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PART TWO

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND HISTORICAL SPACES

CHAPTER THREE

-

The Guided Tour at Mariannahill Monastery

Introduction: Making Space

Clemens Gütl's account of early Mariannhill provides crucially important historical insights, alternative to the propaganda narratives. In particular, he describes the mission's internal frictions and the interactions with African neighbours. However, the account does not establish the fact that Mariannhill Monastery developed into a prospering tourist destination since the mid-1880s. The missionaries in fact made extensive efforts to socialise with commercial partners, politicians, tourists, and local visitors at all times, at least on a professional basis. This situation must therefore be reconsidered by comparing accounts by insiders and outsiders to the mission. I will do this in particular by analysing the mediating role of photographs within these relationships.

In this chapter I describe how various social actors co-created Mariannhill Monastery as an environment, by physically, textually, and photographically distinguishing different spaces, as interior and exterior to the mission station. Access to the monastery compound was highly regulated for visitors and only possible during particular hours. Visitors were not allowed to enter the ground by themselves and instead obliged to experience the monastery by guided perambulation. They could therefore not experience the day-to-day interactions between missionaries and their subjects, but only well-rehearsed performances. Nevertheless, visitors got a glimpse at how Africans and monks produced commercial goods in the workshops. They could also witness these things by purchasing evidence in form of either genre photographs of such situations, mission-produced goods, or by inspecting "Zulu curios" at the end of the tour at the monastery's museum and the photographic studio. The fact that visitors could correlate these photographs and objects with their experience on a grassroots level—however limited—stabilised the experience of their visit. As I will suggest, the missionaries established parts of the monastic ground as a "front region" or "frontstage" (MacCannell 1999 [1976], also see Goffmann 1990 [1956]), in which they performed the mission's success for visitors. This region was strictly separated from the monastery's private quarters and the monks' day-to-day routines.

Mariannhill Monastery, as much as Centocow Mission, were tourist sites in the most explicit sense, and even vacation sites. International tourists and local visitors came to see Mariannhill and its workshops as an attraction, while neighbouring White and Black families traded at the stores, or came to be photographed in the studio. In 1908, following many other famous names, the entire family of the local sugar magnate Campbell visited Mariannhill, and every member signed individually into the visitor's book on passing through the monastery's gate. In the 1920s, people such as the writer Alan Paton and the educationalist Charles T. Lorum worked and spent their holidays at Centocow Mission (cf. Chapter Seven). Apparently, more than other missions, Mariannhill's work and extensive network of stations was present in the public mind, as much as it was represented in local and national tourist guides since the early 1890s.

Before and during the visitation by Trappist superiors in 1892, self-representation at Mariannhill existed in form of either group- or single portraits showing Mariannhill's members as contemplative monks, and only very few scenes of interactions with Africans. In the

following, I suggest that after the visitation, the self-fashioning of Mariannhill's members as missionaries developed an even greater reflexivity and self-referentiality for the purpose of creating more engaging and entertaining photographs for the studio's customers and the benefactor readership of the periodicals. Mariannhill's photographic activities beyond the monastery's grounds had only developed slowly with the foundation of the first outstations between 1886 and 1888. Once the monastery had established itself as a tourist destination, and a photographic studio and a museum had opened commercially in 1894, photographic production and the collection and redistribution of museum objects proliferated. The attempt to start active mission work then required representing Africans, and especially interactions with them. Müller, however, only referred to his photographs explicitly as "ethnographic" once he started to engage with European ethnologists in 1898 (cf. Chapter Six).

In the first part, I discussed "types", posed portraits, and genre photographs that reiterate essences, generalisations, and stereotypes as intentional performances and staging of the mission encounter. In order to understand the representational process in a colonial situation, it is necessary to link, not only the photographic image, but alongside it the photographic object, product and commodity to a historical situation as it can be established by alternative sources. This allows to position these performances outside of the mission's narrative. Phrased differently, in the following two chapters I relate the photographic spaces of the last chapter to historical spaces. I show how the "image world" (cf. Geary 2003, Poole 1997, Sontag 1979) of the last chapter had been produced and assembled in the first place. Furthermore, I explore the material environments that enabled and positioned historically the photographs constituting this image world. I hope to provide historical ground by analysing in two steps how photographs were produced and re-produced in particular occasions. In Chapter Three, I describe how the missionaries created a context for visitors to the monastery through a guided tour, so to experience the space before they were presented with photographs of it. Only by narratively and physically establishing an inside, could the missionaries construct an antagonistic outside, which still had to be christianised. In Chapter Four I discuss very specific photographic occasions outside of the monastic compound, as well as those transgressing both spaces.

In the historical narratives created by insiders and outsider to the mission, efforts of creating and relating spaces are linked to the monastery's efforts of proselytisation. In the *Vergißeinnicht* of 1897, an anonymous author explained Mariannhill's "*Missionssystem*", which was alternatively referred to as "*Missionsmethode*" (Dahm 1950:177ff). First of all, this method was based on the extensive purchase of land (cf. Gütl 2005), so that the missionaries could establish adjacent villages for their *Amakholwa* communities of converts. Near Mariannhill Monastery this was the parish of St. Wendl, and near Centocow Mission the two villages of Emakholweni and Esibomveni. Another feature of this system was the establishment of boarding schools, instead of day schools. This allowed to maintain a steady influence on the children, instead of having them return to their often distant homesteads on a regular basis.

As we already realised in the last chapter, the fore-field to photographic production, the

préterrain, also consisted of multiple audiences, correspondences, and the constant movement of people and ideas between South Africa and Europe (Pels and Salemink 1994, 1999; Pels 1999). In this Chapter I explore this fore-field in South Africa, as well as concrete situations of photographic production. Mariannhill's photographers took photographs at Mariannhill Monastery, inside the studio, at its various other mission stations, but also outside the closed perimeters of the missions. As the conditioning of photographic production took place within a complex colonial setting, we need to take into account the relationships between missionaries, their subjects, and the colonial administration. We thus need to approximate the last chapter's potential photographic fictions to accounts produced by contemporary outsiders.

While I generally focus on the biographies and actions of particular photographic subjects, I also consider the actions of several other historical actors in the ambit of Mariannhill. In Chapters Three and Four these are government officials, travellers, magistrates, journalists and other writing visitors, and in Chapter Six anthropologists and ethnologists. As professionals in their respective occupations, these actors produced alternative traces to and next to photographs, while claiming to provide expert knowledge on colonial society. In the case of missionaries, it was less clear to the public mind what their expertise entailed exactly. As Trappist monks, Mariannhill Missionaries had a considerable internal division of labour and therefore a wide array of skills, as some of the biographies have shown already. This allowed Mariannhill Missionaries to continually reproduce the mission space through various internal media geared towards propaganda, which I already described in the last chapter. Outsiders instead penned a multiplicity of administrative reports and travelogues on their interactions with and visits to Mariannhill. In particular, newspaper articles and travelogues followed the narrative setup of the obligatory guided tour.

Mariannhill, unlike other missions, maintained representational institutions at the mission station itself, where objects and images were accumulated to manifest and mediate colonial ontologies. I will therefore reconsider the mission itself, the space between the mission and the "native reserve", and the space of the photographic studio and the museum as "contact zones". These enabled the missionaries, but also many other social actors to co-produce knowledge. Mariannhill's centre and agency of representation was clearly located at Mariannhill Monastery in South Africa, instead of Europe. As this was a situation unlike with other mission congregations, we also have to rethink relations of centres and peripheries (cf. Cooper and Stoler 1997).

The location of Mariannhill Monastery, close to the harbour town of Durban, can hardly be called a "contact zone" in the strict sense of Pratt's 18th century "border zone" (2008 [1992]), with a stark contrast in the imagination of space and life worlds. I hope to show that the missionaries at least presented it as such.²⁵⁵ Pratt considers contact zones as "[...]social spaces

²⁵⁵ Colonial intermediary space has been alternatively conceptualised either as "third space" (Bhabha 1994), or, as an adaptation of Foucault's heterotopia, as "xenotopia" (Barth, Halbach and Hirsch 2010). For my purposes the operationalisation of different "contact zones" appears to be sufficient.

where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination [...] (ibid:4), and [...] space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (ibid:6).

In Pratt’s sense, the contact zone is not so much a particular space, as much as it is constituted by the actors within an encounter. The question is then who takes part in the interaction, and who eventually represents the occasion, and by what means. To nuance Pratt’s discussion I analyse in a first step the relations of different spaces towards each other, and how this relation influenced the encounter. I will specify the above-mentioned distinct spaces in their relationships, in particular to the photographic studio at Mariannhill. In the fourth chapter I furthermore consider the role of specific objects within photographic occasions and spaces. This is essential to understand their later transformation in different spaces and contact zones, such as museums and exhibitions. In this way, locally and abroad, the missionaries established objects as “African”, as “mission-made”, or as indicating a process of conversion (cf. Chapter Five).

The essay “Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand” by the South African anthropologist Max Gluckman (1940) inspired me due to the fact that the opening of “the bridge” as both place and event, certainly constitutes a photographic occasion in a contact zone. Gluckman’s use of photography is rarely acknowledged as reflexive visual anthropology. Arguing for the fact that Europeans and Africans constitute one coherent social system, he also made this point visually through the use of photographs. Gluckman took photographs of the event himself, which he used as illustrations for his article (cf. Wingfield 2012b). Occasionally, similarly complex social occasions defined the encounter between Mariannhill’s photographers and their subjects. Due to the social gravitas of both the event and the participating people, Mariannhill’s photographers singled out such occasions. In both Chapters Three and Four I will show that only in such cases other traces accumulated around photographs. Such traces eventually allowed me to reassemble the respective photographic occasion.

In this chapter I first describe how the missionaries presented their station as enclosed by “otherness”. Then I analyse the textual and photographic descriptions of this “outside” and contrast Mariannhill’s self-representation with others. Eventually, I will describe the course of the guided tour at Mariannhill: on the one hand for White visitors, and on the other hand for the case of an African chief. The latter was spoken for in a report in the *Vergißeinnicht*, while White visitors were in a position to publish their own accounts of the visit.²⁵⁶ Mariannhill’s public image was thus created in the course of popular and popularising writing, but also through administrative, as well as governmental correspondences and interactions. Photographs played an important mediating role in both spheres.

²⁵⁶ It may well be that reports by African intellectuals on Mariannhill appeared even before the First World War. Future researchers may want to consider evaluating Zulu newspapers, for example from the Protestant press.

The Monastery: Naming the Land and Creating the Mission

The Colony of Natal was made up of several so-called “divisions”. In virtually all of them Mariannhill had established mission stations by the early 1900s. Mariannhill Monastery itself was located in the very centre of the Umlazi Division’s northern part, which consisted of mostly private farmland, apart from the Durban city area. The division’s southern part was constituted by the so-called Umlazi Native Reserve. It bordered on the Alexandra Division to the south, the Camperdown and Umgeni Divisions to the west, and the Indwedwe and Inanda Divisions to the north. While the eastern boarder was delineated by the coastline, the northern and southern borders followed the Umgeni and Umkomanzi Rivers. The native reserve to the south of Mariannhill was again divided from the northern private farms by the Umlazi River. These private farms thus formed a corridor from the Durban harbour towards Pietermaritzburg, in between the two very large Inanda and Umlazi Native Reserves.²⁵⁷

When a census was held in 1904, the Umlazi Division had a population of 66.765, consisting of 6.244 “Europeans”, 22.998 “Indians”, 36.968 “Natives”, and 555 “mixed and others”.²⁵⁸ The entire division measured 592 square miles (1.533 km²), of which Mariannhill’s two farms occupied 55 km². Between 1875 until 1905, the Umlazi Division had one magistrate located in Durban, with a branch court held at Pinetown every two weeks. Due to their convenient logistic locations, the respective magistracies also used Mariannhill Monastery, as well as the mission station Centocow in the Ipolela Division as so-called “branch courts” (cf. Chapter Four). On 1 March 1905, a second magistracy was opened in Pinetown by the Assistant Magistrate H.J. Colenbrander.²⁵⁹ Below I shall explain how varying professional and personal relationships to the magistracies at both Mariannhill and Centocow allowed for different photographic practices.

At least by 1888, Mariannhill Missionaries had fully appropriated the landscape around the monastery by applying German names to the area’s topographic formations. The map reproduced here was first published in the *Vergissmeinnicht* in 1888 (Figure 67). In this way the missionaries had overwritten, as it were, the earlier Dutch names of their two farms, Zeekoegat and Klaarwater. The introduction of new German names eventually made the space more familiar for German-speaking visitors and benefactors, and at the same time more exotic for other visitors. The German names indicated on the map were applied in the periodicals, but also used for the purpose of the missionary’s own orientation. They used them to reference the landscape in correspondence, administration, as well as baptism registers. The same map also

²⁵⁷ See the very detailed map by Imasson (1904), *Map of the Colony of Natal*: “Compiled in Surveyor General’s Office, Natal, from Diagrams and general Plans therein, and from data furnished by the Engineer in Chief for Railways, and by the Chief Engineer P. W. Dept.”.

²⁵⁸ PAR: *Magisterial Reports, Colony of Natal* (1904:49). However, the numbers between years, as given in the yearly reports, fluctuated considerably. In 1904, the Colony of Natal in its entirety had a population of 1.108.754, consisting of 97.109 “Europeans”, 904.041 “Bantu” and 107.604 “Mixed and other Coloured Races” (South African Native Affairs Commission 1908:7).

²⁵⁹ PAR: *Annual Reports Department of Native Affairs, Colony of Natal* (1905:15).

distinguishes between “buildings after European fashion” on the one hand, and “Kafir Kraals” on the other. This topography was therefore not only a measure to create a representational frontstage for outsiders, but the missionaries used it at the same time in backstage management.



Figure 67: original caption: “Karte von Mariannhill in Natal”. Map of Mariannhill’s farms *Seekoegat* and *Klaarwater* with a “germanised” topography, lithograph, 1888 (CMM Archives, also published in the *Vergissmeinnicht aus Mariannhill*, 1888. For an earlier version see *Der Trappist unter den Kaffern*, 26 October, 1884).

The still-existing main gate to Mariannhill Monastery was built between 1906 and 1907, after the entire compound had been surrounded with a second enclosure in the form of a fence in 1905.²⁶⁰ The first enclosure was constituted by the walls surrounding the monastery's cloisters (*Klosterklausur*), initially in a small temporary structure, and only by the 1930s in its present form. This additional enclosure was set up because throughout the 1890s, the community had been complaining repeatedly to the magistracy about what one of the fathers called a “gang of young natives” and “rascals”.²⁶¹ According to the complaints, these intruders verbally and physically disturbed the contemplative life of monks and sisters, as well as the education of converts. Eventually in 1898, the missionaries started to evict those people from their land who would not comply with their attempts at conversion. Once their own efforts had not shown any success, Fr. Ambrosius Hartes requested the magistracy to take action:

Enclosed you will find a list of Cafirs whom we wish to have officially evicted from our farm. They have been notified time and again to leave but they do not heed the notice. Two weeks ago the Brother Missionary informed them by letter fully explaining that they must leave within the next fortnight. This warning has not been heeded. All Cafirs on our farm are obliged to attend instructions, to send their children to school and to become civilized. These Cafirs have refused to comply. Besides as Missionaries and for the good example of our growing Christian population we cannot allow these heathen orgies, such as dancing, utshwala [beer-like beverage] carousals and the like heathen customs to be carried on on our missionary premises. These people are perfectly incorrigible and do not wish to better their condition. An other reason for their expulsion is that we need our place for our Christians and we cannot allow our Christians to settle in the immediate neighbourhood of such Cafirs as these are. Trusting that you will perform the expulsion of the said Cafirs as soon as possible; these men have all received the notice to leave.²⁶²

The magistrate followed the request and ordered a White police inspector to notify the indicated 13 “kraal-heads” to leave the Trappists’ land within one month time. The fact that the names were later ticked off by pencil may indicate that they were notified, but could also mean that the respective person had indeed left the land. This episode shows that by 1900, the Trappists had consolidated an inside of the mission compound according to their own values and rules, and in consequence also an outside, which in their view was still to be converted and civilised.

In 1904, Dom Obrecht became Mariannhill’s temporary administrator. After Abbot Gerard Wolpert’s resignation, it was his task to restore monastic order at Mariannhill, and in the process he saw a further need to protect the community by fencing the entire compound. Since 1905, Mariannhill’s architect, Br. Nivard Streicher, therefore had extensive correspondence with European contractors supplying building material for the gate and the fence. In the process, Streicher conceived of the idea to decorate the gate with an image showing “the group of Mother Ann and Mary”. When contemplating how to execute this image for the gate, Streicher wrote on 25 August 1906 to the Dutch stonemason Stolzenberg:

While I am agonising myself what would actually fit, I come across the *Mariannhiller Kalender* of 1906, and find on the frontispiece exactly what I am looking for [cf. Figure 10]. [...] Into this opening, so I hope, it will be possible

²⁶⁰ Letter, Streicher to Josten, 14.04.1905. In Streicher and Seubert (2003).

²⁶¹ DAR: 1-UMB-3/1/10-1897: letter, Abbot Schölzig to Resident Magistrate Umlazi Division, 26.04.1897.

