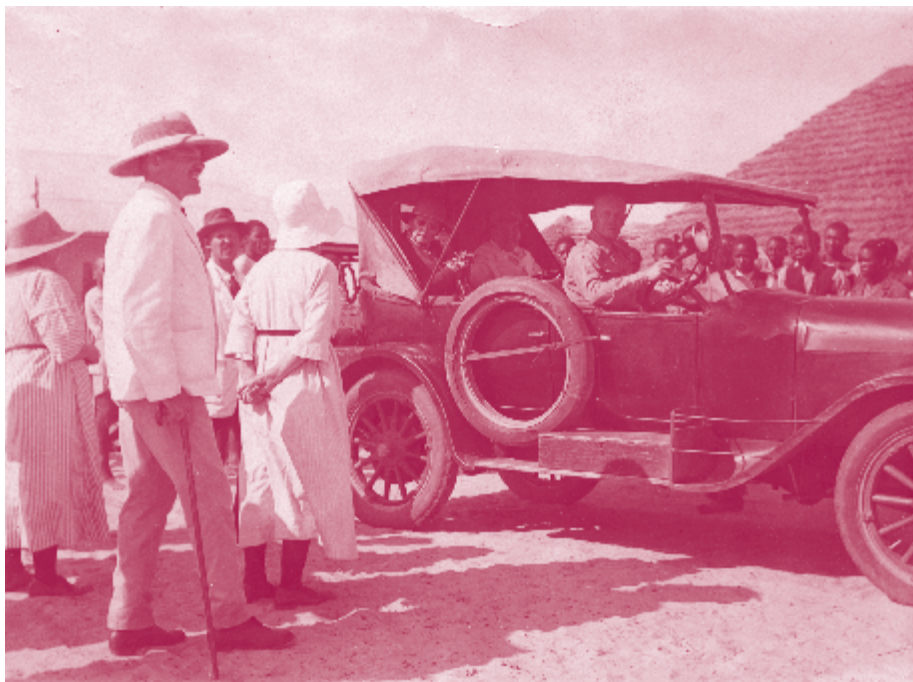
In 1929 the Finnish missionaries expanded their work into Kavango, where the Roman Catholic missionaries had already established their position. The Finnish missionary work was limited to the Kwangali tribe, whereas the Roman Catholics were influential in the eastern part of Kavango. Interestingly, the expansion of missionary work into Kavango was not unanimously approved of

by all the Finns in Owambo. Opposition centered on the argument that they were now acting in the same way as rival Christian confessions had behaved in Owambo only a few years earlier: they were now the intruders. The most eager spokesmen for moving into Kavango were the missionaries Aatu Järvinen and Tarkkanen, who did not find the situation to be paradoxical at all. In the 1930s, the mission work in Kavango remained rather modest, which was not reported truthfully in mission magazines nor in annual reports.

The arrival of other missions had clearly motivated the Finns. Now they had to pay more attention to the content and quality of their own work. The geographical expansion of their work and their focus on the teaching of Lutheran doctrine was a direct outcome of the arrival of the Roman Catholic mission. The Finns thought that their Christian mission would be a failure if they were to lose their position in Owambo to the Roman Catholics. The confessional competition culminated in the middle of the 1930s, when a controversy over school sites broke out and even the government had to interfere. Consequently, cooperation between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic missions broke down completely due to insurmountable doctrinal differences.

The role of local people remained minor in this confessional competition: the Finns were not very interested in the reactions of local tribal kings. This attitude shifted greatly as they seemed to favor the party that would provide them with most economic and political benefits. The local authorities also seemed to favor the Finnish mission. The same tendency can be found in the upper level of government, even though these links had to remain indirect. The Finns were extremely sensitive to the attitudes and reactions of local officials. Despite being critical, the Finns were favored by the local population in most cases at the expense of other missionaries. At this time, the general attitude of the Finnish missionaries was quite suspicious towards local officials. The missionary Valde Kivinen was able to confide in Charles Hahn, the local officer in charge. Kivinen knew the best methods of practising diplomacy with him. He managed to maintain the confidence of the authorities towards the Finns. He did this by emphasizing the importance of acting in strict accordance with the regulations. He avoided acting as arbitrarily as the Roman Catholic missionaries. He did his best to minimize the work opportunities of confessional rivals among the western tribes.

The relationship between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic missions remained very tense during these years, while the mutual understanding between the Finnish and the Anglican missions increased in the 1930s. Intercommunion between the Church of England and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1934. This had a surprising consequence on mission work in the region. When the new mission director, Uno Paunu, undertook his inspection tour to Owambo in 1937, he met the Anglican Bishop C. C. Watts. Bishop Watts expressed his willingness to withdraw the Anglican mission from Owambo and to leave the whole area to the Finnish mission. The positive progress of the Finnish-Anglican relationship did not occur because of a new doctrinal convergence between the churches. Instead it had much more to do with how the respective leaders of the two confessions interacted with each other and made decisions. Director Paunu and Bishop Watts had an opportunity to forge a mutual understanding, because their relationship was devoid of personal tension. This had not been the case with Tarkkanen and Fogarty. Similarly, Paunu and Watts were able to act in a considerably more diplomatic way than their predecessors.



Finnish mission workers received a Hupmobile car in 1925. Matti Tarkkanen sitting in the back seat. The Finnish Heritage Agency.

Nakayale Keengulu, a Center for Missionary Activities

Hertha Lukileni-lipinge

Nakayale, a village in north-central Namibia has been the home of Finnish missionary work since 1925. Nakayale has long been known as a mission station, where missionary events and undertakings were disseminated to other areas in the north of Namibia and some parts of southern Angola. I remember this because I attended Erkki Tauya Junior Secondary, named after a long serving principal of the school at Nakayale, which is one kilometer from the church. I attended school at Nakayale for six years, from 1989 until 1994, when I left for secondary school elsewhere. While I attended the junior secondary school, which was a little bit further from the church, I remember that there was a primary school, which is in very close proximity to the church.

Nakayale Primary School

The primary school was also established as a result of the efforts of Finnish missionaries, which stemmed from their early work at Oniipa and in Finland. The then colonial government granted the Finnish Missionary Society permission to operate at Nakayale. They provided 1962 yards of ground space. This approval provided for the church, the hospital and the school. However, the three different sections developed differently over time. First the church was fully established, then the school and the hospital in 1936.

The primary school was previously named Nakayale (Okeelele), but is currently named Sakeus Iihuhua Primary School, after the first 'local missionary' and pastor at the church. One of the first people to lead the school was John Mandume Ndatipo, a former principal. His father, the late Reverend Simson Ndatipo, was one of the first Namibian pastors to work in difficult conditions of mission work in southern Angola. Simson Ndatipo was one of the first local missionaries to travel to southern Angola to work among the community there.

He worked in the areas of Evale, Cassinga, Vila da Ponte, Ngalangi and others. He later led the Nakayale congregation.

Finnish Missionaries at Nakayale

Among the first missionaries to arrive at Nakayale was Heikki Saari. In 1919, while Saari was working in Ongandjera, he was commissioned by the Finnish Missionary Society to go to Ombalantu to oversee the establishment of the mission station at this location. In 1922, whilst Saari was overseeing the process, the Society gave approval for the missionary Kalle Himanen to go to Nakayale in 1922. Himanen stayed at Nakayale on his own, with occasional support from others, until a local pastor was appointed. One of those who visited Nakayale was the missionary Viktor Alho.

Evangelism had been successful in the Ondonga area at this time, where the native Aawambo were being ordained as pastors at a local seminary. One of the first pastors to be ordained was Sakeus Iihuhua, who was later posted to work in Nakayale. Iihuhua was ordained on September 27, 1925 by the missionary Matti Tarkkanen.

Saari, whom the locals nicknamed Ikonyena, oversaw the establishment of the mission station. He led a team to construct the church building, storage room, the rooms of the missionary helpers (female and male sections) and a dispensary, as well as a section for the sick. There was also a shaded area constructed to cater for an animal cart. This was carried out with the assistance of Iihuhua who was a teacher at the time.

