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The things in between: photographs from the Mariannhill Mission in KwaZulu-Natal and other objects in situations of intermediality
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CHAPTER EIGHT

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Photographs, Personhood and Power

Introduction: The Missionary, the Diviner, and the Chief

One morning in April 2011, I met Fr. Henry Ratering CMM at the car park of Mariannhill Monastery. Until his death in 2015, Fr. Henry, despite his advanced age, had served as Mariannhill's organist and tour guide; and, as often as he could spare the time, as historian, translator, archivist, librarian, as well as the keeper of the museum. Already from a distance I saw him resting next to the back of a car and blowing his nose. Meanwhile, he had placed a picture frame on the car's boot, which was still wet from the morning rain. Once we had greeted each other, he presented the framed painting, which, so he told me with a smile and an apologetic wink towards the wet car boot, was a "real Bhengu". It depicted Abbot Franz Pfanner, the founder of Mariannhill Monastery, in full regalia. Holding the abbot's staff with the left, and touching the abbot's cross with the right, Pfanner is standing at the entrance to the monastery's church (Figure 152). Fr. Henry explained to me that he was on his way to take the painting from his study back to Mariannhill's museum; he had had to "touch it up a bit", as some areas had faded out, while others had been affected by the museum's damp microclimate.

After our conversation, Fr. Henry in fact did not return the painting to the museum, but installed it in the "first abbey". This colloquial name is commonly applied to the small corrugated iron hut in front of the museum, being a replica of Abbot Pfanner's first dwelling. The original hut had been on the other side of the monastery, and was temporarily used as a shed for garden utensils once Pfanner had died in 1909. At one point after 1938, the hut's interior was recreated according to its original form. In 1954, it eventually had to be taken down in order to make space for more important building projects. After repeated, but failed attempts during the 1960s, the hut was eventually rebuilt entirely in 1982 from a photograph in front of the present museum for the centenary festivities and the related opening of the museum. The present first abbey's interior, including a bed and office table, next to others of Pfanner's supposedly original belongings, was redesigned according to historical descriptions and memories of the last interior before 1954, which itself had already been a replica.⁷⁸⁶

Today, the building is one of the most important stops during the guided tour around the monastery, which Fr. Henry used to give, and others still give when welcoming visitors and tourists. During the course of the tour, the hut is portrayed as the most intimate space relating to the founder's presence. By putting Bhengu's painting up on the first abbey's wall after our meeting, Fr. Henry attributed considerable importance to both Pfanner and Bhengu. His emphasis on the fact that he was dealing with a "real Bhengu" had partially been triggered by his embarrassment of having placed a valuable artwork on a wet car boot. Despite this *faux pas*, he was well aware of Bhengu's role in the South African art historical canon. The painting's instalment in the first abbey may therefore be considered as a gesture of reverence to both individuals.

⁷⁸⁶ CMMA-MM: letter, Fr. Pius Rudloff to Sr. Adelgisa Hermann, 16.11.1982. Also see Vorspel et al. (1921-1989:341, entry for 1982).

As I was able to observe myself several months later, most visitors did not even recognise Bhengu's work as a painting, due to its photo-realistic quality. It is indeed an interpretation of a photograph, taken between 1886 and 1892⁷⁸⁷—most likely during the festivities for Pfanner's jubilee in 1888, which I described earlier. It is yet unclear when exactly Bhengu produced the copy, and for what exact purpose. Employed by Bishop Fleischer of Mariannhill during the years 1932 and 1933, Bhengu moved to Mariannhill's station Mariathal near Ixopo, in order to “paint pictures ‘for the saints’, as Bhengu himself put it, as well as ‘some ordinary pictures’” (Schlosser 1971:133). According to Juliette Leeb-du Toit, it was most likely here that he was commissioned to reproduce Pfanner's photograph. Already by 1925, CMM Missionaries and CPS sisters had started to “record everything remarkable” about Abbot Franz Pfanner, either in terms of material remains, or in terms of stories about his deeds.⁷⁸⁸ I suggest that this was possibly already with the idea in mind to initiate the process of Pfanner's beatification. As I shall explain later in this chapter, beatification is one of the first steps in the Catholic Church's institutionalised trajectory towards canonisation, or put differently, in the process of “creating” a saint. Possibly it was this fact that Bhengu himself referred to when speaking to Schlosser.⁷⁸⁹ These circumstances indeed make it plausible that Bishop Fleischer commissioned Bhengu's work as part of the anticipated beatification project.