²⁶² DAR: 1-UMB-3/1/11-1908: letter, Hartes to Magistrate’s Office Durban, 18.08.1908.

to place the image just like in the *Kalender*. If the group, which has become typical through the *Kalender*, now becomes imperishable [*unvergänglich*] in stone, so to speak, this does not hurt at all. Of course we will not tell anyone that the stone image was made after the *Kalender*, but instead the other way round: The editor of the *Kalender* has taken a slice [*Schnitt*] from the gate.²⁶³

Along with the letter, Br. Nivard sent the cover of the *Mariannhiller Kalender* of 1906 (Figure 10). It shows a depiction of St. Ann, with St. Mary kneeling before her.²⁶⁴ This is the image Br. Nivard wanted to “become imperishable in stone”. Even if a certain irony in his writing is implied, he wanted the *Kalender*’s audiences to see Mariannhill as the actual physical prototype of space, and as the genuine source from where images emanated. There was thus an inherent concern about the relation between Mariannhill as an actual space, and the images it produced for the sake of propaganda. In this chapter we shall see that propaganda not only consisted of the mediation of ideas over a great distance, but that it was at the same time co-produced on the ground in a common experience between missionaries, their subjects, and other colonial actors. Next to political interlocutors this involved commercial clients, curious visitors, and tourists. Since the mid-1880s Mariannhill had become an important player within Natal’s growing tourism economy. Already in 1887 Pfanner explained the situation as follows:

One thing is for certain: Nowhere else than with us—together in one place or in one house—can one see so many different things, at least not in South Africa. By this I mean things of agricultural and industrial nature, literature and the schooling system, in addition to the Trappists’ completely foreign [*fremd*] way of life, to which we recently added the peculiar agency of the sisters.

There is no foreigner [*Fremder*], who does not find something of great interest to him, be he a farmer or an industrialist, a pedagog or a missionary, an architect or an engineer, a litho- zinco- typo- photo- or any other kind of -graph, be he a craftsman or economist, a gardener or a herdsman, a pomo- or a physiologist, be he a pro- or regressionist [*Fort- oder Rückschrittler*], a monk or a man of the world, Catholic or Freemason.

Another Trappist monastery had made the same impression on the Turks earlier; one day in Bosnia I guided several Turks through the monastery [Mariastern]. The familiar Beg [rich landowner], who had visited us several times before, told the foreign [*fremden*] Turk, who visited for the first time: “Go to Vienna, there you cannot see so many things as you can with the Trappists”. And indeed, in Vienna, or in any other big city, the foreigner [*Fremder*] has to walk a lot before he can see such a diversity of things. With us he may see everything in a few half-days, or even within hours.²⁶⁵ (Pfanner 1987:40)

At least since 1894, visitors to Mariannhill would sign in with a so-called “*Fremdenbuch* [visitor’s book]” once they entered the grounds, or from 1907 onwards, when they passed the new portal I just described. As I will explain below, “*Fremde*” was a common term in the Trappist vocabulary to refer to secular outsiders. The volume of 1908 recorded 162 signed visitors for the month of July alone. An article in the *Vergißeinnicht* of the next year commented that the monthly average must have been even higher, as usually not every visitor signed in (Anon. 1909c:26). These visitors, so the article, came from all parts of the world, but

²⁶³ My own translation from the German original. Letter, Streicher to Stolzenberg, 25.08.1906. In Streicher and Seubert (2003).

²⁶⁴ The combination of their names is also the common source ascribed to the creation of the name “Mari-ann-hill”. Contrary to the common hagiography, this name had not been conceived by Pfanner on arrival in Natal, but already in Bosnia during the 1870s (Gütl 2017).

²⁶⁵ My own translation from the German original.

especially from Europe, and in particular Germany. The guests were most often educated, and a majority were curious non-Catholics. The same article also boasted with a considerable number of famous visitors of the past years. Among these were for example the Prince of Prussia, Joachim Albrecht, and the Governor of Natal, Matthew Nathan (cf. Figure 74). Also many politicians attending the first session of the South African National Convention visited the monastery in several groups, while they assembled in Durban during October 1908, and prepared parts of the terms for the South African Union of 1910. Over the years, many distinguished guests were photographed in the studio, together with the Abbot and high-ranking priests. On the one hand, this allowed the Trappists to present their guests—photographically, and textually through their enthusiastic remarks on the monastery—as social capital to audiences in Europe. On the other hand, as it was explicitly mentioned in the article, it was a common practice that the missionaries sent the photographs to such distinguished guests some time later as a gesture of reverence.

Whether famous or not, all visitors to the monastery had the possibility to take a guided tour with a standard script. This led past the various workshops, farms, stables, the sisters convent, the printing-press, and eventually to the photographic studio, as well as Mariannhill's own museum. As a matter of fact, the entire setup of the tour must have appeared as an industrial open-air exhibition to visitors, within which the actual museum was embedded (cf. Chapter Five). At all stops the guests were not only supplied with information on Mariannhill's history and activities, but could also purchase produce, such as farm goods or artisan products hand-crafted by the converts employed at the workshops. Memorabilia of a special kind could be acquired at the photographic studio and at the museum. Many visitors to Mariannhill reported that they purchased photographs of the mission, "native views", but also had their own portraits taken. The studio was thus not only central in supplying photographs to Mariannhill's own press for the periodicals, or to Mariannhill's houses in Europe and the US, but was socially embedded in the space of the mission station itself. Next to the studio, the museum was in complex ways related to practices of collecting and curating of both objects and photographs (cf. Chapter Five).

Visitors and hosts alike explicitly evoked the idea of a guided tour along these very institutions of production and re-production. The imagined social impact of the institutions intended a betterment of the "native question". This justification constituted a topic for conversations between visitors and missionaries. The presentations of these conversations (within and about the space of the mission) took place on the ground, but as I will show, they were often continued later on in public or private correspondence. We shall come to know how Mariannhill was represented in public guide books, as well as by guides of the Trappist community. The guided tour at Mariannhill Monastery must be separated in at least two parts: first, the general tour of industrial sites and workshops, which I will describe in this chapter, and second, the tour of the museum and the visit to the photographic studio. In the museum and the studio the missionaries had the possibility to narrate their experiences and endeavours related to objects and photographic albums, which also referenced places other than the monastery or its

missions. As the collection, accumulation, and redistribution of museum objects took place in a very distinct physical and discursive space, I will discuss the museum separately in Chapter Five.

Guided tours of industrial sites and factories already occurred in the late 18th century, but only became popular with a wider public in the last third of the 19th century. In particular their representation through picture postcards during the 1890s added to their popularity (Marsh 2008). The idea of the public guided tour was thus not yet all-pervasive when it was initiated at Mariannhill during the 1880s. Tony Bennett describes the efforts at public museums at the end of the 19th century as setting themselves off against earlier and messier forms of collecting, in order to become disciplinary machines for the masses (Bennett 1995). Mariannhill's tour and exhibitions had similar tendencies. However, as I shall describe in Chapter Five, the situation in Natal was different to the one in Europe or the USA. Black South Africans may have taken tours and visited exhibitions, but their experiences hardly ever became part of the representation of exhibitions. But as always, there are exceptions.

One of the visual strategies to create familiarity with benefactors in Mariannhill's periodicals, was the frequent repetition of depictions of the monastery, as well as the extended network of the mission stations. The editors achieved this through photographs, but also through various kinds of maps. The missionaries thus used photographs to familiarise those who could not see for themselves by providing a virtual tour: photographs could either be bought directly at the studio, or were sent to Europe as gratitude in form of prints, photographic foldout booklets (*leporellos*), as well as in periodicals. The tour, the various institutions folded into it, and their representations in form of photographs, were supposed to further social and moral education, not only of the African subjects, but also of the addressed audiences. The educational impact was thus not only presented during the actual tour, but also in later recollections and condensations of it.

Both insiders and outsiders, participants and observers, explicitly considered early Mariannhill before the First World War as an "experiment". On first sight this appeared as a paradox, which consisted of the *mission* to convert "natives" through the presence of contemplative *monastic* craftsmen (Kolbe 1895, Martindale 1931, Merriman 1905, Ricards 1879, Streicher 1905, also see Pels 1999). In theory this was a paradox because the monks were only allowed to communicate with the outside world with explicit permission by their superiors. The experiment was therefore carried out in a well-defined and disciplined space, constituted by various disciplining institutions, such as craft workshops, schools, hospitals, and agricultural facilities. In order to maintain, manage, and represent this experimental space, a printing press, a photographic studio, a museum, a library, and eventually an archive were set up, in exactly this order. According to the idea of the experiment, namely that contemplative Trappists did something unheard of, the outcome (or success) was yet unclear. As we shall see in the next sections, it was exactly this remaining contradiction in the idea of contemplative European monks engaging in mission-work, which created fascination for outsiders. Eventually, this translated into a high number of visitors. The construction of Mariannhill as an imagined space

took place in representations, as much as in historical space during the guided tour. As I will show, visitors only experienced Mariannhill in a restricted way during these tours. Later they re-assembled this space according to what they had heard and seen, however, only partially in photographs of the studio.

When visiting the monastery, tourists had already been aware of its extensive network of mission stations in both Natal and East Griqualand. At least they became aware of it when browsing the collection of photographs showing the missions, and especially Centocow Mission. Not only was it the last of Mariannhill's stations before one crossed from Natal into East Griqualand, but also many traces lead back and forth from and to Mariannhill. These are of a biographical nature, but also relate to the transfer of ethnographic artefacts and research, as well as photographs. In the following section I present a general overview of the station, while repeatedly comparing it to the situation of Mariannhill. Moving back and forth between these two places allows us to explain the differing preconditions for the production of both photographs and knowledge in relation to these transfers. In Chapter Seven we will eventually turn to Centocow entirely for the period of the late 1920s.

The Missions: Centocow and Beyond

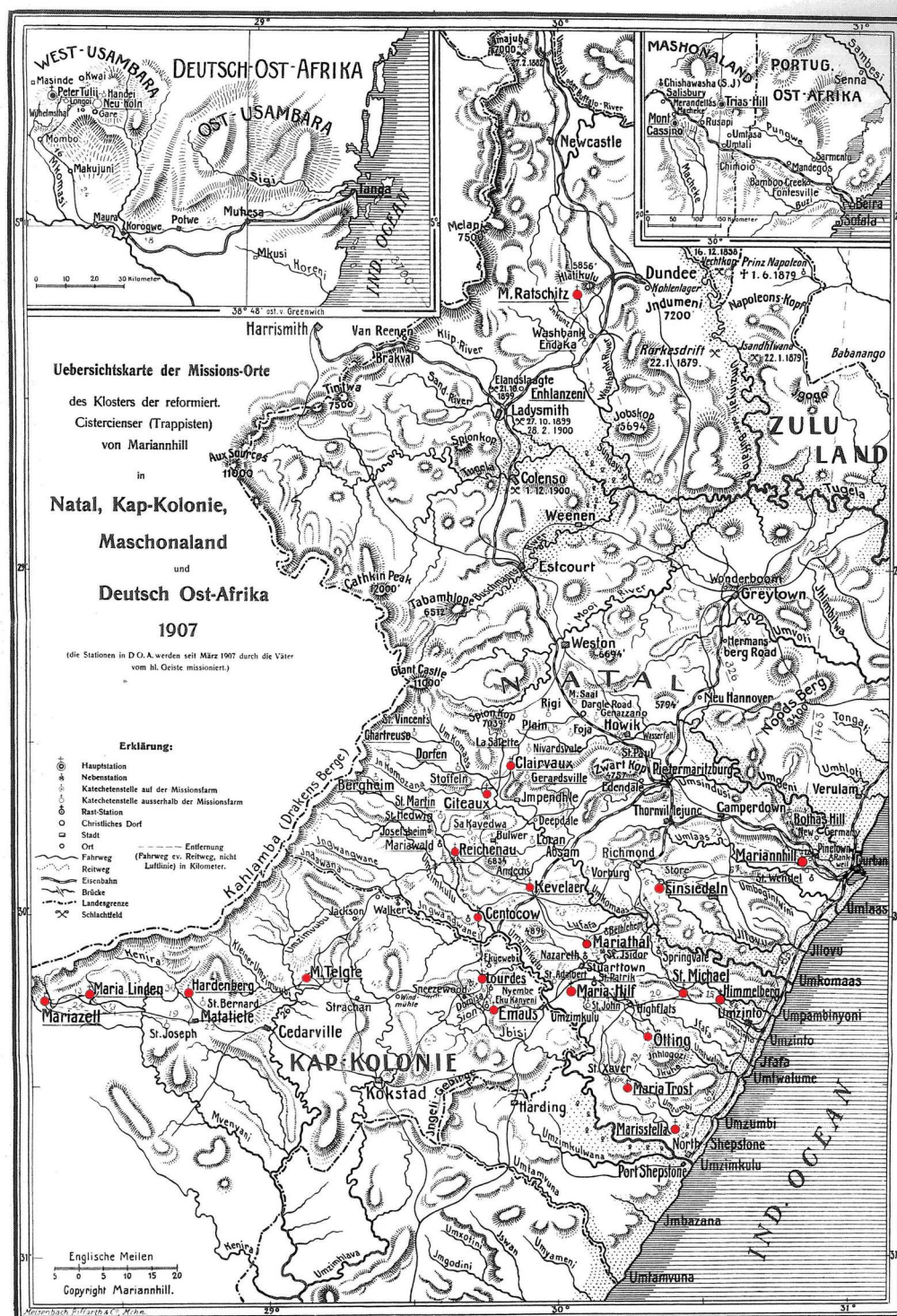


Figure 68: map of Mariannhill's mission stations as active in 1907, indicators added by the author (published in Frey 1907, also see the colour section).

The idea of a “tour” can be drawn much wider than only the tour for visitors at Mariannhill Monastery. Visitors would have been aware of the monastery’s network of filial stations in Natal and East Griqualand, and even chose to visit some of them. The stations were present in narratives and in the photographic studio at Mariannhill, and in so far were not only a physical reality, but also constituted an essential part of the representational work. By 1899, Mariannhill had developed an extensive network of more than 20 filial stations all over Natal²⁶⁶ and East Griqualand²⁶⁷ (Figure 68). The community had also established a house with two priests in Johannesburg, as well as stations in German East Africa and Rhodesia. The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (CPS) were called to help with the Belgian Trappists of Westmalle in the Congo, and also remained in German East Africa once the Mariannhill Trappists left in 1907. Three Mariannhill houses were established in Germany, two in Austria, and one in Switzerland. The sisters founded a noviciate in the Netherlands, and so did the Missionaries of Mariannhill in 1911.

The South African “dependencies” of Mariannhill Monastery were usually referred to as “mission stations” or “filial stations”. As “daughter houses” these stations depended on Mariannhill Monastery as a “mother house”. In order to create lasting connections to Europe, Pfanner and his successors named these stations after well-known places of pilgrimage in Europe, many of them dedicated to Mary, the Mother of Jesus (cf. Gütl 2005:78). Depending on whether these places of pilgrimage were in Austria, Germany, or Poland, the Abbots hoped to attract benefactors from these specific countries to fund the respective mission. For reasons that will become clearer throughout the rest of this study, I will only discuss the mission station Centocow in more detail. Centocow was, after the neighbouring Lourdes Mission, the biggest outstation in terms of resident missionaries and numbers of converts residing at or near the station. As visible on the map, all filial stations had their own sub-stations, and upheld extensive farming lands with networks of several churches, often served for by only one priest.

In early 1900, the entire male community related to Mariannhill Monastery comprised 329 members, however spread out over the sub-stations in South Africa, with 24 members residing permanently abroad;²⁶⁸ 10 of these in Europe. The community of missionary sisters numbered 354, equally dispersed over the mentioned localities. Of the male community, only 167 resided permanently at Mariannhill Monastery. A major part of these were professed lay brothers (75), while professed priests were a minority at Mariannhill with only 8 individuals at the time. This was a fact lamented throughout the time before the First World War, as priests

²⁶⁶ Maria Ratschitz, Einsiedeln, St. Bernard, Mariathal, Mariahilf, Ötting, Maria Trost, St. Michael, Centocow, Reichenau, Kevelaer, Clairvaux and Citaux.

²⁶⁷ Lourdes, Maria Telgte, Maria Hardenberg, Maria Zell, Maria Linden and Emaus. The main filial stations in both Natal and East Griqualand even had their own sub-stations.

²⁶⁸ The following evaluation is based on statistics as they were presented in the *Familiäre Mitteilungen* 1899:24-26. Fluctuations took place throughout the early years, with a considerable number of members leaving and entering the community each year: as a peak, 57 new members entered in 1892, but in the same year 25 left the community. As this was the year of Pfanner’s disposition, his personal propaganda efforts had ceased, and it appears that since then slightly fewer novices entered the community each year.

were needed to perform daily mass, and to take care of the community's other spiritual needs. The community's majority at the time was therefore made up of novices, as well as several associates, such as the photographer Br. Aegidius Müller. Members moved between the monastery, the stations, and the houses in Europe frequently, either to relieve confreres from duty, to collect or deliver goods, or to help with construction work. Also African converts, workers, as well as school children were relocated, often permanently, between stations over considerable distances.

Since its foundation in 1888, Centocow Mission became one of Mariannhill's most important outstations. Müller took many photographs in the area, and it will therefore be of crucial importance to understand the network of involved actors contributing to the visual and material economy between the mission stations and the monastery. Moreover, influential members preferring the missions over monastic life, temporarily worked and gathered crucial experiences in this region, amongst them Mariannhill's third Abbot Fr. Gerard Wolpert, Fr. Alfred T. Bryant, and Fr. Willibald Wanger. In later years, the creators of Mariannhill's early theatre productions, Fr. Emanuel Hanisch and Fr. Thomas Neuschwanger became the leading missionaries at Centocow (Cf. Chapters One and Four).