The Finnish missionaries were to a certain extent involved in establishing the mission station. When the Aawambo pastors were ordained, it was not deemed necessary to send Finnish missionaries further to north-central Namibia. Instead, they had opted for a policy that prioritized the establishment of other mission centers by local Aawambo, with support provided by the Finnish Missionary Society. Iihuhua initially taught from 1917 until 1921; thereafter he undertook training to become a pastor from 1922 until 1925. When he became an ordained pastor, he was then sent to Nakayale in order to establish a missionary church in the village. Heikki Saari and Himanen stayed at Nakayale until 1922, thereafter Iihuhua joined Himanen in 1925. Iihuhua remained in Nakayale until

1976, but was assisted by Titus Heita between 1955 and 1972. Josafat Kashindi Shanghala took overall charge of the congregation from 1974 until 1977, and worked with Lot Hambiya from 1974 until 1976. Shanghala, who retired as a bishop, is the grandson of the late Sakeus Iihuhua.

Missionary work from Nakayale spread to support the establishment of *Igreja Evangelica Luterana de Angola* (IELA) in Angola. While it took a number of years to fully establish the church, there was eventually a strong Lutheran presence in the country. The establishment of the IELA in Angola occurred after something of a push-and-pull process whereby the missionaries were not being fully accepted. This was largely due to the strength of Catholicism in the area at the time. The local missionaries worked under harsh conditions, and they were expelled from the area at one point. It was not until 1933, when the Finnish mission work normalized, that they were accepted back into the Ombadja, Ongambwe, Odhimba, Ongalangi, Ovimbundu, Oshihokwe and Ongangela communities.

The late Reverend Sakeus Iihuhua, who was born in Onayena, Ondonga, trained to be a pastor and was ordained in September 1925. Thereafter he was soon sent off to lead the Nakayale congregation. The Finnish missionary Himanen worked at Nakayale together with Reverend Iihuhua. Before Himanen and Iihuhua began working at Nakayale, Saari used to travel back and forth between Ongandjera and Nakayale. He did this in order to teach God's word among the Aambalantu, as well as Aambadja, who were coming from southern Angola to seek the word of God.

While various writers described the establishment of the church in Ombalantu as difficult, Himanen and Iihuhua managed to teach Christianity and to subsequently convert and baptize a number of locals. Among those baptized were people from southern Angola, who had left their homes in search of the word of God. Indeed, they converted the people from Ombadja first, and thereafter they baptized the locals.

Sakeus Iihuhua established his homestead at Omholo, Outapi, a home that is still associated with missionary work. Iihuhua was receptive to people coming from Angola seeking evangelism, and he housed them at his homestead, where he oversaw bible studies, catechism teachings and other services.

Previous research conducted in Ombalantu in 2002 revealed that the missionaries were at first skeptical and reluctant to pursue missionary work and the advancement of Christianity prior to the 1920s. They may well have been

deterred by the Aambalantu killing their own king. Thus, they may well have been initially concerned about the possible eruption of violence in the area. Hence, they did not pursue Christian teachings as fast as they would have liked.

Nakayale Hospital

Viktor Alho stayed at Nakayale until the 1930s, together with Ebba Maria von Pfaler (known locally as Nandjungu), who worked at the hospital. They successfully facilitated and oversaw the building of a hospital section called Oshali, where patients with TB were kept in isolation. Other missionaries who worked at the hospital were Aino Vapaavuori, Helmi Makkonen, Kaino Kovanen and Anneli Linkola. Kaino Kovanen, a nurse, stayed for a long time at Nakayale until she was forced to leave because the government of the time did not accept the fact that she was treating people suspected to be SWAPO soldiers. Many children were named after the nurses.

The hospital has since been moved to the town center and renamed Kamhaku Hospital, and is managed by the current government. The school has also been taken over by the government, which is responsible for maintenance including payment of teachers' salaries.

Conclusion

There are still some building structures at Nakayale that were constructed by the Finnish missionaries that exist to this day. Unfortunately, many of them are no longer in use.

Today the Nakayale congregation has a very active missionary program, which together with other ELCIN congregations, celebrate mission work on 7 July every year.

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The Lutheran Condemnation of the Initiation Ritual of Girls in Namibia

Saara Kuoppala

When the first Finnish missionaries arrived in South West Africa (SWA), now known as Namibia, in 1870, the initiation ritual for girls, known as *Olufuko*, was an important part of Ovambo culture. The missionaries did not approve of the practice and therefore it was banned in the first church regulations. In recent years, this initiation ritual has been at the center of a heated public debate. The launch of the *Olufuko* Cultural Festival in 2012 produced much debate in Namibia. On the one hand, high-profile politicians, such as Namibia's first president Sam Nujoma, promote *Olufuko* as an authentic Namibian practice. On the other hand, Namibia's biggest church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), which has its roots in Finnish mission work, sees the practice as "paganistic" and against Christian values.

The girls' initiation ritual among the Ovambo people in northern Namibia is known as *Ohango*, *Olufuko* or *Efundula*. These are effectively the same ritual with only minor differences. From the beginning of the proselytizing efforts of the Finnish missionaries in the 1870s, the Lutherans viewed the indigenous traditional practices as paganistic. In this essay, I examine whether there are similarities between the argumentations of the early Finnish missionaries and the contemporary Lutheran Church in Namibia.

The University of Namibia's Multidisciplinary Research Center conducted research on the *Olufuko* rite in 2016. As a member of the research team, I undertook ethnographical work at the *Olufuko* Cultural Festival and stayed with the initiates throughout the whole ritual. I observed the different phases of the initiation rite and interviewed several informants on this topic.

Throughout my fieldwork I noted that public discussion in Namibia is full of diverse views on what happens in the *Olufuko* rite. In these discussions there are arguments implying that the initiates are wed as minors or that the girls have to go through sexually-oriented acts in which a male ritual leader tests the virginity of the girls. Therefore, I feel the need to shortly describe what I observed at the

Olufuko Cultural Festival in 2016.

The town of Outapi arranges the annual *Olufuko* Cultural Festival at the end of August and beginning of September. The festival is a large-scale cultural festival that includes arts and crafts and food stalls. The girls' initiation ritual forms the central feature of the festival, with large numbers of young women being initiated. The initiation ritual lasts for six days and the ritual leaders were exclusively women. There were no sexual acts involved in the ritual and men could only participate as audience members at the festival. The initiates were between the ages of 15 and 25 and they were dressed in traditional attire. An initiation ritual prepares a young woman for marriage, but these girls were encouraged to stay in school and finish their education before getting married. There are no statistics available that would illuminate what happens to the girls after being initiated. Even so, I had a chance to interview girls who had gone through the initiation and they were still in school and not married. Thus, it is safe to say that not all of the initiates are wed directly after the initiation.

The Impact of Finnish Missionaries

When the first Finnish missionaries arrived in SWA, they represented the Lutheran denomination with a pietistic twist. The conversion process was slow and it took thirteen years for the missionaries to baptize the first Ovambo. As is typical with Pietism, the Finns preached about the importance of giving up traditional practices. According to historian Kari Miettinen, the Finnish missionaries strongly opposed the *Olufuko* initiation ritual. The practice was strictly forbidden and there were no attempts to Christianize it. The first church regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1924 banned the rite. The regulations ordered anybody who sent a girl for initiation to be excommunicated from the church. The condemnation of the rite created conflicts because Christian girls were attending the initiation ceremony against the will of the missionaries.

In a study of Finnish mission history in Africa published by the Finnish Lutheran Mission Society, Matti Peltola, a former missionary, describes the *Ohango* initiation ritual as a celebration of the Ondonga people. The *Ohango* rite was arranged every other year in the fall. The festivities had different phases and each was distinguishable. Peltola describes that some of the ritual practices

were “pagan” and were carried out in private. He describes how during these acts the girls were taught things that went against Christian values. Peltola does not specify what these acts were and how they were immoral.

Among the first Finnish missionaries was Martti Rautanen. In a letter to the German missionary Carl Hugo Hahn, Rautanen describes how the Ondonga king Kambonde allowed Christian girls to get married without going through the initiation. Rautanen explains to Hahn how he told the king that baptized Christians had been liberated from indigenous traditions through their baptism. Baptized Christians had supposedly become people of God and therefore were not under the influence of the traditional gods of the Ondongans.

Peltola argues that the girls’ initiation ritual became a problem for the Lutheran Church mainly because of the Christian youth. In the first years of the Lutheran congregation, the young men went to the *Ohango* ceremonies to pick their brides. For this reason, as early as 1885 Rautanen denied the possibility for the youth of the region to take part in *Ohango* because he viewed it as being closely connected to indigenous religions. The actual main problem, according to Peltola, was that there were Christian girls who were baptized who were still attending the initiation. Rautanen ordered that a local should reject the traditional ritual practices of their culture after being baptized as they were not compatible with Christianity. Girls were even threatened with excommunication from the Lutheran church if they participated in the *Ohango* rite.