Leeb-du Toit suggests that Bhengu was probably assisted in producing this work, due to “[its] unprecedented complexity and scale” (2003:89). Bhengu created this “pen and ink drawing”⁷⁹⁰ from a photographic print, which at the time circulated as a memorial card. This card had been reproduced in such great numbers that Fr. Alexander Ultsch CMM in Cologne could still provide me with a spare one in 2012. The print, mounted on cardboard, measures 6.6 by 10.2 centimetres. Bhengu's drawing therefore is a considerable enlargement by an approximate factor of 20. He translated a photograph, which had already been reproduced many times and was circulating widely, into a singular and unique painting. In so doing he re-authenticated Pfanner's presence. In the previous chapter we have seen how Bhengu had earlier appropriated other photographs and turned them into anonymised ethnographic paintings. In this case, however, he produced a singular artwork in the form of an identifiable portrait, the power of which is derived from the combined personhood of both Pfanner and Bhengu. Eventually, the painting was installed in the first abbey, a space that likewise had been replicated in supposedly authentic fashion in order to reestablish Pfanner's presence and personhood.

⁷⁸⁷ Mariannhill ascended to the state of an abbey in 1886 and Abbot Franz left Mariannhill in 1892.

⁷⁸⁸ CMMA-MM: letter, Fr. Salesius Esser to Fr. Paschalis Boneberg, 15.12.1925.

⁷⁸⁹ It therefore appears to be significant that Bhengu said “for” and not “of” the saints. Nevertheless, we have to take into account that Schlosser translated to the German from a conversation she had with Bhengu in English. This may already have introduced a shift in meaning: “[...] *einige Bilder ‘für die Heiligen’, wie Bhengu sich ausdrückte, [...]*” (Schlosser 1971:133).

⁷⁹⁰ The technique is identified as such in a label accompanying the picture in the first abbey. The label must have been produced by the museum's curatorial staff during the 1980s.

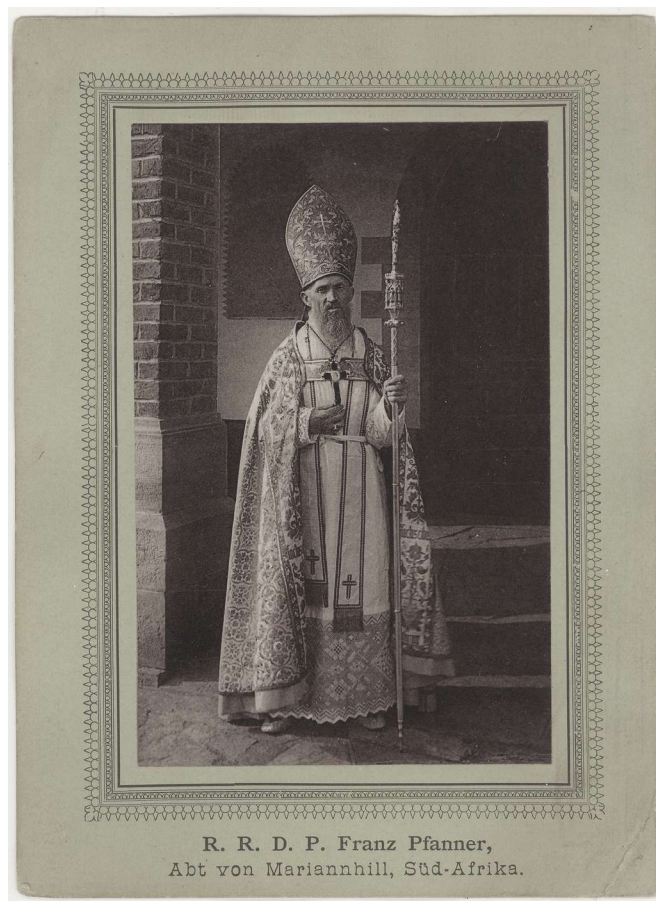


Figure 151 and Figure 152: original caption: “R.R.D. P.⁷⁹¹ Franz Pfanner, Abt von Mariannhill, Süd-Afrika”. Original photographic print mounted on cardboard, approx. 1920s. 6.6 x 10.2 cm. The photograph had most likely been taken in 1888 (collection of the author); Gerard Bhengu’s interpretation of the photograph in Figure 152, early 1930s. Resized to match Figure 151 (photograph by the author, 2011).