Centocow is situated about 150 km to the west of Durban, near the village Creighton, from where a railway line used to connect Natal and the Eastern Cape.²⁶⁹ The mission became well-known for its fruit orchards and tree nurseries, as well as wine and honey, which were exported far into the country (eg. Ergates 1906). Due to its remote location, the station was not as much of a tourist destination as Mariannhill, but still had visitors who wrote about it early on (eg. Kufal 1894). The mission was also known for the successful pass rates of its boarding school, as the mission's periodicals often boasted before 1914.²⁷⁰

Like Mariannhill Monastery, Centocow Mission attempted to be self-sufficient as much as possible, and to provide schooling, as well as artisan training for its *Amakholwa* settlement. Pfanner, Wolpert, and Streicher chose one particular farm in the Natal Midlands to found Centocow, because it was situated between two large "native locations" or "reserves".²⁷¹ "Location No. 1" of the Polela District to the West was inhabited mainly by *Amakhuze* communities, while "Location No. 3",²⁷² as part of the Ixopo District to the East, contained a smaller *Amabhaca* community (cf. Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:18). The protocol of a council meeting at Mariannhill Monastery in 1888 mentions that the indicated farm "Trinity" was ideal for a mission station, as "[...] there lived no Whites in its vicinity, and also no Protestant

²⁶⁹ The historical train line still exists, but is defunct. A part of the line is still used occasionally by a refurbished historical steam train to take tourists on joyrides between Pietermaritzburg and Riverside.

²⁷⁰ This popularity brought the young writer Alan Paton to stay at Centocow as a teacher in late 1923, to supervise examinations, but also to write at the mission (Paton 1995, 2009). By the 1920s, also several other political actors visited Centocow for holidays or social events (cf. Chapter Seven).

²⁷¹ According to Brookes and Webb "[i]n Natal the name 'Location' has always been used for rural reserves as well as for urban villages. In the other Provinces it is used for the latter only" (1979 [1965]:58, also see 166).

²⁷² The two locations were renamed "Upper Umkomaas No. 1" and "Upper Umkomaas No. 2" during the first decades of the 20th century.

missionaries” (Zürlein 1999:14). In this strategic position, Centocow Mission became a crucial political factor, and it was mutual dependence that furthered a relationship with the local magistracy, which was represented as positive from both sides throughout. This even continued during times of war, when Germans and also Catholics were otherwise denounced.

Abbot Franz Pfanner had adopted the mission’s name from the Polish place of pilgrimage Częstochowa, and immediately hoped to anglicise it “[...] as either Centocau or Centocow, so that British mailmen shall not curse [his] legs to fall off” (Panner 1888:55).²⁷³ The city Częstochowa in Poland is famous for its Monastery Jasna Góra, and the religious icon of a “Black Madonna” with Christ, dating back to the 14th century. The black face of the original icon in Poland is usually thought to have been caused by the perpetual burning of candles underneath it. As a “Black Madonna”, however, people at both Centocow and Mariannhill interpreted copies of the icon as “African”.²⁷⁴ Unfortunately, I was not able to study contemporary perceptions during my fieldwork.

According to his own account, Pfanner conceived of the name “Czenstochau” explicitly in order to attract “slavic” benefactors as patrons, and thus to re-pay the sum, which he had already invested to buy the farm (Pfanner 1888). Mariannhill Monastery had several Polish members, as well as benefactors, apparently enough to make it profitable to publish the periodical *Vergißeinnicht* in the Polish language for several years. The station Centocow was eventually financed by a Polish aristocrat, which the current occupants of Centocow, the Polish Pauline Fathers from Jasna Góra, believe to be the Countess Maria Theresa Ledóchowska (1863-1922). Ledóchowska had a particular presence in South Africa as benefactor of Catholic mission projects, for example by supporting the one of Fr. Franz Mayr (cf. Gütl 2004).²⁷⁵

The first superior of Centocow between 1889 and 1900 was Fr. Gerard Wolpert (1855-1945). Like some of his confreres at the time, Wolpert had never studied theology upon entering the Trappist order in 1883, but was nevertheless admitted to the priesthood in 1888, and soon after put to practical mission work (Gütl 2005:150). In 1900, he was transferred back to Mariannhill and became the monastery’s third abbot. However, he resigned again after only four years, as the monastery’s internal tensions between the ideals of contemplation and mission became too strenuous for him. Within these tensions, Wolpert was an important member of the mission faction, who opposed the advocates of the contemplative ideal. Eventually, Mariannhill was separated from the Trappist order in 1909, and Wolpert became the first Superior General (*Provost*) of a new mission institute in 1910 (Dahm 1950:219).

At Centocow, Wolpert was succeeded by Fr. Balduin Reiner (1900-1909) and Fr.

²⁷³ The missionaries themselves nevertheless spelled the name *Czenstochau* in their periodicals, and it was only officially anglicised by the order of Provost Fr. Gerard Wolpert in 1913 (Anon. 1913a:176).

²⁷⁴ For one such interpretation see an anonymous and untitled story in the *Vergißeinnicht* (Anon. 1901:24). The ethnic interpretation of the Black Madonna as “*Amabaca*” was even strengthened by the lines running across the Madonna’s left cheek. The story recounts that a Black boy interpreted these as incisions, and accordingly as “tribal” markers of the “*Amabaca*”. For more information on the original icon in Poland see Niedzwiedz (2010).

²⁷⁵ Due to such engagements Ledóchowska was beatified in 1970 (Gütl 2004:22).

Innocenz Buchner (1909-1911).²⁷⁶ Fr. Emanuel Hanisch arrived at Centocow in 1908, and eventually became its superior in 1911 (cf. Dischl 1982, Pellazino 1914a).²⁷⁷ Fr. Emanuel was the nephew of Fr. Alexander Hanisch, who curated the museum at Mariannhill. This personal relationship certainly benefitted the transfer of information, but also the transfer of ethnographic objects from Centocow to Mariannhill, and further to the ethnographic museum of Stuttgart between 1905 and 1914 (cf. Chapter Six).

On arrival at Centocow in 1908, Hanisch introduced a crucial routine of documentation, which was extraordinary when compared to Mariannhill's other stations at the time. This involved three different types of records: a station chronicle, a scrap book (*Sammelbuch*) for newspaper clippings and letters, as well as a photographic album.²⁷⁸ Hanisch instructed Sr. Philippine Treumund CPS to write the mission's history for the past 20 years since its foundation in 1888, and continued writing the chronicle himself since his arrival. In the chronicle's introduction, Hanisch indicated its purposes: "A chronicle is a precious repository [*Fundgrube*] for the scholarly historian, an immensely useful source for the young mission pioneer, and an interesting book for everyone (Treumund et al. 1888-1956)".²⁷⁹ For Hanisch, these three records had a retrospective, but also a prospective use value, as future missionaries could learn from past experiences and the interactions with the mission's common interlocutors. The combination of these three sources allowed for insights in the contemporary use and importance of photographs, of which I will analyse one case in Chapter Four.

Returning to the actual network of missions, Centocow was closely connected to Mariannhill's nearby filial stations Lourdes and Emaus. Centocow and Lourdes Missions were both founded in close succession in 1888. After Pfanner's resignation in 1892, Emaus Mission served as his old-age residence. Despite their proximity, the three missions were separated by multiple geographical, political, and religious borders. Unlike Mariannhill Monastery itself, the respective area is remotely landlocked against the Drakensberg. As we shall see, the region experienced a long history of religiously and politically motivated geographical (re-)imaginings. Mariannhill Missionaries nevertheless frequently crossed these borders—along with their converts—in order to commute between their stations. All three stations were connected to the monastery by various events, media, and persona. As filial stations they were administered by the monastery as a mother house. The stations therefore had to report back to, and most interesting for our concern, they were represented by Mariannhill Monastery. The media institutions, such as the photographic studio and the printing press with its various periodicals, featured Centocow and Lourdes in most editions with the longest reports, anecdotal stories, and photographs. But also ethnographica, collected around Centocow eventually ended

²⁷⁶ The position of superior and the actual responsibilities as recorded in Centocow's chronicle are not clearly specified, as priests moved around a lot for various reasons. Also Abbot Gerard Wolpert apparently spent much time at Centocow after his resignation between 1904 and 1909.

²⁷⁷ Hanisch stayed at Centocow until 1920 and became Bishop of Umtata in 1937.

²⁷⁸ The photographic album has been transferred to Mariannhill Monastery, and the Chronicle and scrap book to the CMM Archive in Rome.

²⁷⁹ My own translation from the German original.

up in Mariannhill's museum, and some even in German Museums.

The Umzimkhulu Valley(s), as the wider region between Centocow and Lourdes is sometimes referred to, is historically split between Natal's Polela and Ixopo Districts to the North, and East Griqualand's Umzimkhulu District to the South. Since the beginning of the formal annexation of "No-Man's-land" between 1879 and 1894, the Ingwangwane River and the Umzimkhulu River constituted the border between Natal and East Griqualand, as part of the Cape Colony (Saunders 1974:188, Ross 1976). Even if the latter region was discontinued as a formal administrative unit by the late 1870s, East Griqualand was obviously referred to by the same name beyond the 1890s, and was more commonly known as the Transkeian Territories.²⁸⁰ At the same time, the two rivers have always been natural landmarks for orientation, and still today many place names in the area refer to them. While Centocow was on the Natal side of the historical border, Lourdes and Emaus were several kilometres South to the border. The Umzimkhulu River passes Centocow just a few hundred meters downhill from the mission's main compound and joins the Ingwangwane River towards the sea several kilometres downstream (cf. Map, Figure 68).

Once the Catholic Church had restructured its diocesan system in the 1950s, the Umzimkhulu River became the border between the newly-founded Mariannhill Diocese and the Umzimkhulu Diocese, with Centocow and Lourdes falling under the latter (Dischl 1982). Since then the two missions have been drifting away from their former motherhouse at Pinetown, which became the centre of the newly established Mariannhill Diocese. Under Apartheid, since 1974, the Umzimkhulu District South of Centocow became a satellite of the Transkeian *Bantustan*, factually an independent "Homeland" for Africans. From then on, the Umzimkhulu and Ingwangwane Rivers constituted the border between South Africa and the Bantustan. As for everyone else, this complicated movements for Mariannhill Missionaries, whenever they had to leave the country in order to do their work, or to visit other stations. These reorganisations separated Centocow and Lourdes Missions from Mariannhill Monastery and added to the stations' separate development. Mariannhill Missionaries nevertheless held on to Emaus Mission, due to its symbolic connection to Mariannhill's founder Abbot Franz Pfanner. Since 1994, the municipalities of Umzimkhulu and Ingwe (formerly Polela) have been unified as part of the Sisonke District in KwaZulu-Natal, and at about the same time the Pauline Fathers²⁸¹ from Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, Poland, took over Centocow Mission.

On the one hand, border areas, such as the Umzimkhulu district, were ambivalent spaces, but not necessarily secured and monitored more than other places at all times. On the other hand, the fact that both sides of the Natal/Cape border were peripheral to their respective centres, did not create a situation of marginality for the missions, or for governmental control. On the contrary, due to their strategic positions, Centocow and Lourdes became crucial hubs in the production of knowledge for the intersecting interests of mission propaganda, government, as

²⁸⁰ The land beyond the River Kai, from the perspective of the Cape Colony.

²⁸¹ "Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit" (O.S.P.P.E).

well as ethnological interests during the 1890s and once more during the 1920s. Even though the African population clearly outnumbered Europeans, the latter upheld a tight information network and infrastructure, in order to facilitate control over Africans. This network consisted of White traders, missionaries, as well as Black and White government employees and police.

Centocow and Lourdes were close to the railway line, and Centocow even had its own train station after 1900. The very next stop in the Cape was the border station and trading post Riverside, dominated by the trading store of James Cole. White traders, such as Cole and Donald Strachan, played a crucial political and economic role in the local colonial society, and, like missionaries, had considerable influence on Africans (Rainier 2003). Due to the high percentage of Africans in the area, the trader's livelihood likewise depended on their African interlocutors. Magistrates, their staff, as well as White and Black police were another group of colonial actors, who were deeply involved with the daily life of missionaries and their subjects, due to the relative remoteness of the area in an even tighter network of dependencies. In this situation, Centocow mission itself served as a particularly important contact zone for the involved protagonists, which I explore in Chapter Four through the occasion of a magisterial branch court session, held at Centocow in February 1912. Müller documented this event photographically with considerable effort and preparation. This occasion can only be reassembled due to the social spaces and networks I just explored and the traces they produced.

A Stopover on “Route XVII”

In the valley [Botha’s Hill, just North of Mariannhill], which for the most part is a native reserve, there are many tribes located; and the tourist would do well to pack up a few days’ provisions, secure a trustworthy guide, and march down to visit the kraals of, say, the Bango tribe, whose portly and popular chieftain ever extends a courteous welcome to the white traveller. Should the tourist be a master of the camera, he will come out of the region with a sufficient stock of artistic negatives to make up an album of views which will delight all who see it. A few beads or cheap pocket knives are sufficient recompense to models, whilst a judiciously bestowed shilling on some of the old kraal mothers will ensure a kindly reception, not only to the tourist himself, but to those who follow him. When Natal possesses a picture gallery of her own, or when the number of colonists has increased sufficiently to make the pursuit of oil painting from nature lucrative, this district is certain to become one of the most popular artistic resorts in South Africa.

J. F. Ingram, *The Colony of Natal: An Official Illustrated Handbook and Railway Guide* (1895:161).

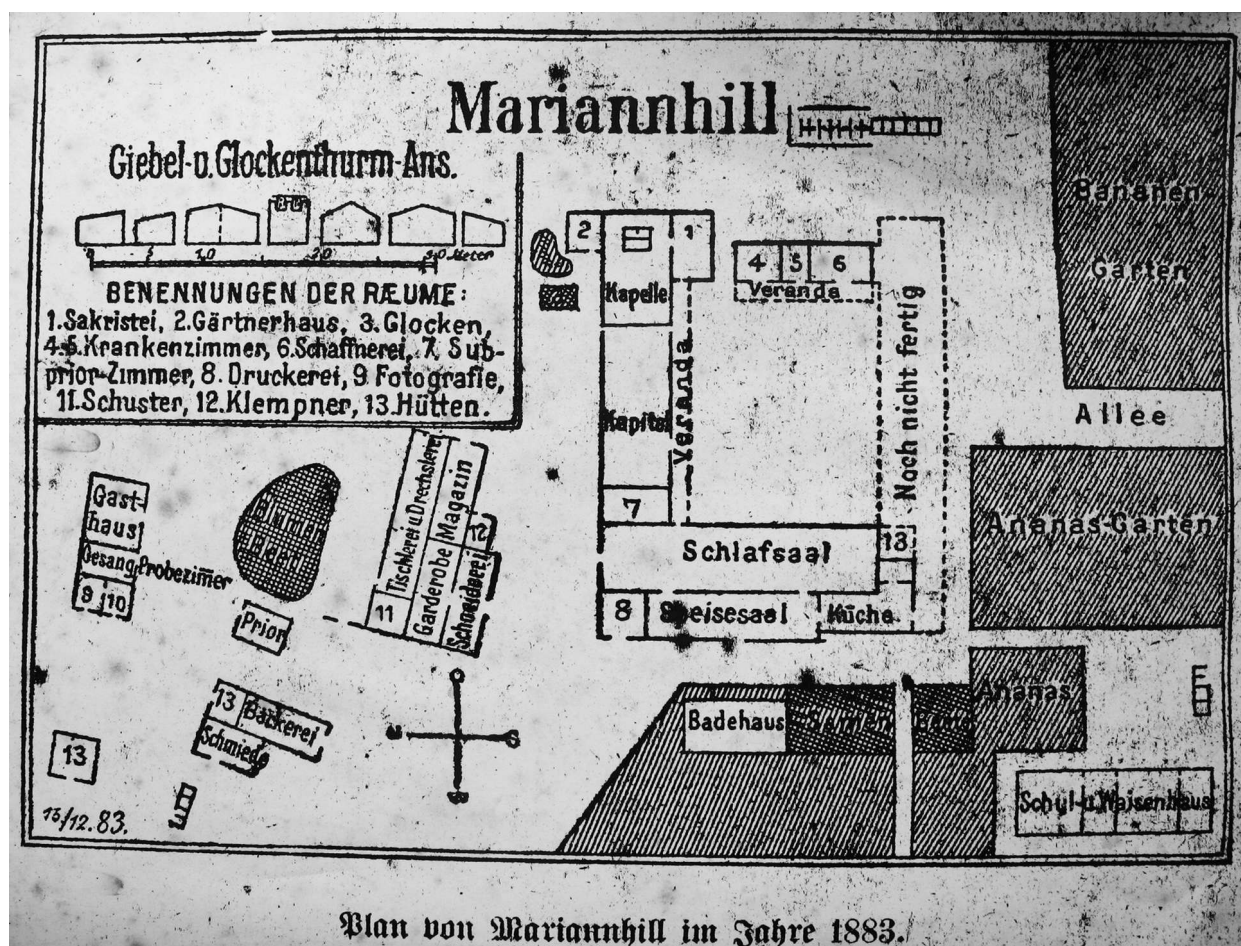


Figure 69: original caption: “Plan von Mariannhill im Jahre 1883”—“Map of Mariannhill in 1883”. As number “9” this map indicates a very small room dedicated to “photography [Fotografie]” (CMM Archives).