ELCIN and the *Olufuko* Festival

The *Olufuko* Cultural Festival is promoted as an reenactment of Namibia’s cultural heritage and it was created to attract tourists to Outapi and to stimulate the local economy. Since the launch of the festival in 2012, the ELCIN has strongly opposed the event. The ELCIN had a pastors’ conference at Ongwediva in July 2012. After this conference, the ELCIN released a pastoral letter via the press. The letter condemned the *Olufuko* practice as being “against Biblical teachings and principles”. According to the ELCIN, “it infringes upon Christian values and morals”. With this letter, the church pleaded with its members to stay away from *Olufuko*. The letter was signed by Bishop Shekutaamba Nambala on behalf of all ELCIN pastors. Kim Groop points out that the press release contained strong

binary connotations. Groop mentions several examples, such as light versus darkness and decency versus sexual immorality. According to Groop “*Olufuko* in this press release seems to represent the old, dark and immoral whereas the church represents, or wants to promote, a message of light, newness and morality.” Groop continues to argue that “[i]n this sense ELCIN seems to stay relatively true to its Finnish Pietistic heritage.”



Over eighty young women were initiated at the *Olufuko* Cultural Festival in 2016. Photograph: Saara Kuoppala.



The ritual leaders (*Namunganga*) were exclusively women. Photograph: Saara Kuoppala (2016).

In an interview with retired Bishop Josaphat Shanghala in 2016, the bishop emphasized the church’s stance by stating that tradition, which includes *Olufuko*, and Christianity travel down separate paths. According to him, tradition and Christianity are like two railway lines that go parallel but never meet. In his view,

Olufuko is a form of cultural worship that does not belong to the church because the church has a different culture. As a solution, Bishop Shanghala suggested that those who want to practice traditional things, such as *Olufuko*, should secede from the church and practice their tradition outside it. Nonetheless, if they want to be a part of the church, they would have to abandon their tradition, including its ritual practices.



The skin of the initiates was covered with red ochre oil. Photograph: Saara Kuoppala (2016).

Dr. Abisai Shejvali, who is the former head of the Council of Churches in Namibia, wrote a piece in *The Namibian* in 2012 and explained why the Lutheran Church is against *Olufuko*. According to Shejvali, the Lutheran Church consists of baptized people who believe that they have been delivered from idolatrous worship. Shejvali emphasizes that traditional rites, such as *Olufuko*, do not have anything to offer to Christians. A baptized person “has emerged as a new being” and therefore old customs should be abandoned.

According to those I interviewed at the festival, the girls and especially their mothers are threatened with excommunication if they are associated with the initiation rite. My informants told me that after taking their daughters to the *Olufuko* rite, some mothers had to go through a schooling program at their church in order to atone for their sins. One interviewee said that her mother had been banned from the Sunday sermon because of her participation in *Olufuko*. She had

to listen to the sermon from outside the church. Nevertheless, Bishop Shanghala pointed out that the church does not excommunicate its members who take part in *Olufuko*. Instead, the church disciplines them through education. According to Shanghala, the church provides counselling because people are doing things without knowing that they are making mistakes. He continued that it is the church's duty to guide its members to the right path.

According to an article published in the *New Era* newspaper in 2017, Bishop Shekutamba Nambala condemned the practice of *Olufuko* during a sermon in 2017. The article claims that Bishop Nambala had hinted "that parents who took their children to the *Olufuko* Festival may in the future be stripped of church privileges, including receiving holy communion." Not to be able to attend the Holy Communion is a severe punishment in a country where the majority of the population are Christians.

Conclusion

The revival of the girls' initiation ritual has led to heated discussion in Namibia. The ELCIN is strongly opposed to the practice, as were the early missionaries in the nineteenth century. There appear to be similarities between the early Finnish missionaries and the contemporary ELCIN regarding their viewpoints on tradition.

As Kim Groop points out, the ELCIN's press release has strong binary oppositions. *Olufuko* and tradition in general represent a dark and immoral life, whereas the Lutheran Church represents the light and righteousness of Christian life. This binary view was also present in the worldview of early Finnish missionaries. Africa was seen as a dark and "heathenistic" continent, whereas Christianity was seen as a flaming torch in the dark. The missionaries saw it as their duty to bring light into the Dark Continent through their Christian message.

Both the early Finnish missionaries and the ELCIN perceived that there was (and is) no room for old traditional practices in the Christian life of Namibia. According to them, Lutherans are liberated from these traditional practices at the moment that they are baptized. The girls' initiation ritual is considered to be an important issue to both parties that is worthy of severe punishment. The missionaries threatened baptised Christians with excommunication, whereas

the ELCIN, which has not excommunicated its members in decades, threatens its members with a cut in their church privileges (including Holy Communion).

In conclusion, the biggest problem for both sides appears to be the fact that Christian girls were (and are) initiated. Mixing tradition with Christian life was and still is seen as syncretic and not suitable for Christians. It seems that ELCIN and the early Finnish missionaries understand Christianity as an attribute that does not include indigenous traditions. In brief, if one is baptized as Christian, it signifies that one should desert his/her traditional practices.

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Martti Rautanen as the Agricola of Owambo

Marjo Kaartinen

Martti Rautanen (1845–1926) remains a well-known figure in Finnish history. As one of the first group of missionaries to Owambo, Rautanen worked there from 1870 up until his death in 1926. He is buried in Olukonda along with many of his immediate family. His renown was not only forged by the length of time he worked as a missionary, but also by the fact that he became the face of missionary activities in general in Finland. School textbooks on church history in the 1960s, for example, referred to him as the most preeminent Finnish missionary in Africa.

Perhaps Rautanen’s multilingual childhood and youth in Russian Ingria provided him with a foundation that helped him to thoroughly know Oshindonga, and to devote an enormous amount of time to the translation of what missionaries would consider essential texts, such as hymns and the Bible into this language.

In Finland this work earned him the unofficial title as the “Agricola of Owambo” (Ambomaan Agricola). This chapter takes a look at the ways in which Rautanen’s career epithet was seen in the press in Finland. This will be done by taking a look at the Finnish National Digital Archive, as well as studying a number of journals and other texts. However, the reader is advised to keep in mind that these are tentative results, which rely on basic electronic searches, and are thus not intended to present a complete picture of the title used in the media for Rautanen.

Mikael Agricola

I am especially interested in the title “Agricola” because of its special importance to Finns. The title Agricola of Owambo refers to Mikael Agricola, the sixteenth-century Bishop of Turku. In the nineteenth century, Finns granted him the title of “the Father of the Finnish language”, in honor of his contribution to

the development of literary Finnish. Agricola was born in approximately 1510 in Pernaja, in southern Finland. At the time Finland was part of the Swedish kingdom. Educated in Wittenberg in Germany, the hotspot of the Lutheran Reformation, Agricola became a reformer. Among his works in Finnish were the primer and catechism *Abckiria* (1543) and the Bible. Being able to read vernacular translations of the Bible was one of the main goals of the reformers and Agricola began his translation of the New Testament during his studies in Wittenberg. The work was published in 1548. He also translated parts of the Old Testament.

After the Finnish War of 1809, Finland was transferred from Sweden to the Russian Empire. Thereafter, in less than two generations a great national movement and awakening emerged. As a result of this movement, the Finnish language was “discovered”. Because the language of the elites had been Swedish, Finnish had been identified with the illiterate poor. But the change was rapid. The first Finnish-speaking school had opened in Jyväskylä in 1858, and soon there was a seminary for Finnish-speaking teachers. Meanwhile, the *Kalevala* had been created as the national epic, based on traditional Karelian folk poetry. This work further strengthened the new-found status of the language and heroic character of Finns. In the process, Agricola was “created” as the father of written Finnish. He became a national hero in the nineteenth century (and he remains so to this day), with his death, on 9 April 1554, being annually honored as an official flag day.

Martti Rautanen grew up in an age when Finnish national identity was being forged. He studied in Helsinki before departing for Africa at the height of this rising sense of Finnish nationalism. Although he later used German at home among his family and, at least initially, considered himself Russian, Rautanen would not have minded being given an honorary nickname that compared him to the great Agricola. The first reference to Rautanen as Agricola that I have found is from the *Herättäjä*, a Pietist newspaper, from 1912, when a great deal of his translation work from Finnish to Oshindonga had already been published, including the New Testament. This had also been Agricola’s most acclaimed Biblical translation.