This episode serves to introduce the final chapter’s first building block, as well as its general theme. Relying on what we have learned so far about photographs, objects, social actors, as well as respective environments of production, exhibition, and circulation, we may now deal with the effects and affects of the resulting compounded entities. By intentionally compounding images, objects, and the persons represented by them, the missionaries created particular assemblages.⁷⁹² Within out-of-the-ordinary performances these were thought to better serve the purpose of convincing others of particular projects.

One may think of objects as “acting” independently of, and on humans (cf. Latour 2005). In this view, the material deterioration of Bhengu’s painting induced Fr. Henry to fix it in a rather desperate effort (cf. Hodder 2016). But how do we indeed account for, and trace back the agency of intentionally engineered subject-image-object compounds, such as Bhengu’s painting? Such

⁷⁹¹ R.R.D. = (lat.) *Reverendissimus Dominus* = The Very Reverend Monsignor.

⁷⁹² On the idea of assemblages (derived from Deleuze and Guattari) as agentic combinations of objects also see Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter* (2010).

compounds have to be empowered—and constantly re-empowered—by people, before they can act themselves, or in turn act on and empower other people. The Cambridge anthropologist Alfred Gell referred to such processes of empowerment as “secondary agency” (1998).⁷⁹³ In order to explore different kinds of image-object-subject relationships, I discuss the recollection of the “distributed personhood” of three interconnected social figures: the missionary, the diviner, and the chief.⁷⁹⁴ Even though they can also be considered professions and social institutions, the tension between individual personhood and social figures as manifested through the lens of photography, provides a resonance that allows for the study of the figures’ active social involvement.

These three popular social figures allow us to consider the ongoing eminence of related mimetic capital in KZN today, and to chart instances of related appropriations. Since the beginning of the encounter between Mariannhill Missionaries and African communities in the 1880s, these three figures had been mutually constitutive and evolved in interdependence. As we saw with Kohler’s social and photographic performances as both chief and diviner in the last section, they still played an important role in the public sphere during the early 1930s, and even today. The respective discourses regarding each figure produced, and at the same time questioned particular material objects, which, together with the photographs I discuss, were able to redistribute personhood. Still during the 1930s, we saw the triangulation of power relations between mission, healing, and divination, as well as political authorities. These relationships have been established in interdependence since the 19th century; their visualisation in form of photographs at Mariannhill, however, can be located around 1900.

Mariannhill’s jubilee publication of 1907, which I introduced in the first chapter, opens with yet another photographic portrait of Abbot Franz Pfanner. As part of the success story since the Trappist’s arrival in South Africa in 1880, this portrait became one of the most reproduced depictions of the first abbot, to an extent that it still has an iconic effect of recognition with the people involved with the mission today. African chiefs and diviners had a similar presence in the mission’s periodicals since the 1880s, however, only through textual descriptions. They only

⁷⁹³ In my analysis of “personhood” and “agency” within subject-image-object relationships I only rely on a limited number of scholars, prominently Gell. Such ideas, like the subject being transcended and expanded by objects (which are then granted agency within this relationship) are preceded by a range of works by other anthropologists, amongst them Nancy Munn and Marilyn Strathern. For analysis and critique of their theories, as well as their influences on Gell, see for example Hoskins (1998, 2006) and Keurs (2006).

⁷⁹⁴ In the following I use the term “(social) figure” in the sense of an abstract and stereotypical, yet socially embedded actor (cf. Moebius and Schroer 2010). Between the 19th and 21st century, such figures sedimented in narratives of the Afro-European public sphere. As Barker and Lindquist explain for the Indonesian case, “key figures [...] as particular sites [...] allow access to ideological formations and their contestations” (2009:36). Associations in society with such figures naturally change over time. Missionaries and other colonial actors initially applied temporal connotations in order to construct the “heathen” diviner and the “traditional” chief as “backwards” and as to-be-surpassed. Instead, the missionary, the convert, and the indigenous priest were supposed to represent a European “modernity”, implemented to achieve exactly this transformation. In recent decades, however, this constellation has turned into the exact opposite, in which privately and publicly expressed opinions consider especially the White Catholic missionary as obsolete. For an introduction to a “relational study of modernity” in Africa, see Geschiere, Meyer and Pels (2008).