Since the early 1890s, Mariannhill and its mission stations became firmly integrated in a larger network of “must-do” stopovers, devised for tourists to South Africa, and Natal in particular. The

above quote from the most popular guide to Natal encouraged tourists travelling in the area around Mariannhill Monastery to seek the contact with the local African population and to take their own photographs of people and landscapes in an artistic fashion. It even predicted a great potential in the area for a future artistic painterly culture. Even though tourists may indeed have followed this advice, the photographic results often remained in private repositories and may not have survived until today. At the same time, many of these tourists instead sought the service of Mariannhill's photographic studio to purchase "native views" of a much higher quality than they could have produced themselves. Additionally, the very same studio also offered to take portraits of visitors' themselves. In this way, Mariannhill's photographic production captured several experiences and relationships photographically: the one of the tourists on the one hand, and the missionaries' with both the visiting tourists, as well as their African subjects on the other hand.



Figure 70: photograph of Mariannhill Monastery, approx. 1895. The photographic studio is the second building from the left, which had been constructed explicitly for this purpose in 1894 (CMM Archives).

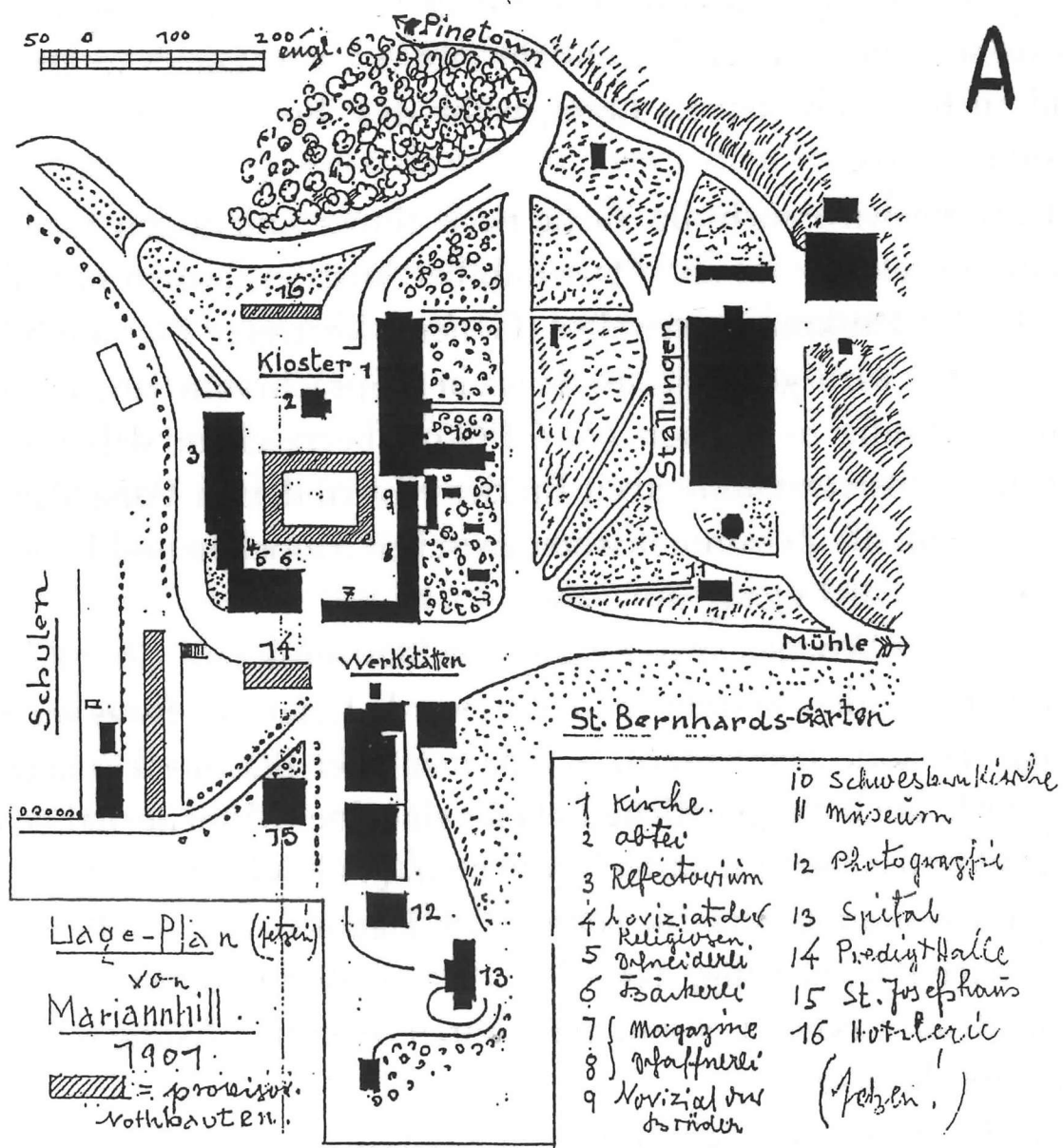


Figure 71: original caption: “Lage-Plan von Mariannhill, 1901”—“Site plan of Mariannhill, 1901”. “[...] 12 Photographie [...]” (as published in Balling 2003:130).

The above photograph (Figure 70) and site plan (Figure 71) can be matched: the photograph was taken from the location of the “Stallungen [stables]”, facing towards the “Werkstätten [workshops]”. The photographic studio is the second building from the left (Figure 70), which is indicated as number 12 in the site plan (Figure 71). Visitors not only marvelled at the

phenomenon of the monastery itself, but also at the Trappists' enormous land purchases around their mission stations. We must therefore understand Mariannhill as an extensive and complex network, rather than a single monastic and hermetic compound. As I suggested, Mariannhill was constructed and perceived as an experimental space, constituted by a well-defined, but also permeable inside and outside. During the tours at the monastery, guides narrated and reproduced these perimeters with the help of a clear script, but also with the help of photographs at the studio, which included the many outstations.

Many visitors to Mariannhill recorded their experiences at the monastery either in published travelogues, or newspaper features. I traced more than 20 publications²⁸² reporting on Mariannhill between 1885 and 1915 alone, and there may well be many more. Of those I can only describe a few in order to show how visitors experienced the space of the mission station, how they wrote about it, and how photographs were involved in this process. To begin with, publications advertising South Africa to the world can be distinguished in at least two common formats: both individual travelogues by overseas individuals and official travel guidebooks were well in place in South Africa by the late 1890s. In particular the latter kind of publication not only attempted to promote tourism, but also permanent immigration. In particular the providers of infrastructures, such as railway companies and shipping lines presented their customers with travel guidebooks to make their networks and services even more approachable. The first explicit tourist guidebook for South Africa was *Brown's 'South Africa': A Practical and Complete Guide for the Use of Tourists, Sportsmen, Invalids, and Settlers* (Brown and Brown 1893). The Union Castle Line eventually bought out the authors and published the guide up to 1960 (Mackenzie 2005:29). As early as 1893, Mariannhill Monastery was thus presented as a worthwhile stopover in the suggested itinerary referred to as "Route XVII", from Durban to Pietermaritzburg (Brown and Brown 1893:204-211). Through the travel guidebook, the commercial directory for a local consumer market, but also by word-of-mouth, Mariannhill thus gained a reputation as an increasingly popular destination for both commerce and tourism. Tourists marvelled at the monastic lifestyle at large, the architecture, the industrial workshops, but also the educational institutions. In particular the latter two dimensions established Mariannhill as a crucial player within the colonial landscape, and defined its relation to governmental institutions.

Even though Mariannhill only received its own train station after the First World War, it was already suggested as an excursion from Pinetown Station by 1895, in the first local guide book issued by the Natal Railways (Ingram 1895). In 1903, the guide's second edition was equipped with photographs from and of Mariannhill (Harrison 1903). The guide's third edition (Tatlow 1911) even contains an extensive article on "Natives and Indians" by James Stuart, which is illustrated exclusively with Mariannhill photographs for the part on the "natives".²⁸³

²⁸² Excluding the frequent short reports in Natalian Newspapers.

²⁸³ The Zulu linguist James Stuart (1868-1942) was Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs (ASNA) between 1909 and 1912. He is generally known for his collection of African oral history, published as the "James Stuart Archive" (JSA), which I discuss below (cf. Leverton 1977, Hamilton 1998).

Stuart wrote his article on some of the common colonial themes of superstition, marriage, and material culture alongside Mariannhill's photographs, which he apparently had selected himself. He ends the article with the lines: "It is hoped that the series of photographs illustrating these notes will assist in giving the reader a clearer idea of the people than would have been otherwise possible" (Stuart 1911:464).

In 1894, one year after the very first national guide book had appeared, a natural history cum ethnographic Museum was established at Mariannhill, and at the same time the photographic studio was professionalised with a substantial new building. By 1911, when the third edition of the Natal guide book was released, Mariannhill Missionaries had already been well known internationally for the imagery they produced of Africans, but also locally for their portrait studio. The photographic production at Mariannhill thus clearly fed on, but also reacted to, a commercial directive; not least by adapting its imagery to examples, as they had already been present in abundance in the first edition of the Natal Railway Guide (Ingram 1895).

Joseph Forsyth Ingram had been a professional photographer in Durban during the mid-1880s, and thus probably provided some of the illustrations for his own publication (cf. Spencer 1982:83). As he seems to suggest in the quotation above, guidebooks like his own may be considered as "how-to" guides, inspiring tourists where and especially what to photograph.²⁸⁴ In this regard Mariannhill was present in two ways: first, in form of a location *en route*, and in the later editions of the guides in the form of the many photographs, serving as an inspiration for what and how to photograph. Mariannhill therefore contributed to the "image world" of Natal in a double sense: not only by selectively representing landscape and people, but also by creating expectations of what visitors wanted to see, and what they would demand to purchase in form of already existing photographs. With the help of travel guides, foreign visitors were therefore able to accumulate visual knowledge on beforehand, and accordingly they were able to recognise sceneries and people on arrival. As Susan Sontag phrased it in her elaboration on the "image-world": "the notions of image and reality are complementary" (1979:160).

Due to its unusual layout, the appearance of its inmates, as well as the enacted work, Mariannhill Monastery was a destination sought after by tourists from the first years of its existence, and considered as equally exotic as the African homesteads in its neighbourhood. While foreign Whites considered African appearances as exotic, local White and Black South Africans must have been equally thrilled by the appearance of the monks (and their photographs):

Strange figures too they look, these shaggy-bearded, sunburnt men, with countenances expressive of meditation and complete indifference to the things about them, their peculiar garb giving them in addition a mediaeval appearance, or such, at least, as we are often accustomed to associate with the middle ages, which must strike the observer as quaintly out of harmony with the bustling thoroughfares of a modern town. (Powell 1899:65)

²⁸⁴ See for example Sontag (1979:65) on the early efforts of the Kodak Company to guide tourism by indicating what and where to photograph.

The author of the first tourist guide to Durban, Sidney Powell²⁸⁵, thus projected Mariannhill's monasticism into a distant, but not unattractive European past (also see Merriman 1905). The attractions, which visitors came to marvel at, were not only of material nature in form of architecture, the great number of workshops and the artefacts they produced, but foremost the extraordinary performances, first by "civilised natives" in the workshops, and furthermore by the silence of the monks, despite which this was all possible. It was this apparent friction between the austere conditions under which the Trappists lived and the fact that they still seemed to achieve what they set out to do, which fascinated many visitors:

The monks rise at two a.m. and go into church. At three a.m. the brown-froked lay brothers go out to do kitchen work and to study Kafir [language]. The white monks remain till nearly six, praying and singing psalms. At 4.30 the lay brothers return to mass, remaining in churchy till 6.30, when they go to breakfast and afterwards to the workshops. The white monks finish their office at 6.30, when they have breakfast and study for the priesthood. They are examined by the Bishop in theology, philosophy, &c. Reading is allowed, i.e. devotional books, no newspapers or fiction. The guides who travel about, and who are exempt from the vow of silence, are obliged to confine their conversation strictly to business, and may bring no news of the outside world to their brethren. (Thomas 1894:23)

Such reports, however, were not absolutely accurate at all times, and often relied on the visitors' own observation, as well as idealised statements by the monks themselves. As Gütl (2005) showed, especially Mariannhill's more remote outstations were considered as lacking the Trappist's discipline in terms of conduct and consumption. As I already explained in Chapters One and Two, the reception and processing of information at Mariannhill on and for the outside world increased quickly during the 1890s. In the process of Mariannhill becoming a tourist destination, the editors of Mariannhill's periodicals quickly realised the necessity of consuming and reproducing secular literature and illustrations for the purpose of raising funds.

Increasingly aware of the fact that every visit by an outsider could have a potential afterlife in the worldwide printing press, Mariannhill Missionaries treated visitors to the monastery most courteously, so that they would leave with the most positive impressions possible. Mariannhill's editors even employed the most prominent visitors as social capital, either at the time of their visit, or many decades later, once they had become famous. Next to the South African politicians and German royalty, which I mentioned above, there were for example Mohandas Gandhi in 1895, Mark Twain in 1896, and Rider Haggard in 1914. Being published authors, two of popular fiction, the three men eventually crafted their own elaborate accounts of their visits.

In 1895, Mohandas Gandhi recounted his observations at the monastery in the British journal *The Vegetarian*. The article was titled "A Band of Vegetarian Missionaries—And their Work in South Africa". Gandhi remarked that since 1894 the monastery kept a "visitors' book", but merely twenty pages were filled in.²⁸⁶ Eventually, he was slightly disappointed that the

²⁸⁵ The Durban architect Sidney Walter Powell (1878-1951) was the author of this anonymised 99-page publication, titled *Durban—The Sea Port of the Garden Colony of South Africa*, which is acclaimed to be the first tourist guide to Durban (Coan 2013).

²⁸⁶ These registers still exist, but only for the years between 1908 and 1960s. By this time the mission had become independent, and members started collecting documents.

monks kept their meatless diet not out of conviction, but rather because “it helps them to crucify the flesh better”. He still appreciated the Catholic belief and its materialisation: “The most prominent feature of the settlement is that you see religion everywhere. Every room has a cross and, on the entrance a small receptacle for holy water, which every inmate reverently applies to his eyelids, the forehead and the chest (Gandhi 1996 [1895])”.

In 1896, Mark Twain listed among the monastery’s austere conditions (mostly exaggerated) that all literature was denied to the monks at Mariannhill (Twain 1897:651). However, Mariannhill’s architect, Br. Nivard Streicher, told Twain’s manager, Carlyle Smythe, conscience-stricken, and “in a whisper, as if he were confessing some horrible sin”, that he had read all of Twain’s books (Smythe 1897:467). Twain and his entourage had met Br. Nivard on their way to the sister’s convent. Before they left the monastery, lunch had been ordered for them at the convent by the use of a telephone line. This recently installed technological innovation was yet another fact that caused much wonder with the visitors. It is unclear whether either Gandhi or Twain ever set a foot in the photographic studio or the museum. People who were even more famous than Gandhi and Twain at the time, such as government officials or religious dignitaries, were however photographed together with the Abbots and high-ranking priests, and later received prints as a gesture of reverence.

Two more groups of visitors repeatedly appeared at Mariannhill, and, amongst other thing, had their photographs taken. During the South African War, between 1899 and 1902, a large contingent of British soldiers was stationed at Pinetown Bridge. While on free time, many soldiers came to Mariannhill, to have their photographs taken, or to buy memorabilia. Since the first half of the 19th century, also many Protestant Germans had settled in the nearby Durban townships Westville and New Germany. These communities were partially augmented by “deserters” from Mariannhill, as we will learn later. Members of this community also constituted regular visitors to Mariannhill, to trade or barter with the missionaries, but also to have their photographs taken. A considerable number of named, as well as unidentified portraits of such commercial customers remains in Mariannhill’s collection, as well as in the photographic collection of Durban’s Berghtheil Museum. The latter institution curates the history, material culture, and photographs of German immigrants to Natal. Since the 1830s, these immigrants have been referred to as the “Cotton Germans” or “Bergtheil Settlers” (Volker 2006). A great part of these settlers came from Protestant Northern Germany, and were thus much closer to the ministers of the nearby Lutheran Berlin Mission than to Catholic Mariannhill. Nevertheless, some of these Protestants still chose the commercial services offered at the monastery, amongst them the photographic studio.

Either a lay brother, who was given permission to speak, or in exceptional cases the abbot himself, served as “guides” for “visitors”. In a previous section I introduced the so-called “*Fremdenbuch*”, or “visitor’s book”. The German term “*Fremde*” indicated that the Trappists perceived every secular individual as a “foreigner [*Fremde*]”. The term “*Fremde*” for “a person of the world [*Weltperson*]” was clearly established in the Trappist rule (Bonaventura 1887), and

accordingly clearly established the monastic space as being beyond the secular world. The Trappist rule further described the so-called “*Gastwart*” as the mediator between the monastic community and the outside world. He had to make sure that, while leading guests across the premises, they did not enter the private quarters of the monks, and were not to interact with the other monks in any way. These conditions were even stricter regarding gender relations. In one extreme case during the mid-1880s, private quarters had to be fumigated for spiritual cleansing, once a curious female visitor had entered against the guide’s advice (Gamble 1976). The two social roles, of guides on the one hand, and visitors on the other, were also clearly established during tours at Mariannhill. Both guests and guides perceived their roles as such and used the respective terms accordingly.