Fr. Schulz

HELSINGFORS

24 Vestra Hensiksgatan 24.

Frieda and Martti Rautanen with their children. Photograph:
Fr. Schoulz (c. 1891–1892). The Finnish Heritage Agency.

Rautanen's Seventy-Fifth Birthday and Fifty Years in Owambo in Finnish Newspapers

In 1920 Rautanen turned seventy-five. By this time he had lived in Owambo for fifty years, and his life-work as a translator was almost done. His birthday in 1920 was celebrated in Finnish newspapers, alongside the fiftieth anniversary of his missionary work in Africa. His colleagues were also remembered in independent, non-religious newspapers. It seems that contemporary newspapers considered the greatest achievement of Finnish missionaries in Africa to have been the creation of a written form of Oshindonga. At the same time, newspapers made negative comments on the low numbers of baptisms in Owambo.

In many ways this achievement was a heroic achievement for the Finnish nation state, which was then only two-years-old. Independence from Russia had been gained in December 1917, but it came at the high price of a short but bloody civil war. Finland was a nascent and thoroughly insecure country in which Finnish nationalism ruled. In this context, the creation of a written Oshindonga language by Finns was considered heroic and it was perceived as a great gift of light to the Aawambo people. In July 1920, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Finnish missionaries in Owambo, an editorial writer in *Aamulehti* wrote: "Gratitude fills one's mind when we remember that Finnish people have also been allowed for 50 years to take part in this great historical world mission". Two weeks earlier Rautanen's colleague, Albin Savola, wrote in *Etelä-Savo* that more than thirty books had already been published in Oshindonga, and that a newspaper was also in print and that many locals took delight in being able to read and write.

Rautanen's birthday caused some confusion in Finnish newspapers. This could have been due to calendar variations, as autonomous Finland used the Gregorian calendar, whilst Russia used the Julian calendar. His birthday was mostly celebrated on 21 October and on 10 November, but also on 9 November. *Herättäjä* in fact mentioned that Rautanen would have been born on the day Agricola had died. This error is an interesting sign of how strongly the two translators could be coupled together. Yet, we know that Agricola died in April, that is, seven months earlier in the calendar year than Rautanen's birthday. Perhaps the most significant recognition of Rautanen's birthday in the Finnish press appeared in *Suomen Kuvalehti*, a weekly magazine with a wide national

readership. Herein, the head of the Missionary Society, Hannu Haahti, wrote a biographical article on the 75-year missionary, which was syndicated widely throughout Finland. By 1920 Rautanen was a household name in Finland.

The Bible Translation in the News in 1921

By the end of 1920, the Bible had been fully translated into Oshindonga by Rautanen. The news reached Finland the following spring, where it was not only duly noted in various Christian journals and magazines, but also in daily newspapers. The first article I located was published by *Forssan Lehti* on 15 March. This is the full free translation of the text:

On 29 December the translation of the Bible in South West Africa in the language of the Aawambo was finished. For 50 years missionary work has been carried out there and already now the whole Bible is available as a full translation. This work has been carried out by the missionary Martti Rautanen, except for [the books on the] prophet Daniel and the minor prophets, which Pastor Savola has translated. The New Testament [and the books of] Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, the minor prophets and the Psalms had been translated earlier. All the translations are being standardized and then the whole Bible will be printed.

It took almost five-hundred years from the arrival of Christianity to our country before the Bible could be read in the Finnish language. Now, after fifty years of work, Finns have translated the Bible into an African language. This is a significant occasion and a great cultural achievement, which will leave its mark on the church histories of both Finland and the Aawambo.

On 15 April 1921, the Christian newspaper *Kotimaa* reported the feelings of Rautanen on completing this monumental achievement: “You can guess that at that moment I thanked the Lord from my heart and was delighted [...] One

can say that the Lord gave [this task] to me: this is why He must receive thanks and glory. I was only a mediator.” The article concluded with the notion of how delightful it was that Finns had been able to produce something like this. The translation was a matter of national pride.

The notion of national indebtedness was intertwined with national pride. A speech by A. V. Laitakari’s (this is most likely Aarne Laitakari, later a professor of geology) in Ähtäri in July 1921 was quoted in the regional newspaper *Vaasa*. He proclaimed that Finns had been able to achieve things through missionary work that would have otherwise been impossible. He too intertwined the national history of Finns and the missionary endeavors in Owambo: “Through other Christians did our people receive Christianity [...] Through it [Christianity], did Finland receive its written language from which other aspects of civilization followed. Now Finland has done a great service to Owambo, and given it a written language, which will be followed by other civilizational processes.” He compared Rautanen to Agricola, with the former also being referred to as the Father of Oshindongan literature. Laitakari also emphasized that a sense of duty was more important than fame. *Riihimäen Sanomat* added similar praise in July 1921, noting in addition that a hymnal in Oshindonga was now in print. This too was a pleasant present for the “singing congregation” of Aawambo Christians, who now numbered 9300.

Rautanen’s Posthumous Fame

The one-hundredth anniversary of Rautanen’s birth, in 1945, was commemorated in a number of newspapers, and, invariably, he was honored with the title of Agricola. This connection was also made in the leftist *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*. Leftist politicians in Finland were among the earliest critics of Finnish missionary work. In this article, the writer “Yx” (“One”) took the anniversary of Rautanen’s birth to continue with this critique. He or she wrote that “missionary work has often been rather sharply criticized, and by no means without cause – to take into account the needs that we have in our home country.” Yx then cited a world traveler, who had written that only medical aid work was acceptable. The essayist then continued by admitting that they had enjoyed reading Negley Farson’s book on Africa (likely to have been *Behind God’s Back*, 1941). Farson,

who hailed from the United States, was critical of all missionary work, but had been particularly against Finnish work in Owambo precisely because it had aimed at furthering local culture. However, Yx gives the impression that s/he does not completely condemn Rautanen's work in Owambo, and, moreover, sees translation work as a means of furthering local culture.

The memory of Rautanen and of his heroic nickname was kept alive in religious teaching at schools and Sunday schools. For schoolchildren educated in the 1950s and 1960s, Rautanen remains a familiar name. For the purposes of the present overview, I located one high school book on Lutheran religion with a full chapter devoted to the Agricola of Owambo. This is *Isiemme usko III* (The Religion of our Fathers, 1966) in which a three-page chapter is devoted to Rautanen (accompanied by a general image of missionary work in Owambo). In another book, *Koulun raamattutieto* (Bible Knowledge for Schools, 1957), Rautanen is also mentioned in comparison to Agricola. In *Oma uskontokirjani* (My Own Book on Religion, 1953), in a short chapter focusing on Rautanen entitled "The Finnish Apostle of Pagans", the famous missionary is also mentioned using his more common nickname Agricola. These school books typically went through many editions, and were used in schools for several years, even decades, thus building a solid basis for Rautanen's fame.

Rautanen's nickname as Agricola was lasting. As recently as 1998 he was referred to as the Agricola of Owambo in *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, with the title suggesting that the reader would know the subject of the study without reference to his actual name. This allusion to the Agricola of Owambo appeared in an obituary of Matti Kuusi, a folklorist, who had also carried out scholarly work in Owambo and who had come across Rautanen's notes. Similarly, Rautanen was given the nickname without further explanation in a caption for an image of his grave in the weekly magazine *Apu* on 23 February 1990, in a reportage on members of the Finnish peacekeeping forces in Namibia at the advent of its independence.

Conclusion

In this article I hope I have given a glimpse of the lasting importance of Martti Rautanen's Oshindonga translation work in regards to Finnish national identity

and pride, mediated especially by the printing press. Even leftist commentators, who were prone to condemn missionary work, were interested in the endeavors undertaken by Rautanen in Africa. The newly-independent Finland needed national heroes, and Rautanen was eagerly given a heroes' cloak. Stressing Rautanen's translation efforts, the nascent Finnish nation's efforts to build itself up through its own history was closely intertwined with the historical processes in Owambo.