emerged in and through photographs with the arrival of Br. Aegidius Müller at the photographic studio after 1898. In the years just prior to the jubilee, and culminating in its publication, the diviner and the chief became part of a profile delineating the essential themes of “mission life” (cf. Chapter One), where they constituted a crucial narrative component as antagonists to the common protagonists such as missionaries and converts.

The chief and the diviner are portrayed in the same publication as adversaries to the ideals of the mission: in the fourth chapter, titled “From rich Kafir life [*Aus dem vollen Kaffernleben*]”, two photographs stick out for displaying institutions of African society: one depicts a female “Kafir diviner [*Kaffrische Wahrsagerin*]” during a consultation, and the other shows the portrait of a “Kafir chief [*Kaffernhüptling*]”. In the respective captions the first is presented as “scheming” and the latter as “superstitious”. While most of the Trappist missionaries, as well as (potential) converts, are identified in portraits by name as active protagonists, the diviner and the chief remain nameless in the publication. In the previous year, however, Müller had published two articles in the mission-ethnology journal *Anthropos* (Müller 1906, 1907), where he discussed several encounters with a female diviner by the name of Ugitschigitschi, the very same diviner he anonymised in the jubilee publication. This is also the very same female diviner, who still appeared in the studio’s post card rag during the 1930s (Figure 78) and the two exhibition stalls at the 1927 mission exhibition in Trieste (Figures 116 and 117). While studying the collection of original glass plate negatives in the archives of Mariannhill, I also found several negatives to the image of the “Kafir Chief”, which Müller labelled with the person’s title in Zulu: “*Nkosi*”. I came to know the *inkhosi*’s personal name, Lokothwayo, through a detour.

The fact that the names of all three depicted individuals had been inscribed in the periphery of the photographs around 1900 made it possible for particular African and European social actors to re-establish the identity of these individuals many decades later. In the process they invested the photographs with a “secondary agency” (Gell 1998) and accordingly a particular power. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge photographs as actors in their own right, which accordingly make a difference in social relationships (also see Edwards 2001:17). In the case of my study, the secondary agency of photographs needs to be explored in relation to how social actors intentionally engineered them as image-objects, so that these image-objects could develop agency in order to convince allies of their projects.

Gell (re-)introduced ideas about “the power of images” to anthropological studies, amongst other authors, through the work of the art historian David Freedberg (1989),⁷⁹⁵ who

⁷⁹⁵ Even though the “agency” of images has been introduced as a topic to art history by Freedberg (1989), recent overviews of the discipline (Nelson and Shiff 2003, Preziosi 2009) do not acknowledge agency as a theoretical concept. Neither the work of Gell, Latour, or even Freedberg are mentioned. Prominent art historians working on similar topics, such as the German Hans Belting (2001) and the American William J.T. Mitchell (2005) have taken no extensive notice of the specifically anthropological discourse on, and ethnographies of the agency of (art) objects, and Gell’s work in particular. However, Mitchell briefly mentions in a footnote that he thinks Gell’s theories are “quite compatible” with his own, and also pays marginal tribute to the work of Latour.

explores various forms of how people invested images with power throughout history.⁷⁹⁶ In the late 19th and early 20th century, Euro-American travellers and scholars often described their subjects' ideas on first encountering photographic technology as "magical" thinking. After Susan Sontag still upheld this notion in her 1977 book *On Photography*, by saying that "[a]s everyone knows, primitive people fear that the camera will rob them of some part of their being" (Sontag 1977:158), Freedberg was the first in recent scholarship to suggest that the previously posed inclination of "non-western" people to "irrationally" perceive images and image-making-technologies as *independently* powerful, must be reviewed by including an analysis of "Western" ideas and practices (Freedberg 1989:XXI). Following Roland Barthes (1993 [1980]), Freedberg argued that the *studium* and the *punctum*, thus objective and subjective/affective interpretations of photographs, must be applied conjointly to all kinds of images, not only two-dimensional ones (Freedberg 1989:430). While the figures of the missionary, the chief, and the diviner were over time associated with theories of magic, these theories have prototypes in social action and relationships. Still, missionaries and ethnologists often represented them as stereotypical reductions in the space between lived experience, image, text, and object. By exploring the occasions and traditions behind such thinking, I hope to show that in all three cases, part of the mechanism to create power relies on the simple binary of the initial concealment of an image or object, and their later revelation or exposure, as suggested by Taussig (2006).