The stringency of the rule of silence is to a great extent relaxed in the case of the monastic cicerone, who will be found to speak English with tolerable fluency (the majority of the brothers are of German nationality), and to evince a courtesy and intelligence totally foreign to the nature of guides as a class. He bores us with no dry-as-dust particulars reeled off by rote in a dreary unpunctuated monotone, but conducts us over the Monastery buildings with interesting comments and scraps of information by the way, and answers lucidly any reasonable questions we may put to him. (Powell 1899:69, also see Thomas 1894)

Most visitors described their experience in hyperbolic terms early on, either referring to personal interest, or moral appreciation:

The Trappist establishment at Marionhill [sic] is one which should be seen by everyone visiting Natal. [...] He [Abbot Pfanner] devoted three hours to taking me over it, and showing me all the various industries and works which are carried on. [...] I came away much interested, and wonderfully impressed with all I had seen in this remarkable institution. (Young 1890:92-94)

It was those visitors’ interests (not rarely curious Protestants, attempting to observe and monitor their exotic competitors) that necessitated the monastery’s proper self-representation in form of guided tours. The script shared by the guides included all the workshops, the schools, the sister’s convent, their sewing workshop, and optionally the industrial buildings at the mill, including the printing press. The visitors reproduced this script in their travelogues, as they had experienced it before. The missionaries themselves also translated the same experience into photographs: each workshop and its inmates were recorded at work, the schools, overviews of the entire mission, landscape scenes of the surroundings, as well as the various mission stations. The visitors could buy those photographs at the end of the tour at the mission’s photographic studio, and in this way reassemble the experience in their publications—be they travelogues (eg. Cameron 1913), or newspaper articles (eg. Andrews 1915)—and even send them as postcards.

As I already indicated, the supposedly morally edifying and educational experience of the guided tour was also restricted by particular rules for the visitors. A photograph of the 1890s makes this most explicit. It shows a tree with a notice board nailed to it. The text reads as follows:

Notice

The Monastery can not be visited on Sundays or Church holidays except by special permission of the R. Rev. Abbot. On weekdays the Monastery and shops can be visited from 8-11 am and from 1-4 pm. Visitors are requested not to go alone to the Sisters Convent or the workshops, but only in company of the janitor or of one of the stewards. Without a special permission the Sisters Convent can be visited only from 10-11 and 2-3 daily, never on Sundays.

By order of the R. Rev. Abbot.



Figure 72: photograph of a note on a tree, which visitors would have passed when entering the compound of Mariannahill, approx. 1890s (digitally inverted glass plate negative, CMM Archives).

According to this notice board the guided tour was obligatory. Visitors were thus not allowed to explore the compound individually, not even the workshops, which nevertheless produced commercially for foreign customers. The existing photographs of the workshops always depicted an interaction between a Trappist lay brother and African apprentices, thus emphasising a relationship of education and tutelage (Figure 73). I will analyse this situation in more detail in

Chapter Five according to the objects, which were both produced and photographed in this interaction. Still in 1915, a visitor marvelled with surprise at the performance of the apprentices:

Mariannhill is, as has already been stated, the workshop for all the mission stations of the Trappists in South Africa.²⁸⁷ Here the brothers labour with their Kafir assistants, each at his own particular trade, and the class of work turned out by them is in the highest degree creditable. All the shops are brick buildings, a specially large one being devoted to wagon-building, which is the chief industry of the place. In this building and all the others it was interesting to watch the native boys at work, and the skill with which they used the tools was surprising, when it is considered that they are generally represented to possess no ability in trades requiring cunning. (Andrews 1915:51)

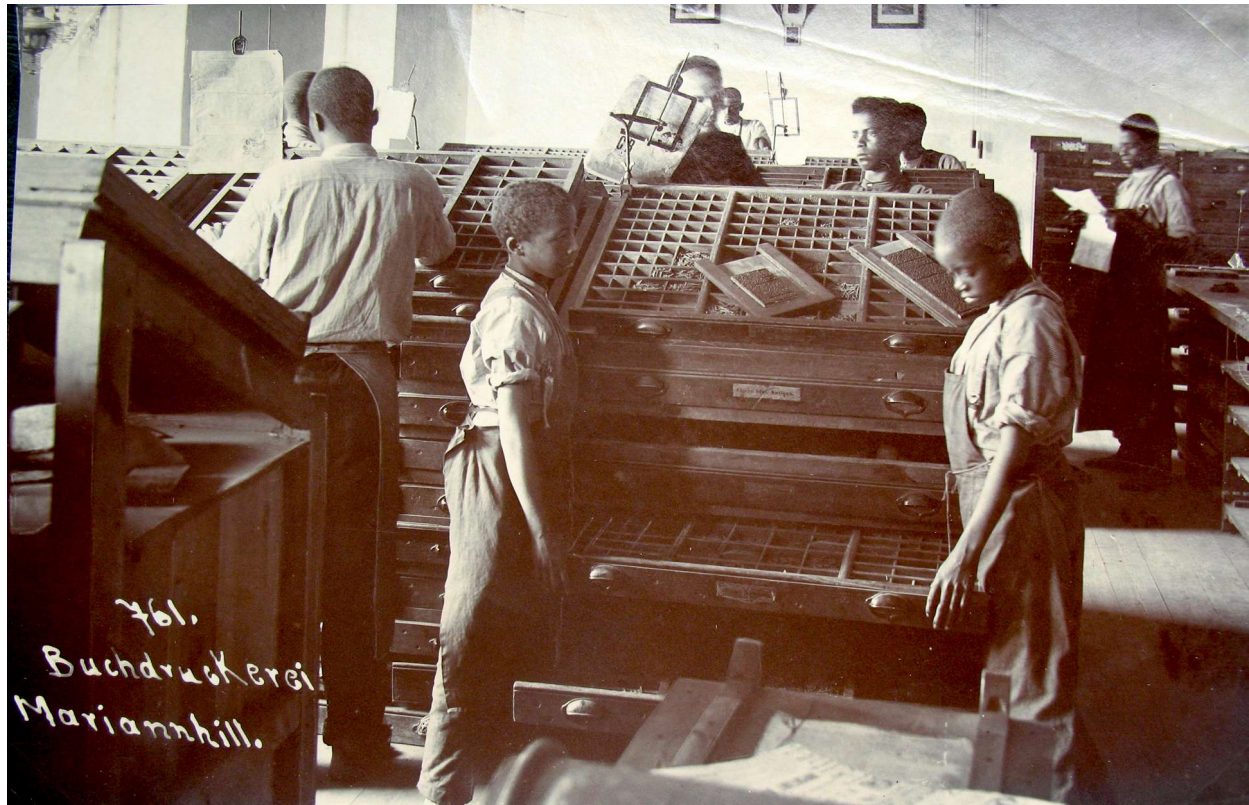


Figure 73: original caption: “761. *Buchdruckerei Mariannhill*”—“print-workshop at Mariannhill”, approx. mid-1890s (CMM Archives).

Most remarkable is the fact that I never came across any photographs of the monastery grounds that had been taken by outsiders during the tours under discussion. Only the archives of the Durban Old Court House Museum hold a set of very blurry photographs showing Br. Nivard Streicher, which were maybe, but not necessarily, taken on the ground. It may thus be—even though it cannot be confirmed—that taking photographs was not permitted to visitors. An alternative interpretation may be that visitors never saw the necessity to take any photographs, because they could purchase much better ones at the studio than they were able to take

²⁸⁷ This is incorrect, most stations had their own workshops, and even their own specialised industries. Centocow, for example, had a reputation for running a successful tree nursery.

themselves. Also the mentioned news reports and travelogues always utilised Mariannhill's photographs, instead of providing their own.

Of course, many private photographic collections, which may have contained such photographs, no longer exist or are difficult to locate. However, the absence of photographs taken on Mariannhill's ground by outsiders may be further explored through at least two collections, which had been collected for strictly private purposes. The first example is the visit of William Waldegrave Palmer, 2nd Earl of Selborne, on 29 October 1908. Palmer was the British High Commissioner to South Africa between 1905 and 1910. He visited Mariannhill with a group of members of the South African National Convention, which at the time assembled in Durban. He was photographed with his entourage in the studio, but also outside, together with Br. Nivard Streicher. In 1975, the Museum Africa in Johannesburg purchased one of Palmer's private photographic albums, titled "South African and Family Photographs". It contains photographs labelled as "groups of Zulus", which Palmer had purchased at Mariannhill, but no other photograph at or near the mission.²⁸⁸ Another private collection of photographs bought at Mariannhill was donated after 1904 to the Linden Museum of Stuttgart by the industrialist Adolf Mayer (cf. Chapter Six). It also contains amateur photographs of a tour through Natal, partially accompanied by Br. Aegidius Müller. However, once more none of these amateur photographs had been taken at the monastery itself.

As previous examples showed, Mariannhill's superiors were most anxious to safeguard the peace and privacy of the religious community, be it against African neighbours or White visitors. Until the separation from the Reformed Cistercians in 1909, the abbots attempted to uphold the image of a contemplative community, while at the same time engaging in the "experiment" of mission. Both of these aspects also had to be reproduced photographically. But for both cases—mission and monastery—the photographic studio never produced any truly "private" photographs in the sense addressed by Geary (1991). Geary of course discusses Protestant missions, and not the hierarchical, celibate, and contemplative setup of Catholic congregations. Mariannhill's mundane life is only presented in staged scenes, showing the community taking walks during pastime, playing croquet or chess, as well as while reading in the cloisters. Also very standardised portrait photographs exist, which may nevertheless have been used for private ends, but would have had to pass the superior's censorship.²⁸⁹ The monks wore their cassock at all times, and civilian dress only when a member had to enter the public realm with the intention not to be recognised as a Catholic (cf. Gütl 2005:82, 140). All remaining photographs of the community made before the 1920s, must therefore be considered as public images for propaganda and tourism. However, as Geary suggests, one may still consider the private use and readings of such public images, which I attempt throughout the rest of this study.

In their internal German house periodical *Familia*, Mariannhill's members were able to exclusively address their confreres concerning matters of a shared, but still not entirely private

²⁸⁸ MAJ: MA 1975-2006.

²⁸⁹ See the passage on Obrecht's regime in the introduction.

interest. In 1911, Br. Otto Mäder addressed the external impression of industrial education and its apparent contradiction to the actual “picture” on the ground:

On wandering through our workshops in the afternoon, visitors receive the impression of a happy life and of determined labour. The youth attends school in the morning and works in the afternoon. Practical labour indeed, labour which may be equated to a monetary value: in fact, this is the ideal of the modern pedagogue realised: the working-school [*Arbeitsschule*]! However, imagine the visitor would engage with the matter any closer, and ask for example: “How many kafirs have raised themselves to the perfect worker, or to become a master craftsman, after all?—then the great and beautiful picture is dwarfed considerably [*schrumpft zu einem kleinen Bildchen zusammen*].²⁹⁰ (Mäder 1911:138)

To Mäder’s own great disappointment, the past 20 years had merely turned out 20 of such individuals, who indeed mastered the various craftsmanships, in particular their financial and entrepreneurial dimensions. Therefore, in his eyes, the current training was still highly inefficient. This account can be seen as a concerned view of the frontstage, as seen from the backstage. Mäder’s concern also brings us back to my discussion of authorship and the question about Black photographers from Chapter One. Like with other craftsmanships, Mariannhill apparently failed to train their protégés in the necessary entrepreneurial skills. Whether this was intentional in the case of photography, as I suggested in Chapter Two, or unintentional, must remain unanswered. Such economic skills would have been essential for Black photographers to accumulate sufficient capital in order to start their own businesses and thus to feed their own photographs into the visual economy I described above.

In the next section I present three very particular tours, which allow for even more nuanced insights into this relationship. The first was given to the German traveller and ethnologist Wilhelm Joest in 1883, the second to the African Chief Lokothwayo ka Manzini in 1903, and the third to the British novelist Rider Haggard in 1914. Due to three particular interests, these accounts do not only describe Mariannhill as a space of its own, but they also invoke the outside that constitutes it as a mission. At the same time, all three accounts question Mariannhill and its common narratives in particular ways.

²⁹⁰ My own translation from the German original.

“Our Visitors”

Saturday 15. [March 1884]. [I] compliment most dutifully. Rose early + on foot through town to the train + went to Pinetown with Lehmann²⁹¹ within 1 1/2 hours. Nice tour, cheerful villas, tall banana and pineapple trees + lush green vegetation. Surroundings of Durban are very swampy. In Pinetown neither wagon nor horses, had breakfast at the “Imperial Hotel”, then went on foot across four grass fields to the Trappist Monastery Marianen Hill [sic]. [They have been] there for about one year, have planted beans, corn, sweet potatoes, etc. The Prior Francis [sic, Pfanner] first spoke about the deserters + then showed us the prayer room, carpenter, shoemaker, tailor, photographer, printer, etc. They work like crazy, get up at 2am, prayer is their rest. Now 83 guys [Kerle], [they are] eating at the moment, potato mash with dumplings + pumpkin with onions. Then, with 100 degrees in the shade, the guy [Pfanner] dragged us to the place where the new monastery is supposed to be built + to the river, where there is a nice street + soon a mill, tannery, cloth-making with turbines. Almost 2 hours, complete madness. Enraged [we went] back to the monastery + under burning sun we staggered back to Pinetown, where we drank 2 bottles of sparkling wine and 5 sodas. Home, rest, bath, supper at L[ehmann’s], a bit tired in the end.

Journal entry by Wilhelm Joest, Saturday, 15. March, 1884.²⁹²

In early 2012, I first visited the new building of Cologne’s museum of ethnology, the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum. Eventually I found myself standing in an exhibition space wherein curators had attempted a reconstruction of Wilhelm Joest’s lifeworld. This was done by recreating his actual living room in Berlin, including the ethnographic objects it once contained. The room also boasts a large wall map on which his various journeys around the world are traced with a red line. The line traversing South Africa points inland towards Mariannhill from Joest’s 1884 stopover in Durban. Accordingly I investigated his travel publications to confirm whether he may have visited the monastery.

Wilhelm Joest (1852-1897) was a German traveller and ethnologist, well-off due to his father’s sugar imperium (Soenius 2003). Born in Cologne, he travelled virtually the entire globe, and eventually moved to Berlin in 1885, where he was tightly connected to the ethnological community, both as a member of Berlin’s anthropological society (BGAEU)²⁹³ and through Berlin’s ethnographic museum. After his death in 1897, Joest’s collection of ethnographic objects, photographs, as well as substantial amounts of money were bestowed on the anthropological society, and later to the newly founded (1906) Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne, which still carries his name today (cf. Chapter Six). Between 1883 and 1884, Joest travelled through South and East Africa, and published reports on his adventures in various formats. Not only did he write books (1885, 1895), but prior to that sent letters “from the field”, which were published in the leading German newspaper *Kölnische Zeitung*,²⁹⁴ as well as other popular periodicals. The quote above is a very rough, but interestingly colloquial draft of such a newspaper article from Joest’s original journal.

²⁹¹ Most likely an affiliate of the German consulate in Durban, under Gustav Mohnhaupt.

²⁹² My own translation from the German original. I thank Burkhard Fenner of the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, as well as Herrn von Rautenstrauch, for providing me with this passage of Joest’s yet unpublished diary. The manuscript is currently in the process of being transcribed by Sabine Eller, who is also working on Joest’s biography.

²⁹³ “*Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnographie und Urgeschichte*”.

²⁹⁴ The conservative pro-Bismarck *Kölnische Zeitung* is not to be confused with the pro-Catholic *Kölnische Volkszeitung* (also see Wiese 2013).

Joest was the first ethnologist to visit Mariannhill, and as far as I know also the very first traveller, who wrote an elaborate—and critical—account about having received a tour at Mariannhill. This was at a time when the monks themselves had not yet fully embraced academic ethnology for their own endeavours, and which would not happen for yet another 15 years. While later visitors often remarked on the workshops, the schools, and the museum, Joest was primarily concerned with the previously-described contradiction of an allegedly “contemplative mission” and its impact on the German community in and around Durban. He already noticed a photographic studio at Mariannhill, but did not state whether he bought any photographs at Mariannhill, or even took his own.²⁹⁵ It is unlikely that he was able to buy any photographs at Mariannhill, as an article in the *Natal Mercury* mentioned two years later that “the photographic establishment [at Mariannhill] has not yet produced much, owing to the deterioration of the chemicals brought out from Europe” (Anon. 1885:3). But Joest purchased commercial images for his later publications elsewhere in Natal, and also took his own. He lamented, however, that taking photographs was still arduous for the private traveller at the time, up to a point where it became impossible: moving around proper (scientific) photographic equipment from the harbour was difficult, due to the implementation of taxes and the resulting costs for transport (Joest 1895:218). Considering that Joest indeed had considerable funds, one can imagine that it was even less likely for other travellers to take high quality photographs, at least until the 1890s when light-weight and hand-held cameras became widely available.