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ELCIN Parish Registers: A Trail to Namibia's History and Culture

Harri Siiskonen

On a world-wide scale, Africa is the least-known continent in demographic terms. The population size of sub-Saharan Africa was not even precisely known until the mid-twentieth century. The major problems in African historical demography have either been the almost total lack of relevant sources, or, if some have been available, then they have been fragmentary and non-systematic. The reliability of the most commonly used sources in African historical demography – population counts and early censuses – remained questionable until the 1960s. However, far-reaching conclusions and estimations based on these sources using indirect methods have been drawn. The fragmentary nature of the available sources has offered a firm basis for the dialog.

A noteworthy, but rarely used, additional option for the collection of more accurate data at the individual level in relation to births, deaths, marriages and migrations is offered by the parish registers of African Christian churches. On the eve of the colonial invasion of the interior of Africa by European states hundreds of missionary stations were established in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Parish registers, annual reports, letters and diaries concerning the indigenous population were compiled at missionary stations. One of the biggest problems relating to parish registers in Africa is that they have sometimes suffered damage and sometimes simply disappeared due to poor storage conditions in local parishes. Despite the fact that the possibilities offered by the parish registers for historical demography in Africa have become quite well known, there has been no rush to examine these parish registers.

Another important limitation related to parish registers is the validity and reliability of the data. Despite commonly accepted principles for keeping parish registers, the practices of writing down vital events differed noticeably between parishes. Some priests, both European and African, were more interested in preaching to their parishioners and other important tasks than doing office work. However, when researchers have found undamaged and carefully-compiled



Church registers of the Christian population have been kept since the first baptisms at the Omulonga mission station in 1883. Photograph: Harri Siiskonen.

registers, they have proved to be useful in both a demographic and social historical sense. Parish records are undoubtedly important, but have remained almost entirely unutilized.

Finnish Missionary Work

Today's Namibia is one of the most Christianized countries in Africa. The first Finnish missionaries entered North-Central Namibia in 1869 and arrived at their mission field in Owambo in 1870. The success of missionary work can generally be read from the parish registers.

On the basis of the limited number of baptisms, it can be argued that the Finnish missionaries were not successful in the nineteenth century. The first Aawambo were only baptized in 1883 and the number of Christians remained very low until the beginning of the twentieth century. A new phase in Finnish missionary work only began during the first years of the 1900s, when new

parishes were established in different Owambo communities. The number of parishes grew from 3 in 1900 to 12 by 1920. At the same time, the number of parishioners increased from 872 in 1900 to 7,695 in 1920. The Rhenish Missionary Society had also been working in the northernmost Owambo community, Uukwanyama, since 1891 in order to try and prevent the intrusion of Catholic missionaries from Portuguese Angola into German South West Africa. However, in 1915 the Rhenish missionaries were forced to withdraw from Owambo as a result of the knock-on effects of the First World War. South African troops defeated the Germans in July 1915 and the present Namibian territory then came under South African rule until Namibian independence. Until 1924 the Finnish Missionary Society (FMS) was the only missionary organization working in Owambo, at which time the South African Administration permitted both the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions to expand their work into the northern parts of present-day Namibia.

The arrival of the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions activated the work of the FMS in the 1920s. In the competition between the different missionary organizations the FMS proved to be the most successful. The administration of the Lutheran parishes was gradually transferred from the Finnish missionaries to native ministers. By the late 1930s almost all parishes were formally led by Aawambo ministers, and in 1933 the members of the Lutheran parishes accounted for about 26 per cent (28,506) of the estimated total population of Owambo (the 1933 census recorded a figure of 107,861). The last step on the way to an independent church was taken in 1954 with the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church. During the 1950s, the proportion of Lutherans reached fifty percent in Owambo, and in present-day North-Central Namibia the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) occupies the dominant position. In 1991, over two-thirds of the population of the former Owamboland region were members of the ELCIN. The actual share of ELCIN members of the total population of North-Central Namibia is lower because a growing number of members of the ELCIN parishes live permanently outside the region, but are still members of their home parish. Taking this error into account, Lutherans still form the largest religious group in North-Central Namibia, which makes the data collected from the ELCIN parish registers representative for investigating population development.

Parish Registers and Demographic Research

What makes the ELCIN parish registers even more interesting is the fact that population registration has been based on the same principles since it was first employed. The wealth of data in Scandinavian parish registers has been recognized among historical demographers. Until the 1940s notes on vital registers in the Evangelical Lutheran parishes in Owambo were written on forms sent from Finland. The language used in the register forms has changed from Finnish to Afrikaans and English and to the local Ndonga language.

However, the ELCIN parish registers did not attract academic interest until the 1960s. The Finnish anthropologist Maija Tuupainen was the first to systematically utilize the ELCIN parish registers in her 1970 doctoral dissertation, which dealt with marriage practices in the Aawambo communities. In the early 1990s the ELCIN parish registers were “rediscovered” a second time. The Finnish-Namibian project on fertility, mortality and migration concentrated on analyzing long-term changes in the key indicators of population development in Owambo. Changes in fertility, mortality and migration from the mid-1920s until the turn of the 1990s were emphasized in the first phase of the project. During the second phase research has been focused on analyzing the impact of HIV/AIDS on mortality and fertility from the early 1990s.

The data used in these studies were acquired by microfilming parish registers of the selected ELCIN parishes. The documentation part of the project started in 1993, when the registers of two old parishes (Elim and Oshigambo) were microfilmed. The encouraging experiences gained from the pilot project was a spur to expanding the microfilming. In 1994, the records of five old parishes in different parts of Owambo were microfilmed. Microfilming continued in 1997 and 2001 by filming nine new parishes in the former Owamboland and Kavango regions. Church registers of the 16 ELCIN parishes in microfilm form are now available. At the end of 1991 there were 90,830 members in the microfilmed sample parishes. This means that the microfilmed data at the time covered almost 11% of the total population of the former Owamboland and almost 18% of the total population of the Kavango region. The master copy of the microfilmed data is stored at the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek. Users' copies of the data are available at the Auala ELCIN Library in Oniipa (Namibia) and at the Archives of the Department of Geographical and Historical Studies of the University of Eastern Finland.



The new church building of the Nakayale congregation.
Photograph: Harri Siiskonen.





The church registers of ELCIN parishes are stored in office rooms due to lack of special archival space. Professor Veijo Notkola photographs the church registers of Elim parish. Photograph: Harri Siiskonen.

The ELCIN parish registers provide a much longer-term perspective on population development in Namibia than the available census and survey data, on which the analyses of population development in north-central Namibia have previously been based. In 1926 the colonial administration tried to correct the previous inaccurate estimates of the population living in Owambo by carrying out a “rough census.” The main aim of the census was to chart the labor potential of Owambo to be recruited for the mines located in central and southern parts of the country. The census was implemented by counting all homesteads. A sample of homesteads were also selected to count the number of inhabitants (men, women and children) as well. The result of the 1926 “rough census” was a revision of the estimate of the total population of Owambo to 126,800. Since 1951, censuses have been carried out at ten-year intervals. According to the 1991 census the population of the area was 618,117 persons, covering about 44%

of Namibia's total population (in 1991 the total population of Namibia was 1.4 million, in 2017 it was 2.6 million). However, before the 1950s it was impossible to present any detailed figures concerning the key indicators of population development in north-central Namibia on the basis of the available census data.

The ELCIN parish registers enable us to take a significant step forward when studying long-term changes in population development in Owambo. The analysis of fertility, mortality and migration can be traced back to the 1920s. Fertility in Owambo was close to the natural fertility rate and couples did not use contraception or abortion before the 1980s. In spite of this, a noticeable decline and increase in fertility occurred between 1930 and 1980, which has been impossible to indicate by means of the census data. A comparison of the results of the fertility analysis from the last two decades to the latest censuses and survey figures indicated that parish record data gave slightly lower fertility estimates, but otherwise the parish record data was very reliable. This might be due to missing births in the parish register material.

When considering the transition of mortality the parish record data documents significant discontinuities and reversals in the mortality trend in Owambo. Only inconclusive evidence existed concerning any decline in mortality of adults before the early 1950s. Unlike adult mortality, infant and child mortality probably fell in every decade examined except the 1940s. For children as well as adults the period between 1950 and 1965 showed a particularly rapid decline in mortality. The transition to a moderately low mortality rate was largely complete by the late 1960s. The great benefit of parish records is that they enable us to analyze mortality transition in different age groups with direct methods as early as the first half of the twentieth century. This has been impossible with the census data. Parish registers have also proved to be excellent sources when investigating the impact of AIDS on mortality. Unlike the sentinel surveys and hospital statistics, upon which estimates of AIDS mortality are normally based and represent small special groups of the population, parish registers cover all age groups in a certain area. However, parish registers do not accurately tell which of the parishioners has died of AIDS. A comparison of mortality rates in different age groups before and after the appearance of AIDS reveals the spread of HIV/AIDS on the local level. The impact of HIV/AIDS is not restricted to mortality only, but clearly reflects fertility.

Investigation of migration has been very problematic using census data and

population counts. Data from parish records does not solve all the problems related to the analysis of migration. This data, however, does permit us to go much deeper than has been possible using the “traditional sources.” The ELCIN parish registers are at their best when analyzing intra- and inter-community migration. The migration analysis revealed that moves firmly concentrated around the marriage contract and the distances of the moves were short. For males the most important cause of the move was access to land. However, during the last decades of South African rule the reliability of parish registers for investigating migration weakened noticeably due to an increase in uncontrolled and illegal interregional migration within Namibia. At the time of Namibian independence all restrictions on internal migration were lifted. Today many people live far away from their home parishes on a permanent basis, but have retained their membership in the region in which they grew up. In spite of the limitations related to registers of in- and out-migrants in the recent past, parish registers are excellent sources for investigating internal migration during the first half of the twentieth century.

Unutilized Sources in Historical and Cultural Studies

The example presented above clearly shows the possibilities parish registers can offer for historical demography if the available records have been systematically maintained. The great obstacle to the use of African parish registers is that someone has to find relevant documents and then use them. Utilization of parish registers is not only restricted to historical demography. They also offer an opportunity for social historians, anthropologists, medical scientists, linguistics, etc. to deepen the analysis of African societies with accurate empirical data on an individual level. Minna Saarelma-Maunumaa’s doctoral dissertation on names as links between African and European anthroponymic systems, based on ELCIN parish registers, is a good indication how parish registers can be utilized for different kinds of research purposes. Urbanization is proceeding fast in Namibia and links to the extended family system are expected to weaken at the individual level. It is foreseeable that in the future urbanized Namibians will become interested in their own roots, which means that parish records will be sought-after sources among African genealogists. One of the pioneers has been

Dr. V. V. Nambala, the presiding Bishop of ELCIN. In addition to oral sources, he has utilized church registers in studying Aawambo genealogies. Parish registers are the first written sources in sub-Saharan Africa to merely describe the life of African people. It is not an exaggeration to say that there is an urgent need to document parish registers in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

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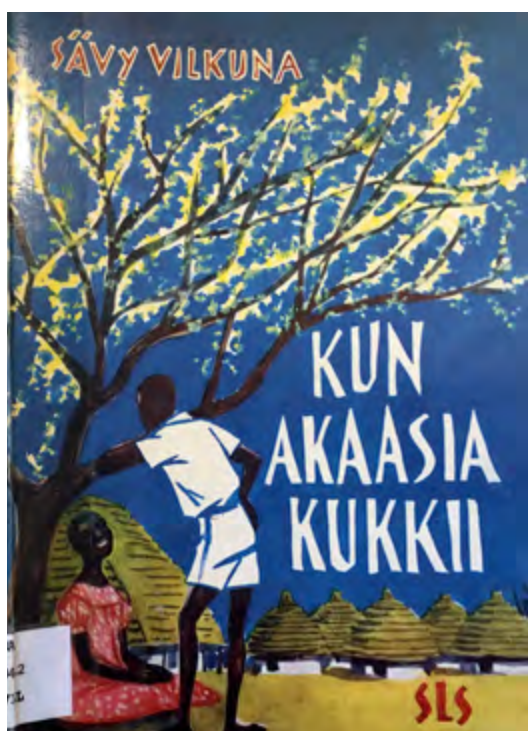
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Stories from South West Africa for Young Finnish Readers

Raita Merivirta

In October 1929, the Finnish missionary magazine for children, *Lasten lähetyslehti* (published between 1900–1954), published an advert on its back cover that highlighted how the publication did not simply cover topics “from Lahti to Helsinki but from Owambo to China.” It was further explained that “*Lasten lähetyslehti* mediates information for Finnish children from faraway lands, primarily from Owambo and China.” As advertized, the magazine published stories and photographs from Finnish overseas missions. Owambo, as the region where the Finnish Missionary Society began its work, held a special place in the hearts of the magazine’s readers. The information mediated to Finnish children was produced by Finnish missionaries. The readers were offered reports and stories describing the environment, nature and animals of Owambo, as well as the people and their customs, habits and way of life. The reports also covered such topics as the churches and schools established in the area, as well as the experiences, successes and hardships encountered by the missionaries and their families in Owambo. In several issues there were also Q&A sections in which children could ask all sorts of questions, including the following selection: Do children in Owambo pick berries? Are there railways in Owambo? What crops are grown? Do African children play with dolls? What kind of social order does Owambo have? The questions were answered carefully and often illustrated with photographs or other pictures. The young Finnish readers were clearly very interested in knowing about everyday life in the south western corner of the African continent and the missionary magazine for children did its best to satisfy their curiosity. For youth, there was a separate magazine, *Elämän Kevät* (1907–1963). The Finnish Missionary Society also published fictional stories about life and adventures in South West Africa for young Finnish readers. Several youth novels, three of which are discussed herein, with Finnish missionaries as minor characters came out in the late 1950s and the 1960s. These works offered Christian alternatives to the more secular fiction of popular youth book series.

The main publishing houses, such as WSOY and Otava, established separate departments for children's and youth literature for the first time in the 1950s, and established book series for youth literature. WSOY's *Nuorten toivekirja* series included both translated novels and Finnish originals and had a significant role in developing the model for youth literature in Finland. Adventure novels formed a sizeable part of the books published in the series aimed for both girls and boys. The youth novels that were brought out by the Finnish Missionary Society in the late 1950s and the 1960s were aimed at the same readership and perhaps therefore also included adventure stories.



Pendapala proposes to Nahenda under the blooming acacia.

Sävy Vilkuna's youth novel, *Kun akaasia kukkii* (When the Acacia Blooms), which was published in 1959, is a novel written for girls and is set in Owambo. Between 1962 and 1965, Vilkuna also edited the renamed and refashioned children's missionary magazine first called *Tuike: Lasten lähetyslehti* (1955–1962)

and then *Totto: Tyttöjen ja poikien lähetyslehti* (1963–1975). *Kun akaasia kukkii* is a fifty-page youth novella that focuses on a young Owambo woman named Niipindi. The blurb on the back of the novel states that the life of the young Owambo girl is depicted in a genuine and natural manner in the novella and that the difficulties the young girl experiences between the views of her home and tribe on the one hand, and the Christian way of thinking on the other, brings the whole young Owambo nation close to Finnish readers. As with the children's missionary magazine, the purpose of the novella is educational: to mediate information for young Finnish readers about both the life of the Aawambo people and the work the Finnish missionaries were undertaking in the region. What, then, is the mediated story told by Vilkkuna?

Kun akaasia kukkii begins by depicting the everyday life of Niipindi in a family that consists of her father, her mother, her father's two other wives and her brothers and sisters. When the parents leave home for a shop that is a half-day's journey away, Niipindi is left in charge of some of her siblings. Vilkkuna writes of the practical arrangements made for the trip: the chores the children were asked to perform, the weather, the coming rains and other details. The two main plot strands – Niipindi's upcoming arranged marriage and her resistance to it, and Niipindi's secret interest in Christianity – are intertwined. Niipindi's uncle Efraim has converted to Christianity and has told the family about his faith and the Christian God, much to the annoyance of the children's father. This has raised the interest of Niipindi and her sisters, but their father has forbidden them to visit a church as he fears the wrath of the spirits. But what really makes Niipindi worried is her father's plan to marry her off to Asheeke, a rich, older man to whom she would be a fourth wife. Niipindi is afraid that she would be bullied by the other wives. She thinks longingly about a young man, Angula, who left her village over a year previously in order to receive an education and to earn money. She imagines him returning home one day when the acacia is in bloom. She hatches a plan and escapes to her uncle's house, where Efraim helps her and escorts her to a mission where she is safe. Over time, Niipindi converts to Christianity and learns to read and write. When her father and Asheeke arrive at the mission with a group of young warriors to catch Niipindi and take her back home, the Finnish missionary intervenes and leads a discussion with the parties involved. Niipindi, who chooses to stay at the mission, is disowned by her father. A couple of years later, Niipindi is still at the mission when a group of young men,

Angula among them, return from the south. He is ill, but Niipindi nurses him back to health. It turns out that Angula began to learn about Christianity whilst he was away. Both Niipindi and Angula are baptized in the mission and take the names Nahenda and Pendapala respectively. They make plans to marry and to study and to become a nurse and a teacher and to do God's work together. The novel ends with the onset of a new spring; a time when the acacias are in bloom.