As Joest was travelling and writing just before the Berlin Congo Conference, where European powers negotiated the division of the African continent, his efforts of publication have to be seen in the light of the pro-colonial editorship of the *Kölnische Zeitung*. Along with the establishment of a German colonial programme, the Bismarck regime developed an antagonism against Catholic institutions, generally referred to as “*Kulturkampf* [Culture War]” since the early 1870s, lasting officially until 1879. In 1873, the medical doctor, (physical) anthropologist, and politician, Rudolph Virchow, coined the term *Kulturkampf* in the German parliament. Virchow not only influenced the matter under discussion as politician, but also as medical doctor, as well as an anthropologist. In 1868 he had co-founded the BGAEU together with Adolf Bastian (cf. Chapter Six). For Mariannhill the struggle of the Culture War obviously had reverberations until the First World War, as I pointed out in the last chapter in regard to articles in Mariannhill’s own periodicals. The Cologne area in particular was a contested ground with an almost equal distribution of Catholics and Protestants. Like Joest, also Pfanner had a stake in the area. This was the nearby Trappist Abbey Mariawald, where Pfanner had entered the congregation as a novice in 1863 (cf. Gütl 2017).

Like several other German ethnologists, Joest had an outspokenly critical and strongly nationalist political opinion. During his travels, Joest compiled a report on newspapers and magazines in the German language outside of Europe, in which he listed Mariannhill’s

²⁹⁵ Fritz Graebner, curator at Cologne’s Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum since 1906, would buy a photographic set from Mariannhill in 1910 (see Chapter Six).

Vergißmeinnicht as one of only two German periodicals for the entire African continent: he stressed that while the language is German, the *Vergißmeinnicht* itself is not “German” (1888:14). He did not elaborate on reasons why he disliked the periodical, but targeted it for being inherent Catholic propaganda. In the final version of his report on Mariannhill in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Joest strongly criticised the situation of personnel, and especially the “deserters” coming from Mariannhill in economic destitution. According to him, they “harassed” the European community around Durban, and put its German-speaking citizens in a bad light.

Gütl (2005) indicates that former Mariannhill members substantially fuelled the German communities of the area. While indeed many novices were recruited over the years, as many left the congregation after only short periods, and either made their way back to Europe, or stayed in South Africa. For example, the earlier-mentioned photographer Fr. Desiderius Fresen in 1896, and the linguist Fr. Theoderich Sonnen 10 years later, decided to stay and had themselves naturalised (cf. Chapter One). As Gütl shows, the monastery was a refuge for adventurers, eccentrics, but also for characters with a criminal past. At the same time, the monastery was also a refuge for outsiders of African communities, who made the decision to exchange their situation of straddling between a rural life and the encroaching temptations and hazards of urban modernities, by becoming *Amakholwa*—converts to Christianity.

According to a chain of accusations by Joest, Pfanner had lured young men to South Africa under the pretence of becoming missionaries, not making them fully aware what it meant to become a Trappist Monk (Joest 1885). Joest wrote that Mariannhill’s agents in Europe had appealed to potential novices by arguing that they could not live their Catholicism in a Germany that maintained the laws of the Culture Wars, and that South Africa would therefore be a much better alternative. As novices were recruited directly for Mariannhill Monastery itself, they never went through a noviciate in Europe before the First World War, as was the case with other mission congregations. Eventually, Pfanner responded to Joest’s letter in Mariannhill’s periodical²⁹⁶ under the headline “*Unsere Besucher* [Our Visitors]” (Pfanner 1884a). In his idiosyncratic and polemic style, Pfanner turned Joest’s critique into a confirmation of his own approach: indeed, the monastery was a place of discipline and order, and those who were unfit had to leave. Joest again responded in his book *Um Afrika* (1885) by ridiculing Pfanner as a fanatic.

In an early chronicle of Mariannhill, written during the 1890s, Pfanner’s long-time secretary, Fr. Joseph Biegner, recalled that “it was in October of 1884 that a Freemason Africa traveller published a defamatory article in the Jewish paper *Kölnische Zeitung*, and denigrated our collecting brother [*Sammelbruder*],²⁹⁷ saying that he would mislead young people to emigrate. This made the police alert in entire Germany, so that the brother could no longer move around safely, neither in Germany, nor in Austria; therefore all other collecting brothers were

²⁹⁶ At the time called *Der Trappist unter den Kaffern*.

²⁹⁷ Several lay brothers were dispatched to Europe and the US for the sole purpose of propaganda and collecting of alms, as early as the mid-1880s. They were referred to as “*Sammelbrüder*” (cf. Gütl 2005:322-329, Wendl 1998).

much restricted as well”.²⁹⁸ Joest had indeed pointed out that the German government should not lose sight of the Trappist agents, in the same way that it confronted all other emigration agents. As a direct outcome of the correspondence between Joest and Pfanner, the periodical *Der Trappist unter den Kaffern* was renamed *Vergissmeinnicht aus Mariannhill* in 1885. According to Biegner, this adaptation intended to draw away the attention of the German authorities from the Trappists (Biegner 1898).

This episode clearly shows the impact of, and the sentiments caused by religious periodicals at the time, and also the alertness of several social actors to European issues. It also shows the particular *préterrain* that facilitated visits to Mariannhill and how these were eventually written up (cf. Pels and Saleminck 1994, 1999). Biegner’s strong language again illustrates his defensiveness within the entanglement of media, religion, and politics. In 1884, when Pfanner explained his strategy to civilise Africans in the periodical *Der Trappist unter den Kaffern*, he even considered it necessary to call upon his Catholic audience not to circulate the periodical any further, in order to prevent the “Protestant ministers and Freemasons” around Durban from foiling his plans (Pfanner 1884). Also Mariannhill’s superiors after Pfanner saw themselves under much external pressure, and thus took efforts to rework the monastery’s standing in South Africa, as well as in Europe. These antagonisms expressed themselves not only in a very conscious self-representation through photographs in the periodicals, but also in the construction of the monastic space itself. The missionaries consciously positioned photographs and various other material objects collected or produced at the mission, in order to establish themselves between their African subjects and their various national and international audiences. Therefore we must consider the fact that the monastic guides led visitors along a spatially and thematically prescribed and continually adjusted narrative. The self-fashioning through the museum and the “material culture” it accumulated, will be one of the arguments in Chapter Five.

But visitors to Mariannhill were not only well-faring and opinionated Europeans. At the same time, those people whom the visitors observed and discussed during tours, were not only “pious monks” or “laborious converts”. Also Africans who had not (yet) converted, often visited the station to look for work, to barter, and obviously to be photographed. There are no indications whether Africans themselves ever took the initiative to have their photographs taken and to acquire them, or whether the photographer approached them to sit for portraits in the studio in exchange for a compensation. It is also uncertain whether they were aware of the future use to which their portraits were put in the mission periodicals. I would be surprised, however, if African sitters had not succeeded to procure and circulate amongst themselves photographs, as well as volumes of the *Kalender* and the *Vergißmeinnicht*, if only to look at images of nearby and faraway places.

In 1903, Fr. Emanuel Hanisch, the later superior of Centocow Mission, attended to the visit of the recently inaugurated Chief Lokothwayo ka Manzini to Mariannhill. Hanisch attended to his guest, first in person, and later in writing. Lokothwayo had just been acknowledged by the

²⁹⁸ My own translation from the German original (Biegner 1898).

government as chief of the *Amanganga* on 1 February 1900. Under the headline “*Ein Hoher Besuch* [An Important Visitor]”, Hanisch reported in the *Vergißmeinnicht*:

At the appointed hour, the announced guest arrived on horseback in the company of a servant. He is a portly figure, a real Zulu, maybe 25 years of age. He wore European dress, which was however void of any royal decoration. Only a big silver medal, with an image of the English Monarch that he wore on his left side, could arouse the suspicion that one was dealing with a person of “royal blood”. Ears, neck, and hands were, following Kafir custom, adorned with shining brass rings.²⁹⁹ (Hanisch 1903:29)

The monarch on the silver medal must have been King Edward VII. In 1901, Magistrate Henrique C. Shepstone had informed all district chiefs and headmen of Queen Victoria’s passing, and of the King’s succession.³⁰⁰ King Edward’s formal coronation ceremony took place on 9 August 1902. Either magistrates circulated the medal for the occasion, or Lokothwayo purchased it by his own conviction. Eventually, he chose to wear it for his visit to the monastery, and may have performed a sympathy with the fellow British ruler due to the temporal proximity of their inauguration. Even if Africans supposedly lived on the alleged periphery of European settlements, popular imagery was clearly a part of their daily life, and they were therefore active consumers of South Africa’s “image world” (cf. Geary 2002:20), and thus active participants in the respective “visual economy” (Poole 1997).

In his report on the tour, Hanisch described how Lokothwayo had encountered attractions, of which some were performed especially for the occasion of his visit: at the school Lokothwayo encountered the children of his own subjects, while they were taught by a missionary. At the sleeping quarters he exclaimed that “there are probably more Zulus with the *amaRoma* [ie. Roman Catholics] than are still left outside”. Then both men attended to a prepared lunch break, where “one could once more observe how much the stomach of a Kafir can take”. As Lokothwayo was constantly in awe, he had to be frequently “admonished” to continue the “survey”, so Hanisch, in order to include everything that was there to be seen. On observing Black employees at the workshops, Lokothwayo wondered whether it was really possible that people “in a black skin like himself” could achieve all this? He then admired the cleanliness at the girl’s school and its dining hall, where one of the pupils taught him how to use a spoon. On to the sewing workshops of the women, where he wondered whether this was real after all, “for how was such speed of production possible”?

Hanisch pointed out Lokothwayo’s alleged shortcomings (gluttony, distraction, unfamiliarity with “modern” material culture) in the ironic style common to the periodicals. Eventually, he presents Lokothwayo in an apparent paradox: overwhelmed with all the features of an industrial modernity, the Lokothwayo of Hanisch’s narrative doubted his own capacities, and thus implicitly suggested his own “lack of civilisation”. More than in any other account on or by Mariannhill, this particular tour, as well as its description, presents Mariannhill’s industrial

²⁹⁹ My own translation from the German original.

³⁰⁰ DAR: 1_UMB-3/1/14-UD_98/1901: letter, Shepstone to Principal Under Secretary, 30.01.1901 (Henrique C. Shepstone was the eldest son of Theophilus Shepstone).

compound as a civilising exhibition and implement. Assuming that the quotes by Lokothwayo are indeed literal to some degree, this account provides us at least with a glimpse of Lokothwayo's perception of a division of spaces: of an inside, as well as an outside to the mission station. It is unknown whether Lokothwayo ever visited the museum, or even had his photograph taken at the studio; it is at least not narrated in Hanisch's story, and no photographs of the occasion exist. As I explain in the next Chapter, Lokothwayo had already been photographed during an earlier occasion in the 1890s. In 1903, Lokothwayo was photographed once more; this time in a martial, but highly honorary pose with spear and loincloth, probably at his own homestead, only a short while after his visit to the monastery in 1902 (cf. Chapter Eight). In both cases I will attempt to reconstruct parts of the photographic occasion by involving the colonial *préterrain*, in order to better understand the outcome of photographic traditions; in Chapter Eight I will do this in particular regarding Lokothwayo's construction as both chief and warrior, as well as for the related case of a so-called *isangoma*, or "witch doctor".

Since the 1880s, the British novelist Henry Rider Haggard had been highly influential in the construction of these two figures.³⁰¹ Touring South Africa as a member of the Dominions Royal Commission in 1914, Haggard also visited Mariannhill. On 2 May 1914, he arrived at the monastery together with Guy V. Essery, the magistrate of Pinetown. Once Essery had signed into the guest book at the entrance gate, they followed the common tour along the workshops. They were guided by Fr. Willibald Wanger, who had returned to Mariannhill as an "Oblate" in 1909, after his exclaustation and his ensuing adventures in Mozambique since 1907 (cf. Chapter One). Over lunch, Wanger and Haggard had an extended conversation:

We lunched at the nunnery where a dear old lady served us a most excellent repast and here I had a most enjoyable conversation with Fr. Wanger, who is a great student of native law and history. He told me a very strange witch story. A deceased brother, a Pole, who investigated such matters, visited an old witch-doctress in the neighbourhood, one of those who say that they are inspired by a 'whispering spirit'. He put to her some questions in Polish. She listened and went through her invocations, which were accompanied by a whistling noise, proceeding apparently from the roof of the hut. Then to the father's utter amazement she proceeded to answer his *Polish* questions perfectly rationally and in good Zulu, prefacing her replies with the statement 'My Lords, the spirits say' etc. Fr. Wanger's conclusion about the whole matter is the same as that of Gen. Joubert, that the Devil is at the bottom of it, and that those who attribute all these native witchcraft manifestations to fraud are very much mistaken. (Haggard and Coan 2000:237)

The conversations recorded during this visit likewise reproduced the polarisation of an inside and an outside to the mission. Mariannhill's periodicals usually either exposed magical practice as a hoax, or they presented it in fictional stories. But occasionally the "heathen magic of Africa" was presented as real. Haggard himself had promoted various South African stereotypical figures,

³⁰¹ Haggard had served as government secretary in Natal between 1875-82, and eventually built his literary career on this experience. Haggard's diaries of his 1914 South Africa journey were edited and published in 2000 by Stephen Coan. The only rough hand-written notes Haggard made during the visit to Mariannhill Monastery were: "glass shop – stained glass made / photographic studio – museum" (Personal communication Stephen Coan, 2012). This at least indicates Haggard's initial interests, even if he did not transfer them adequately to the final manuscript of his diary.

such as the “Zulu warrior” and the *isanusi* or *isangoma*.³⁰² But when writing novels, which were explicitly fictional, he never had to convince readers whether African supernatural powers were real or not (cf. Pels 1998).

At the same time, however, both opinions co-existed with Mariannhill missionaries. Fr. Willibald Wanger belonged to the fraction of “believers”, and was convinced that it was the devil who had enabled the “witch-doctress” with supernatural perception. At least so he told Haggard and wrote himself in Mariannhill’s periodicals, where on several occasions he attributed strange occurrences to supernatural causes and presented them as real. Also Mariannhill’s former member A.T. Bryant was amongst those who could not explain some of their experiences with Africans, and thus attributed them to the supernatural. Some of their confreres, such as Br. Aegidius Müller, instead did their best to reveal such practices as fraud, as we shall see in Chapter Eight. These two seemingly incompatible viewpoints, however, were published in the periodicals interchangeably. In order to translate such practices for a European audience, Müller, for example, compared African magic exactly to the kind of European “believers” (such as Haggard himself) who were often referred to as “spiritists” at the time. This double-view, involving the revelation of magic as real in some cases, and its unmasking as fraud in others, is symptomatic of the historical necessity to reaffirm faith in a constant representational movement between fiction and reality (cf. Chapter Eight).

The purpose of anticipating these constructions at this point, is to show that particular views, either by a politically inclined ethnologist on the missionaries, by an African Chief on the missionaries, or the views of a novelist on both Africans and missionaries, were co-produced in specific situated conversations, or “ethnographic occasions” (cf. Pels and Salemink 1994, 1999). In particular the manuscripts of Joest and Haggard—not yet refined for publication—lend themselves to such a reading. The monastery was frequented by Africans, tourists, curious neighbours, commercial customers, as well as government officials and committees. These interacted with the monks, their subjects and objects on the ground, observed interactions, commented on misdeeds or achievements, and eventually consumed produce. As Rider Haggard recalled about his visit to Mariannhill’s workshops in 1914:

The ingenuity of these good monks is great; they make everything from terracotta plaques and high-class saddlery down to articles such as boys’ and ladies’ belts manufactured from the skins of snakes and iguanas whereof I purchased a selection as presents, one of which is the beautiful tobacco pouch I am using at this moment. [...] These monks are doing a great work among the natives. All success to them. They wear upon their faces that air of goodness which comes to those who in an utterly unselfish spirit devote their lives to the moral and physical elevation of the ignorant and the fallen. The sight of them and the contemplation of the fruits of their labours makes poor worldlings like myself feel ashamed. They do so much, we so little. (Haggard and Coan 2000:237-38)

The experience of the tour endowed narratives on mission-produced objects with a particular quality of social relations. As (narrated) souvenirs they even were able to carry this experience elsewhere. As becomes clear in Haggard’s narrative, particular African-produced consumer

³⁰² Alternatively referred to as “witch finder” or “witch doctor”.

goods became souvenirs in the course of the tour, and were associated with acts of charity (cf. Foster 2008). I will discuss such endowments in relation to objects collected for Mariannhill's museum in more detail in Chapter Five. The tour, its subjects, objects, and photographs became involved in modes of representation that inflected the inside and outside of the monastery in various ways, partially depending on the interest and intentions of the respective visitor, and not always to the liking of the missionaries themselves. The guided tour thus constituted polarised representations of Africans: on the one hand manifested by the experience and photographic representation of "civilised" Africans capable of work, and on the other hand manifested with the help of photographs and objects of "primitive" heathens. The next section shows how these photographs became commodities and eventually part of an international visual economy through the institution of the photographic studio.

“The Photographic Studio Mariannhill near Pinetown—Portraits and Photos of every Kind and Size”

Not of lesser interest was the *photographic studio*, in which is mirrored, as it were, the great work of Mariannhill in its entirety, half of Natal, the mission, as well as monastic life. The distinguished guests did not only take along a rich selection of photographs, but they even used the opportunity to have their photograph taken together with the Abbot [Obrecht] and the Trappist priests, who were present at the time. The end of the interesting tour was a brief visit to our extensive *museum*, as well as the new *hospital*, which is equipped with all practicalities.³⁰³ (Anon. 1907:201)



Figure 74: original caption on glass plate negative: “Gouverneur u[nd] Gruppe 30/1 09”. Sir Matthew Nathan, Governor of Natal, and his entourage, together with Br. Nivard Streicher, 30 January 1909 (digitally inverted glass plate negative, CMM Archives).