Vilkuna's novel has a very conventional plot and is in many ways a typical missionary story. However, what is significant is that the story focuses on a young, independent Owambo woman. Though she is young and under



In *Kunenen kadonnut linna*, the adventurers Eki, Pekka and Kapija search for a lost castle near the river Kunene, where they encounter a scary sorcerer.

tremendous pressure, she takes matters into her own hands and takes charge of her own destiny. She chooses her own faith, occupation and husband, even when this means going against her family and traditions. As this is a missionary novel, Niipindi is helped by her Christian uncle as well as white Finnish missionaries and it is frequently explained to her that the Christian God guides those who seek him. Yet, she is also strong-willed and makes her own decisions. Furthermore, the novel not only introduces a young heroine from South West Africa to its young readers, but also describes the region's daily life to them, thus truly bringing, as the blurb advertizes, "the young Owambo nation close" to Finnish readers.

While Vilkuna's novel focuses on the life of a young woman, Eero Hatakka and Pauli Laukkanen, who both worked for years as missionaries in South West Africa, wrote about – and for – somewhat younger boys. Hatakka's *Kunenen kadonnut linna* (The Lost Castle of Kunene, 1958) is a straightforward adventure story set mostly in southern Angola, with Owambo as the starting point. The adventurers are a young Owambo servant boy named Kapija and a young Finnish boy Pekka, who both accompany a Finnish doctor, Eki Saunio, across the border to Angola in his search for a lost castle near the river Kunene. The boys' job is to act as interpreters: Kapija speaks a little of the local language across the border, whereas Pekka speaks Kapija's native language and can interpret for Eki. After several days spent looking for the castle, the party finds first a slab of rock with carvings and a map that leads them to their objective, which turns out to be a huge ring of stones. While Kapija returns home on foot a day earlier in order to take his family's ox back home, Pekka and Eki stay behind to examine the castle. However, they are captured by a sorcerer and his men for entering sacred ground. They find a way to escape but are captured again. They are saved from being buried alive by Kilpola (Pekka's father), Kapija and a German professor, who come to the rescue in a small plane.

The novel emphasizes the difference between the locals of Owambo and southern Angola, as well as between Christian and non-Christian areas and people in a stereotypical and prejudiced way. This is presumably done to foreground the positive effect of missionary work in the area, and puts white Finnish explorers/scientists/missionaries and their loyal native friend and helper at the center of this very typically colonial-style and in many ways problematic adventure novel. The (South West) Africa of Hatakka's novel is an imaginary space, despite the authentic place names and descriptions

of the local environment. The particular setting is used more as a means to entertain and tell a story about adventurous Finns overseas and their efforts to modernize the region than to convey information about everyday life in Owambo and southern Angola.

In contrast to *Kunenen kadonnut linna*, Pauli Laukkanen's first youth novel, *Myrkkynuoli* (Poison Arrow), which was published in 1962, focuses on South West African characters rather than Finns. Laukkanen worked for several years as a missionary in South West Africa and authored two novels for youths that were set in the areas he knew well. On its back cover, *Myrkkynuoli* is advertized as an authentic account of contemporary Africa and as "an excellent guide to the mysterious world of the Bushmen" (the San people), the authenticity of the tale being guaranteed by his spending years among the locals. *Myrkkynuoli*'s main characters are an adolescent Bushman/San boy Kafita and his adult friend Kondo. The latter is a skilful hunter who gets into trouble with Shimbungu, a powerful sorcerer. In the beginning of the novel, the head of Kafita's tribe, the Old Wise Man, orders all the men to gather around his fire and states that someone had neglected to produce the holy smoke of peace on their ancestors' burial ground during the third full moon. Therefore, one of the neglected ancestors of this man had become angered and had begun wandering around in the guise of the leopard Long Whiskers. Since the tribe no longer had a sorcerer, they had to rely on the neighboring tribe's sorcerer to find out who was the guilty party. The neighbors, who are referred to as being long-legged, are the Aawambo. Their sorcerer, Shimbungu, is the most famous and feared man in the vicinity, as he is able to communicate with spirits. The spirits of ancestors order him to dispense justice and it is to him that the Kafita tribe now turns. The spirits tell Shimbungu that Kafita's friend, Konda, whom the sorcerer already dislikes due to a previous misunderstanding about a hunt, is guilty. The only way for Konda to save his life now is if Long Whiskers dies before the next full moon. Konda himself does not fully believe in the sorcerer and his powers, for he has been told about the Christian God, and has even shared his knowledge with Kafita, who has also become curious.

Kafita has previously pondered what will be necessary in order for him to be allowed to use poison arrows like the grown-up men of his tribe. He concludes that he will need to do something valiant and thinks that hunting down Long Whiskers might be just the thing. He secretly helps to free Konda, who is being



The leopard Long Whiskers is killed by the young Kafita, who thus proves his skills as a hunter and is given a poison arrow as reward.

imprisoned in the sorcerer's abode, and together they go after the leopard. They spend some time with missionaries, one of whom urges Konda to remember that Long Whiskers is just an unusually clever beast, not an ancestral spirit. Eventually, and somewhat unexpectedly, they run into Long Whiskers. They wait for the right moment, then Konda shoots several arrows at the leopard, which consequently attacks. The big cat mauls Konda and he is only saved by Kafita, who shoots an arrow and hits the leopard in the head. The missionaries help to heal Konda. Thus, he escapes the punishment ordered by the sorcerer, which enrages Shimbungu. Kafita is given a poison arrow as a reward by the Wise Old Man and is thus accepted among the hunters of the tribe.

Myrkkynuoli, Kafita's coming-of-age tale, is an adventure story, like *Kunenen kadonnut linna*, which pits heroes against a powerful sorcerer. However, Laukkanen's novel is much more attentive to local customs, way of life (including food, cooking methods, hunting, beliefs), environment and animals. As suggested in the blurb, it aims to introduce the world of the Bushmen/San to young Finnish readers, while also endeavoring to tell an engrossing adventure story that is able to capture the interest of the youthful readers.

Published by the Finnish Missionary Society, all of these youth novels advocate missionary work as a progressive and civilizing force in the area and are often patronizing towards South West Africans. However, all these novels also have very relatable and likeable young South West African protagonists with whom the reader is able to sympathize and who act as guides in a region foreign to the readers. Thus, while the novels may have emphasized and also helped to consolidate some differences at the time of their publication, they also levelled others between South West African and Finnish youths, crossing cultural boundaries and bringing Owambo and its people closer to young Finnish readers on an emotional level.

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Former Mission Churches Cooperated Against Apartheid

Martti Eirola

This article is a tribute to my late father, Rev. Arvo Eirola, who worked as a missionary in today's Northern Namibia between 1958 and 1968. From 1963 he was posted in Oniipa as the Head of the Finnish Missionary Society's (today Evangelical Lutheran Mission, FELM) mission field in Namibia (then South West Africa, SWA). He was a close aide of Bishop Leonard Auala, the first national leader of the Evangelical-Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church (ELOK, later the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, ELCIN).

During meetings conducted by Bishop Auala with other church leaders and authorities my father kept detailed notes, diaries and reports. He also corresponded with church officials on various issues. Drawing on this source material, he wrote a very thorough pastoral thesis in 1971 on the relations between ELOK and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA (ELK, later the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, ELCRN). The third Lutheran church in Namibia is the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC, or Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, DELK).

His thesis covers different areas of cooperation between ELOK and ELK up to 1971, as well as the optimistic unification project of the three Lutheran churches in Namibia. The project ultimately failed because of apartheid. In this article I draw on my father's thesis to summarize the responses of the Lutheran churches in SWA to the South African government's so-called Odendaal Plan of 1964, which envisaged the partition of SWA into "Homelands". At the time South Africa administered SWA as a fifth province of the country. This article also illustrates how the former Finnish Mission Church transformed into the ELOK and then ELCIN, thereby becoming a national actor that contributed to the liberation and independence of Namibia. The footnotes and source references used in my father's thesis are not repeated in this article. The subheadings are my own. One of my father's last wishes was to get his unpublished thesis translated

and published in English, particularly for readers in Namibia. Hopefully one day his wish will be fulfilled.