In 1907, the *Vergißmeinnicht* described the experience of a visit to Mariannhill Monastery by Prince Joachim Albrecht of Prussia. The photographic studio was an inherent part of the script for the mission’s guided tour, and often one of the last spaces visitors entered: here they could

³⁰³ My own translation from the German original. Italics as they appear in the original.

sample views from all the missions, including Centocow. Not only could they literally *re-collect* what they had just seen at the monastery, and purchase in the form of photographs, but they could further manifest the experience of the visit by having their own photograph taken. The photograph above shows the Governor of Natal, Sir Matthew Nathan and his entourage together with Br. Nivard Streicher. Not only had they been given a tour by Br. Nivard, but they were photographed, and at the same time engaged with other available visual material in the studio (cf. Chapter Six).

Even if visitors would never retrace the vast network of the often remote mission stations in person, they could here at least witness it in form of photographs. The studio was the very hub of image production for Mariannhill's endeavours in South Africa, as every glass plate negative, once exposed, had to return here to be chemically fixated, developed, and eventually to be stored. The positive prints were likewise produced here and then stored in form of albums and cabinet cards. Alternatively, they were sent to Mariannhill's printing press, to be used for the periodicals, at the same time sold to visitors, or dispatched by mail order.

Next to White South African or European tourists, also Africans were among these visitors on a regular basis. Whether they were paid models or paying customers, and what their intentions and agencies would have been in both cases, can no longer be fully clarified. I will nevertheless discuss such questions of performance at the end of the next chapter. White customers instead often described their experiences in later accounts. They marvelled not only at the photographs of Africans on display, but at the studio itself as an extraordinary institution. Rev. Frederick C. Kolbe, editor of the *South African Catholic Magazine*, recalled his visit in 1895:

At the photographic studio I was supplied with some excellent studies of native faces and customs—a picture of one woman, over a hundred years old, showing more wrinkles than I had ever thought possible to find upon one human form. They have also been careful to multiply copies of Bushman paintings found on one of their estates. Such photographs provide interesting souvenirs for the benefactors of the mission in Germany. (Kolbe 1895:332-333)

An anonymous correspondent of the local newspaper *The Natal Witness* reported in 1904 that

Mariannhill boasts a photographic studio the same as any town, where visitors may be photographed. It is fitted with every convenience, and stocked with views taken at the different stations, some of them being exceedingly good, especially the enlargements. They include various scenes taken near the station, and a well assorted collection of Kafir pictures. Altogether there are about 900 of these pictures kept in stock. (Anon. 1904)

Still in 1913, the British travel writer Charlotte Cameron commented that

[t]he photographic gallery should not be missed, as here one discovers hundreds of interesting views, and intimate knowledge of the Kaffir homelife. (Cameron 1913:157)

In 1891, the exposed plates at Mariannhill's studio numbered 200, as recorded in an inventory of all the workshops of the same year. The "900 [...] pictures kept in stock" mentioned above in

1904 would have meant an increase of only 700 plates within 13 years. Considering both the propagandistic and commercial production, such a minor increase is unlikely. I therefore suggest that the correspondent of *The Witness* was only writing about the commercially available photographs on display. However, the majority of photographs was indeed only taken after the studio's professionalisation in 1894, and even more since Müller started running the studio in late 1897. It is thus crucial to realise how Mariannhill's photographic studio distinguished itself from many other local studios: it was not simply a portrait studio, but instead also maintained and expanded its stock of photographs, which documented its surroundings according to conventional artistic standards.

A randomly filed note came into my hands one day when working in the archives of Mariannhill's Generalate in Rome. Müller had scribbled it on a small sheet of paper, possibly during the last year of his life at St. Mary's Hospital in 1920: "My testament is in the locked drawer at the photographic studio, where the money is stored. [signed] *Jos. Müller Br. Aegidius*".³⁰⁴ As he stored a very private document with the studio's money in a locked drawer, we may conclude that he was the only person who had access to it. Even if the heirs and the nature of the inheritance remain unknown, the note indicates that Müller managed his own finances, and therefore ran the studio independently.

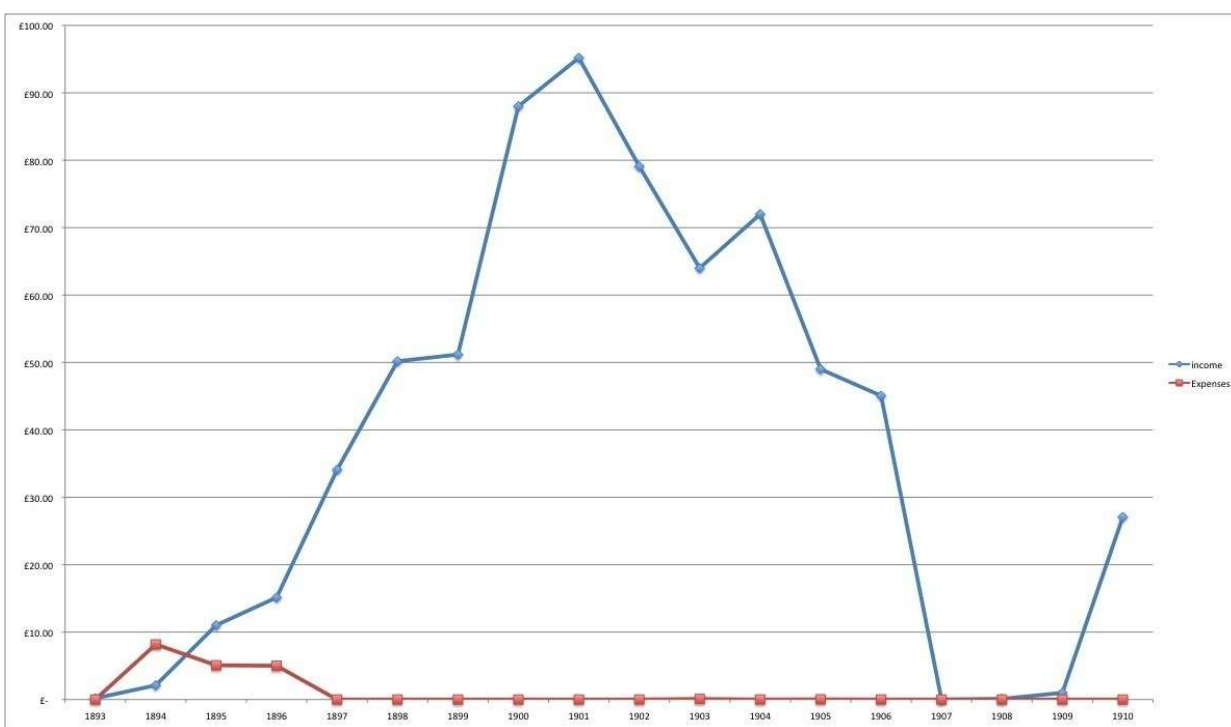


Figure 75: chart of the photography studio's income (blue), and expenses (red), as recorded in the accounting books at Mariannhill Monastery.

In 1889, Mariannhill's press anonymously published a small booklet for internal use, titled:

³⁰⁴ My own translation from the German original.

Anleitung zur Buchführung für Mariannhill und die Filialen. These instructions for accounting coincided with Müller's arrival, who was, according to the register of personnel, the only member trained as an accountant at the time. As "*vestarius*" he was also responsible for the distribution of goods and clothing amongst the monastery's members since 1889. It is therefore likely that he compiled this booklet, which intended to explain to the superiors of the monastery and the outstations how goods, value and finances had to be understood and written up. The chart above (Figure 75) displays the photographic studio's income and expenses, which I extracted from the accounting books, the monastery's so-called "*Cassabücher*". These books still exist for the period between 1893 and 1922, and constitute the general record of the monastery's financial returns and investments. Items recorded here are as big and general as, for example, the entire income of the store of Centocow for one month, or as small and personal as a single hat, which Br. Aegidius Müller purchased in November 1897 for 9 Pennies, just after having started at the studio. The records of the individual accounts of each workshop no longer exist, and annual stocktaking inventories of the workshops only remain for the year 1891.

Reading the chart of the photographic studio's income and expenses (Figure 75) shows that the monastery initially invested in the studio, especially in 1894, when the new building was set up. Already by 1895 the studio seems to have produced enough revenue to support itself. The sums indicated in the chart are thus only the annual *gains* returned to the monastery, not the total *income*. The latter would have been registered in the studio's individual accounting book. Even if the studio appears to have been financially independent, the monastery still occasionally paid for custom fees and fines for photographic paper and equipment. Most of these goods arrived together with other purchases from Germany, from where the monastery also imported most of the equipment for all of its workshops. The photographers, for example, purchased glass plate negatives exclusively from German companies. These were stored in their original boxes until 2012: J.F. Schippang (Berlin), Richard Jahr (Dresden), Kapim (München), Agfa (Berlin), Westendorp & Wekner (Köln), only to name a few of the brands used over the years.

Müller had more freedom than any other member of the monastery, as the Trappist priests and brothers had to be given dispensations by their superior or abbot for every action diverging from the rule. Unlike his Trappist confreres, Müller could also dispose of his own finances. As several payments in the accounting books indicate, he had an account with the monastery, which would for example give out money for his hospital sojourns. The accounting books also indicate that he invested money in Germany, possibly with, or for relatives. He also appears as the only member in the financial register, who had (recorded) subscriptions to at least two German newspapers, the *Kölner Volkszeitung* and the *Augsburger Postzeitung*. Müller's financial independence, the fact that he was not a Trappist monk, and in particular his position as photographer, made possible and even obliged an engagement with worldly media and matters. This also involved travelling throughout Natal and East Griqualand, in order to photograph at the mission stations.

Not much literature exists on 19th century photographic studios on the African continent

as commercial and aestheticising businesses. Amongst others, the two edited volumes by Wendt and Behrend (1998), and by Saint Leon and Fall (1999), as well as the two recent studies by Haney (2010) and Schneider (2011) discuss cases in West and East Africa. They even traced Black African professional photographers, who established themselves before 1900. However, most analysis quickly jumps to professional photographers beyond the 1920s. Only Schneider (2011) discusses the period between the 1840s and 1890s for West Africa. I still hesitate to make comparisons to a South African case between the 1880s and 1914. No literature exists which discusses the economic situations of South African photographic studios in detail, apparently due to a general lack of related sources. Overviews on South African photography (see Introduction) do not deal with Natalian studios in any detail. Also Webb (1992), who writes explicitly about photographs from Natal, draws conclusions from literature on studios elsewhere. In the remaining pages of this chapter and the next I make an attempt to connect the economic, practical, and performative traces that remain for the case of Mariannhill's studio.

The fact that a Catholic monastery had a photographic studio along with its other workshops is a curiosity, but not a novelty. As I explained in the introduction, the Trappist Abbey at Staouéli in Algeria had a photographic studio already by the 1860s. The studio at Mariannhill contributed substantially to the monastery's income, as an analysis of the financial records between 1893 and 1922 showed. To examine the relative total value in comparison to other economic factors at Mariannhill, a more extensive study, including all workshops, the more than 20 mission stations, and various other factors would be necessary, which cannot be provided here.

Despite extensive inquiries, I was not able to trace any official registration of the studio with public authorities. The Umlazi Magistracy did monitor businesses in the area, but listings of local industries never mention the photographic studio. Industries that were recorded for Mariannhill in a screening during 1904, were a "Jamery [?], Bricks, Carpentry/Joinery, Corn Mill, Blacksmith & Wagons, Bookbinding".³⁰⁵ Photography instead is not exactly an "industry", and smaller service-workshops in the margins of bigger cities, between Pietermaritzburg and Durban may not have been ranking high among the magistracy's interests. It also appears that advertising for the studio and other workshops was unnecessary: even if the studio's cabinet cards had individualised and elaborately decorated versos, the photographers never placed any adverts in popular business registers, such as the *Natal Almanac*, or local illustrated magazines, such as the *Pictorial Mercury*.

When Müller took on the business in 1897, the commercial register *Natal Almanac* listed six professional photographic studios in Durban. The studios are listed according to the name of the proprietor. Their number had already doubled by 1899, according to the same register. Pietermaritzburg even had eight photographers in 1897. By 1917, Durban still had 11 studios, by now with more marketable names, such as "Empire Studio", or "Rembrandt Studio". The number of studios in Pietermaritzburg, on the contrary, had dwindled to merely four. The demand

³⁰⁵ DUR: 1_UMB-3_1_20-1904.

for more studios in Durban may be explained by the fact that it had always been a harbour town and trading hub.

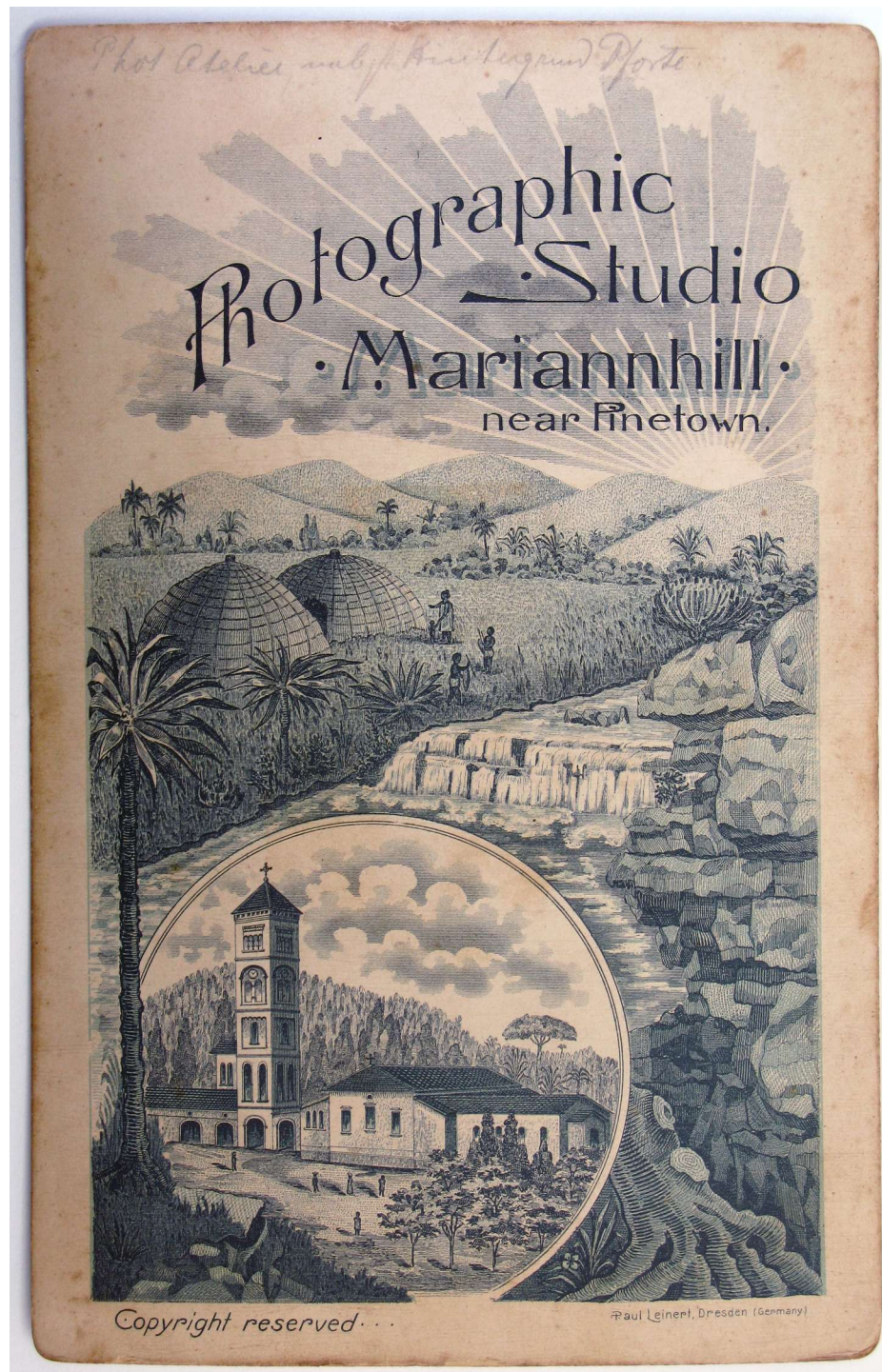


Figure 76: "Photographic Studio Mariannhill near Pinetown. Copyright reserved ... Paul Leinert, Dresden (Germany)". Verso of a cabinet card, as sold at Mariannhill Monastery, approx. 1905 (CMM Archives).

Over the years, the studio used a variety of differently decorated cabinet cards, which differed in size, colour and the amount of information, either on its front or verso. It is difficult to say which cabinet cards dominated, as the current collection does no longer represent the entire distribution of the historical production. The decorated versos of Mariannhill's cabinet cards referred to the studio throughout as "The Photographic Studio Mariannhill near Pinetown". An earlier version than the one reproduced here, also promised that the studio was able to supply "Portraits and Photos of Every Kind and Size". The elaborate design of the cabinet cards involving a depiction of the monastery and its surroundings (Figure 76) was only introduced after 1904, once Mariannhill's bell tower (or *campanile*) had been raised in the course of 1903. Once more, the cabinet card shows the monastic ground as a space amidst a pristine landscape, including an African homestead. The card's design renders the monastic ground distinct by inserting it within a circle. While the provider of photographic equipment, Paul Leinert in Dresden, manufactured the printed cartons, we may assume that the graphic design—or at least parts of it—had been provided by one of Mariannhill's artists.³⁰⁶ Müller considered it necessary to introduce a "Copyright Reserved..." in the carton's lower left corner, in order to indicate the studio's legal rights over the images.³⁰⁷ Evidence, which I present in Chapter Six, indicates that the inscription was introduced around 1905, as a result of Müller's own experience with, and growing anxiety about copyright infringements. The publishers of the monastery's periodicals were already conscious of the circulation and impact of their photographs by the early 1890s, and occasionally commented on this in the periodicals. On one occasion, for example, the *Vergißmeinnicht* found that the Catholic youth periodical *Das Heidenkind* had republished their photographs and used "misleading" captions (Anon. 1894:15). However, as the Mission Benedictines of St. Ottilien in East Africa were not considered a competing institution, the *Vergißmeinnicht* only asked for correction, and not for compensation.

Photographs, produced at the studio between the 1880s and 1939, were standardised commercial commodities, and sold in various forms: either as single prints in form of cabinet cards, as postcards, and even in picture frames. For sales over greater distances, such as to Europe, Müller sent photographs without any stabilising carrier, in order to save weight. Once in Europe, so he advised his customers, "only a professional photographer" should fixate the thin photographic paper on a cardboard carrier.³⁰⁸ The standard price for the conventional format of cabinet cards around 1900 was 1 Shilling³⁰⁹ in South Africa, or 45-50 *Pfennige*³¹⁰ in Germany. The South African price could be calculated from single payments in the accounting books,

³⁰⁶ Leinert advertised his services in the journal *Photographische Chronik*, to which Müller had a subscription. For an introduction to advertising on photographic versos in Austria and Germany see Starl (1981, 2009), and for the case of West and Central Africa see Schneider (2016).

³⁰⁷ Due to the business of their printing press, the Mariannhill Trappists were well aware that they dealt with British copyright law. However, no photographs have ever been registered with the Stationery Office in London. The German "*Urheberrecht*" instead did not rely on the registration of a photograph.

³⁰⁸ See my discussion of Müller's correspondence with Felix von Luschan and J.D.E. Schmeltz in Chapter Six.

³⁰⁹ 12 Cents equalled 1 Shilling. 20 Shillings equalled 1 Pound.

³¹⁰ 100 *Pfennige* equalled 1 *Reichsmark*.

divided by the number of sold photographs, while the German price is derived from sales to ethnographic museums, which I discuss in Chapter Six.

The studio sold at least two formats around 1900, which Müller described as “*Cabinet*” (approx. 10.2 cm x 16.2 cm) and “*Doppel-Cabinet*” (approx. 13.4 cm x 21.7 cm). By the 1880s, the *Cabinet* format had replaced the *Carte de Visite* format, which was about half the size of cabinet cards (cf. Starl 2009:21). On one occasion in 1899, Müller sold the smaller cabinet cards for approximately 45 *Pfennige* and the double-cabinet format for approximately 65 *Pfennige*.³¹¹ An incident, often referred to as the “*Stuttgarter Fall* [Stuttgart case]”, had just collapsed prices for photographs when Müller started his business. In October 1897, the journal *Über Land und Meer*, published by the *Stuttgarter Verlagsgesellschaft*, had introduced dumping prices for the reproduction of photographic prints, and in April 1898 photographic studios in Berlin’s department stores followed by selling a dozen cabinet cards for 4,80 Mark, which was less than half of the earlier price (Hoerner 1989:86-88, 110-112). The “Stuttgart case” also reinvigorated the question about copyright and authorship, which I discussed in Chapter One. Customers now considered to have their photographs reproduced by big companies, instead of the photographic studios where their portraits had been taken in the first place. Mariannhill’s business was well informed regarding the prices handled in Germany, and quickly responded and adjusted to the many dimensions of the European photographic economy at large. I will return to this case, and in particular to issues of reproduction and copyrights at the end of Chapter Six, where I discuss issues of circulation and the reception of Mariannhill’s photographs with European museums.

Most of the studio’s sitters were thus local or foreign customers, visiting Mariannhill as a tourist destination, to trade at the various workshops, or only to visit the photographic studio. They could buy “ethnographic” types (cf. Chapter Six), views of the monastery and its community and outstations, but they could also have their own portraits taken. It is thus plausible that the price for the first photograph, including the service of *taking* it, was at least three times higher than additional prints.³¹² The purchase of a photograph, and in particular having one’s own photographs taken, would therefore have been a greater investment for some people. The price for a single photographic print at the time was 1 Shilling, while one could, for example, buy a pig at Mariannhill for 5 Shillings. This price may have excluded some visitors (*Black and White*) from buying photographs. It seems likely that photographs of Africans, such as the one of Lokothwayo’s brother Bulawayo (Figure 96), were made in the first place (from the perspective of the photographer) for commercial sale and for using them in the propaganda periodicals. This does of course not exclude the idea that African sitters themselves purchased copies, or received them for free. It is difficult to say what a Black worker earned at, or near, Mariannhill around 1900. For paid labour the accounting books neither recorded the specific nature of the work

³¹¹ NMVWNMVW: letter, Müller to Schmeltz, 24.08.1899. The cards were slightly more expensive than on the contemporary German market, even though Müller claimed that he did not even make a profit on the sale. Instead he considered it as a contribution to science (cf. Chapter Six).

³¹² This is at least a logic that common price lists of contemporary German studios suggest, such as the one of the Munich “Studio Elvira” from 1906 (cf. Herz and Bruns 1985).

carried out, nor its duration. Only in few cases can the actual value be estimated, when for example in 1894 a Black man was paid one shilling for guiding two religious sisters from Pinetown to the monastery, or when in 1906 Mariannhill's *Amakholwa induna*, Joseph Phewa, received a monthly salary of 10 Shillings.³¹³ It is possible that he had additional means of income, what would render the purchase of a photograph for 1 Shilling less crucial. Even though Phewa appears to have been one of the more prominent *Amakholwa* on Mariannhill's land (cf. Chapter Four), there is no (identified) portrait of him to be found in the archives.

When Müller started running the studio in late 1897, the income suddenly rose drastically until 1901, when he was hospitalised for an unknown period. In late 1901, he must have been seriously ill, as he paid for a sanatorium in Durban.³¹⁴ As stated in his obituary, Müller suffered from chronic heart problems, which may have slowed down the production from this point in time. A considerable decline in his physical appearance and signs of ageing can be observed in portraits during the relatively short timespan up to January 1914. Since 1901, the financial gain continued to dwindle until Mariannhill's 25th anniversary in 1907. A short comeback in income is indicated between 1909 and 1910, when entries for the studio eventually stopped entirely. Eventually, Müller discontinued his photographic practice in the course of 1915, due to the restrictions of the First World War. These ruptures reconfirm my initial suggestion that most photographic activities—at least financially—took place between 1898, when Müller started a structured sales program, and 1907, the monastery's 25th anniversary. As the chart above shows, the studio's financial income had already petered out long before 1915. Even if Müller continued to travel as far as Centocow to take photographs for the periodicals until the beginning of the First World War, portraits already show him as a worn-out man. On 12 January 1920, Mariannhill's architect, Br. Nivard Streicher, replied to an inquiry about photographs by Arthur H. Tatlow.³¹⁵

I looked into the photographer's shop and found that since the beginning of the war he has not done anything in the photographic line, he has not taken any new pictures. There are some large albums here full of Natives and "Native Life", also all the negatives are here. The photographer does not ease to send the albums out. You would have to come or send someone to pick what would be suitable and make your own copies from the negatives. (Letter, Streicher to Tatlow, 12.01.1920, in Streicher and Seubert 2003)

During the First, and again during the Second World War, many of Mariannhill's German

³¹³ Apparently, Phewa was still *induna* in 1906 (next to the newly installed *Amakholwa* Chief Alois Cele) as Phewa's occupation as *induna* is explicitly mentioned in the accounting book entry.

³¹⁴ The hospital referred to in the accounting books may have been the Catholic St. Augustine's Hospital. Müller's illness is also referred to in a letter by Fr. Isembard Leyendecker to a German glass negative company in 1901. Leyendecker ordered new supplies and mentioned that for the reason that the photographer was ill, he himself was temporarily taking over the task of ordering supplies.

³¹⁵ We remember Tatlow as the editor of the travel guide *Natal Province* (1911), for which he had sourced photographs from the studio earlier, in particular for the article of James Stuart. Tatlow had been appointed manager of the South African Railways and Harbours Publicity Department in 1910. Due to several successful tourism campaigns he was given the name "Father of National Publicity" by 1930 (Maxwell-Mahon 1981:640). According to Br. Nivard's letter, Tatlow intended to continue using Mariannhill's photographs during the 1920s, but it is uncertain whether he did.

members were interned at the monastery and its stations, or at least were their movements restricted. Also the taking of photographs was limited, as supplies from Germany were cut off, and taking photographs was generally prohibited for enemies of the state. Therefore the photographic production at Mariannhill stopped in the course of 1915. Due to a shortage of staff in 1916, Müller was re-appointed to run the printing press (Nolte 1928). At the time, the press was still located in the mill building, a few kilometres south of Mariannhill, before it was eventually reestablished next to the monastery in the 1950s.³¹⁶ At the end of the First World War, Müller must again have become seriously ill and was hospitalised at Mariannhill before 1919, probably for the reason of heart problems.³¹⁷ Joseph Caspar Maria Müller died on 5 February 1921 at Mariannhill's Hospital, at the age of 67.

Already several months earlier it had been decided during the monastery's plenary council of 1920 to restructure the book keeping, to change from the Trappist garments to a new black cassock with a broad red cingulum,³¹⁸ and eventually to make an effort to constitute new communities of African priests and sisters. Once Mariannhill had been separated from the Reformed Cistercians in 1909, the missionaries were nevertheless only able to freely establish their identity as a mission congregation after the First World War. This eventually allowed for crafting the monastery's chronicle retrospectively in 1921. It (re-)covered the first 30 years of the mission, as compiled by members who had been present since the early days. As I already explained in the introduction, no archive had been maintained during Trappist times. The council of 1920 also announced that "the *Vergißmeinnicht* must be supported better. This had already been pointed out earlier. One should also summon a new photographer, to procure the necessary illustrations" (Vorspel et al. 1921-1989).³¹⁹

Br. Leonard Weber, Müller's successor, eventually arrived in October 1923. During his journey he had been accompanied by Fr. Isembard Leyendecker, who himself returned from Europe after ten years at Mariannhill's house St. Paul in the Netherlands. Over the following months he taught the basics of photography to Weber. The latter worked in the studio until it had to be closed for good with the beginning of the Second World War. Instead, he was transferred to become boarding master at Mariannhill's St. Francis School (cf. Rippe 2007). However, inscriptions on photographs indicate that the studio was indeed used much longer for internal purposes, such as portraits of both students of the St. Francis College and members of the monastery. Even though Weber's work is more recent than Müller's, it is less well contextualised: unlike Müller, Weber did not write extensively, he never published, and he did

³¹⁶ The previous secular manager of the press, a Mr. Braun, had left the position, and it seems that Müller was now the only member of the congregation capable of running the business. This fact points again to his prior training at a photographic institute, possibly that of Cronenberg in Germany. As I explained, Cronenberg was exceptional by teaching not only photography, but printing technologies more generally.

³¹⁷ Letter, Wolpert to Leyendecker, 22. March 1919. Cited in Kneipp 1981c: 64.

³¹⁸ Also referred to as "soutane", the "cassock" is a single coat-like dress, usually worn in only one single colour. The cingulum is the belt-like band, worn around the waist. In many cases the change in dress helped to distinguish the photographs from the 1920s, from those prior to 1914.

³¹⁹ Insert of printed protocol, plenary council 1920. My own translation from the German original.

neither annotate his negatives, nor the remaining archival prints. Also later members of the congregation never engaged with his work extensively. Müller's pre-World-War-One photographic production was thus aesthetically superior in the eyes of both insiders and outsiders to the monastery. We shall see this once again in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Br. Leonard Weber took the photograph below after 1930 (Figure 77), by now on a celluloid negative. He continued to use the same backdrops, as well as the same furniture and props after Müller's death in 1921. The negative of this photograph reveals a display table to the left, and in particular a rack of postcards. It is likely that it would have been cropped out in the photographic print delivered to the family. Weber used the display table to present customers with the various formats of photographs on sale. In the detail showing the postcards we can discern (from top to bottom) the founder of Mariannhill, Abbot Franz Pfanner, a baby eating from a big iron cooking pot, and also a female *isangoma* (diviner) in consultation with a client (Figure 78). We already know the baby from the album, which the Mariannhill priest showed to the two young boys in the propaganda film of the 1950s (Chapter One). The two other characters we shall meet again in Chapter Eight.



Figure 77: unidentified family with unidentified priest in the Mariannhill Studio, approx. 1930 (digitally inverted celluloid negative, CMM Archives).



Figure 78: detail of Figure 77 showing a postcard rack and a picture frame on the table to the left.

Conclusion

The photographic studio was the central hub of Mariannhill's propagandistic efforts, which commercially received, (re)produced, and once more redistributed photographic images for more than 50 years, between the 1880s and 1939. Like the other workshops, it was an economic institution, but at the same time connected all other institutions involved in propaganda efforts. Most importantly, it was a theatrical space in its own right, nested within the mission station, and at the same time able to reproduce and draw in narratives referring to the mission's exterior. The studio was not merely a commercial portrait studio, but in particular Br. Aegidius Müller was an ambulant photographer, who documented and staged "mission life" in entire Natal and East Griqualand. This chapter showed the studio's interior development and economy, in combination with its material layout as yet another space nesting within the one of the monastery compound. Visitors, such as Governor Nathan and his entourage, or the family more than 20 years later, engaged with photographs in an experience of intermediality.

The studio allowed the missionaries to locate themselves and their subjects as protagonists accordingly, during the tour, as well as in wider narratives. This argument will become even more prominent once we approach particular photographic occasions in the next chapter and the curation of objects in Chapter Five. Due to the professional aesthetic, social, and technological skills of the earliest photographers between the 1880s and 1914, mostly the oldest images started to circulate. The ones produced in the 1920s and 1930s, instead were less appealing and thus remained dormant.

In 1906, when working on Mariannhill's front gate, the architect Br. Nivard Streicher made it clear that he considered it important that images emanated from Mariannhill, instead of being imposed from the outside by popular print culture. The ensuing sections of this chapter showed how the experience of a guided tour constituted the experience of monastic space and successful mission, while at the same time implying the antagonistic outside of this space, which still had to be assimilated. The missionaries achieved this division through conversations during the tour, but even more effectively through photographs of this periphery. As I mentioned in Part One, many interlocked gazes were involved in this photographic production. "Gazing" at Mariannhill as a tourist destination involved not only literally traversing and experiencing a space that had a predefined and obligatory layout and trajectory through a guided tour. To an even greater extend this involved the literary and visual modes of representing this division. Visitors and missionaries eventually co-produced the monastic compound in textualised narratives with the additional help of photographs. Often they used Mariannhill's own precompiled photographs as *aide de memoire* when writing up their accounts.

Due of its contemplative nature, the monastery needed separate and semi-public spaces in order to receive guests adequately. These may with Goffman and MacCannell be considered as "frontstage". The workshops, the photographic studio, and the museum were the most explicit manifestations of this frontstage, even though visitors may instead have perceived them as a

view into the “backstage”, the mission’s “making of”. According to Br. Otto Mäder’s (1911) report to his confreres, this frontstage did after all not present what actually was at stake. Visitors to Mariannhill in fact relied on photographs, the production of which they had not witnessed. Instead, they matched them with (or rather allowed them to be complemented by) the glimpses they received of the workshops and the stories they were told by the missionaries. We may thus already see the unfolding of an “ethnographic tradition”, which can better be rendered as a “photographic tradition”. The idea of “collateral knowledge” becomes important once more, as visitors to Mariannhill indeed did not witness the making of photographs showing “mission life” themselves. Nevertheless, the missionaries gave the impression to the visitors that they had witnessed the occasion by supplementing it through the dispensing of photographs “*in situ*”, the very place where the photographs had been produced.

In 1886, Mariannhill Monastery started the project of creating a wide network of mission stations, which expanded for almost 30 years. In the same time period, the monastery became a major tourist destination in Natal, for its industrial and architectural work, but also for its exotic appearance. At the monastery’s photographic studio, visitors could perceive this orbit of influence as an extended visual microcosm that inspired a distinct repertoire of photographic representations. The missionaries presented this network as ever-expanding, according to the propaganda image of “the Kingdom of God” (cf. Chapter One).

Missionaries at Centocow, as one example of this peripheral situation, of course had their own perspective on Mariannhill, as well as the world surrounding them. Due to the diplomacy of Centocow’s superiors, Fr. Emanuel Hanisch in particular, Centocow established ongoing positive relationships with the local magistracy, which also had crucial influence on the production of photographs, as we will see in the next chapter. Centocow was also the very first of Mariannhill’s mission stations to establish an elaborate practice of documentation in form of a photographic album, a chronicle, and a scrap book. Even Mariannhill Monastery only established its chronicle retrospectively by the early 1920s. These sources and their making were only enabled by the particular relationships at Centocow Mission. At the same time, it is only these traces of the relationship, which allow us to reassemble and describe the particular social situation at Centocow Mission retrospectively.