The delegation of ELOK for the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Addis Ababa departing from Windhoek Airport on 9th October, 1965. From the left: Rev. Arvo Eirola, Bishop Leonard Auala, Rev. Olavi Ojanperä, Mr. Julius Ngaikukwete and Rev. Natanael Sironko. Rev. Ojanperä, Secretary for Africa of FMS, joined the delegation on his way back to Finland after visiting Namibia. Unlike ELOK and ELK, DELK did not send representatives to the Conference. ELOK and ELK agreed that the representatives of SWA would function as a single delegation, separate from the larger delegation of South Africa. Photograph: Arvo Eirola's private collection.

Lutheran Churches Critical to South Africa's Plan to Establish Tribal Homelands

After South Africa became a republic in 1961, President C. R. Swart ordered the Odendaal Commission of Enquiry to SWA Affairs to make recommendations for the further development of the territory. The report of the commission was tabled in the Parliament of South Africa in January 1964.

The commission recommended the establishment of twelve separate "Homelands" for the population groups of SWA, based on the premise that the population was very heterogeneous both physically and spiritually. The commission recommended that the groups should continue to exist separately in their own Homelands and should gradually develop them towards the goal of independence.

Church Leaders Became Worried when the Plans were Published

In February 1964, Nel de Wet, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development of the South African government, presented the Odendaal Plan to the people of Owambo. Bishop Auala attended meetings in Ondonga and Ongandjera. At the latter meeting he made a very outspoken speech. He thanked the government for all the good things in the plan, particularly regarding economic matters as well as medical and educational work in Owambo. However, he expressed his fear that population transfers and resettlement projects involving about 40,000 Aawambo people working south of Owambo would cause unrest. The bishop also feared that these actions would disturb the good cooperation that had developed between churches in SWA. For example, the churches had their theological seminary in Otjimbingwe that would be staying within the territory of the white population. Bishop Auala concluded his speech by stressing how the objective of churches was to build peace between different indigenous groups so that "we all would feel at home in our South West Africa". The minister rebuked the fear that the plan would hamper cooperation between churches.

The speech of Bishop Auala had a particular importance because he not only spoke on behalf of the Aawambo and ELOK, but also in the name of all three Lutheran churches working in SWA. A joint meeting of the church councils in March 1961 had appointed a committee chaired by Bishop Auala to work towards the further development of the unity of the three Lutheran churches.

Subsequently, the Conference of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in South West Africa was founded in August 1962 at a meeting in Oniipa and a constitution was ratified. The constitution included the idea of forming a federation of churches in the near future. In 1963 the synod of the ELOK “decided that the three Lutheran churches of South West Africa will operate together”. According to the constitution, the conference was to come together annually and be chaired by each head of church in turn. In 1963 Bishop Auala was elected as the chairman of the conference, and in this capacity he delivered a speech in Ongandjera. Bishop Auala also handed over copies of his speech to the minister.

Additionally, the ELK and the ELOK drafted a so-called Memorandum to the government in May 1964. The memorandum addressed the unrest and disturbances in the cooperation between the churches caused by population resettlements. The ELOK church council decided that the memorandum should be submitted to DELK for comments and possible signing, before sending it to the government. The DELK church council proposed that church councils should first negotiate with each other on difficult issues concerning the Lutheran churches before the problems became public.

The synod of DELK discussed the Odendaal Plan as it also affected the White churchgoers, whose farms were to be sold for new Homelands.

The conference discussed the memorandum, signed by ELK and ELOK, in a meeting in Paulinum in November 1964. However, the delegates at the meeting did not pass the memorandum for the time being, as the government had decided to wait for the outcome of the SWA case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague before forming the Homelands.

The delegates at the same meeting adopted two principles. On the one hand, each church had the right to make their decisions freely; on the other hand, the growing linkage between them increased opportunities for joint decisions. The spirit in the meeting was still optimistic and looked forward to the creation of a federation of the three Lutheran churches.

In 1965 DELK joined three other Lutheran churches, which were comprised of German-speaking white South Africans, and formed the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in South Africa (Die Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Süd-Afrika, VELKSA). The membership of DELK in VELKSA has been seen as a step towards a racially-segregated Lutheran church, for it consisted of white-only churches. ELK and ELOK, however, did not want to move quickly towards a closer federation. Instead, they wanted to wait for DELK to grow and to become more unite-minded.

When the ICJ gave its ruling in 1966 and the South African government was allowed to continue to develop SWA, the question of creating tribal Homelands came up again. Unrest among churches grew.

In a time of uncertainty the church had to fight with the weapons it had. In November 1966 the ELOC Church Council added a prayer for SWA into the common church prayer. It was used in all holy services. In 1967 ELK also started to use the same additional prayer.

Apartheid Separated Lutheran Churches from each other

Most members of the liberation movements in the 1960s were also church members. Thus, churches in SWA could not remain neutral bystanders. The staff of ELK and ELOK, as well as the missionary societies supporting them, were viewed as suspicious by the government. They were seen as being involved in the illegal exodus of men from SWA.

A serious clash between the South African police and guerillas took place in the western part of Owambo in August 1966. A month later guerillas burned the government post of Oshikango at the border between Owambo and Angola. These incidents increased the hunt for the so-called terrorists. The search and interrogation methods of the police forced the churches speak out. Early in 1967 the leaders of the three churches of Owambo – ELOK, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church – paid a visit to the local police chief in Ondangwa in order to commence negotiations. They gave him a letter in which they complained of the unchristian methods used and asked him to forward their letter to the relevant authorities.

The unchristian methods of government officials once again became apparent in November 1967, when a joint memorandum of ELK and ELOK (known as Ontwerp) was sent to the South African government. It pointed out how uncertainty and even hate towards the government had grown in recent years. The mission of the church was to ensure peace among peoples. It declared that an atmosphere in which justice prevails and dignity is respected was needed. The churches requested serious talks about their grievances in the name of their 250,000 members. The list of grievances included the following four accusations:

1. The unchristian methods of government officials during interrogations.
2. The use of bribery for capturing guerillas, which only resulted in mutual mistrust.
3. The establishment of "Homelands" for different population groups. No forced migration should be set in motion without prior negotiations and the preparation of the areas, so that the decision to relocate would be based on free will.
4. The construction of black-African neighbourhoods and the ensuing problems brought by these areas. People had to pay rent year after year for houses built by the government, but they were never allowed to own them.

The Ontwerp Memorandum commended the government for the good things it had promoted. Yet, it included a request for further talks on the issues mentioned above. The memorandum of 1964 was also included to show the government that these issues had been under discussion among Lutheran churches for several years. The Ministry of Bantu Administration and Development replied in March 1968 that the matters in question did not give any reason for further discussion, as the Odendaal Commission's plan had already been approved.

The so-called Terrorist Trial of the thirty-two accused started in Pretoria in 1967. A verdict was reached February 1968, whereby nineteen Aawambo people were sentenced to life imprisonment and six were sentenced to twenty years in

prison. In March 1968, six churches – ELK, ELOK, DELK, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church – sent a joint petition of mercy, based on a proposal by Bishop Auala, to the President of South Africa. The petition called for the sentences to be commuted due to the suffering this would bring to the families of the convicted. The churches felt obliged to help their members. However, the petition was rejected.

In October 1969, the synod of the NGK church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) was asked to support the petition for mercy, but it rejected it on the grounds that by supporting it the church would make itself an “ally of the terrorists”. Along the same lines, anger was felt in South Africa as a result of the decision of the World Council of Churches in September 1970 to give aid to nineteen political organizations, including SWAPO.

In July 1968, the Rhenish and Finnish Missionary Societies, together with many German churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, submitted a similar petition for mercy to the South African government. In October, Archbishop Martti Simojoki of the Finnish church received a reply from the South African Prime Minister that the petition had been rejected.

According to my father, the petitions for mercy clarified the boundaries between denominations. The Reformed Churches stayed in their own camp. The Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches had the courage to cooperate with ELOK and ELK, and DELK was also still involved.

However, the Lutheran faith had to undergo a hard test. In his thesis, my father argues that the Lutheran churches were ultimately unable to display unity under political pressure.

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