In several innovative accounts, Heike Behrend (2000, 2002, 2003) has compared the agency and efficacy of photographs with those of relics, fetishes, and the Eucharist in Eastern Africa, leading to the reactivated presence of individuals.⁷⁹⁷ She did not, however, draw these observations from one coherent ethnographic setting, where these phenomena were connected. I will do exactly this, and broaden the explorations of Chua (2009), Smith (2003, 2008), and Edwards (2005) into the distribution of personhood through photographs. These authors consider photographs as agentive objects, giving material presence to the people they relate to, or represent. I further suggest that in order for social actors to re-establish the personhood of the three figures, and in order to tap into their powers, the inclusion of compounded image-object ontologies was essential. Furthermore, to locate the historical moments when such assemblages were created, I retrace the historical networks that enabled the constitution and distribution of these powers.

Perceptions of photography (or rather the descriptions of such perceptions) did certainly not evolve in an evolutionary way, as suggested by the anthropologists Tylor and Frazer, from "primitive" to "civilised" or "modern". Instead, as Tylor proved himself by engaging with "spirit photographs" (Pinney 2011:33-35), photographs may be "re-enchanted" at any time (cf. Gell 1998, Pels 2003). This is also addressed by W.J.T. Mitchell (2005), by asking "what do images want?", or, rather "what claim they make upon us, and what is it that we want from pictures"

⁷⁹⁶ For other studies on the power and social life of religious images, see for example Belting (1990), Morgan (1998), as well as Roberts and Nooter Roberts (2008 [2003]).

⁷⁹⁷ Wendt to the contrary claims for the case of Ghana that "photos are not used in magic and sorcery practices" (2001:87).

(ibid.:XV). He uses the term “want” not only in the sense of desire, but also regarding what images may lack or miss (ibid.:10, 50). For the case of Mariannhill, I suggest that it is a sense of materiality that photographs in circulation “wanted” in the eyes of those who employed them, in order to convince better. Accordingly, social actors over time supplied particular photographs with material prostheses, either in a material or in a narrative sense. The social figures of the missionary, the diviner, and the chief constituted a substantial part of Mariannhill’s narrative repertoire, as much as they were involved in the discourse entertained by many colonial actors in Natal and elsewhere. All three figures had multiple manifestations in texts and images, but also in the form of particular—often “musealised”—objects, which ethnographic descriptions and exhibitions established in a highly generic way.

Since their arrival in the 1880s, Mariannhill Missionaries attempted to take on the responsibility and the control of spirituality, healing, schooling, as well as land and labour distribution for their subjects. These spheres of influence, however, created spaces of competition, as these spheres had previously been controlled by both diviners and chiefs.⁷⁹⁸ Like African non-Christians addressed Manzini and later his son Lokothwayo as *inkhosi* (chief), African converts addressed Pfanner as the *inkhosi* of Mariannhill (Bryant 1887). Also his followers Schölzig and Wolpert were addressed in the same way. Prior to the introduction of mission doctors, such as Kohler in the 1920s, Mariannhill had not only provided spiritual, but also limited medical support since the first years of arrival. These positions were not only based on the legitimation and authority to dispense benefits and restrictions, but also on the claim to the expert knowledge of how to do this most effectively.

With the help of text, image, and objects in their periodicals and museum, Mariannhill missionaries thus represented the diviner and the chief as incapable of adequately dispensing the services of leadership, medical and spiritual support. In the eyes of the missionaries, this legitimised their efforts to weaken the chief’s and the diviner’s status. As Kohler’s superiors Becker and Boslet still reminded him time and again during the 1920s and 30s, it was stories about such characters, and in particular photographs of them that would always find interest with readers. Due to the inherent relationship of conflict with missionaries, these two figures produced the most entertaining and thrilling stories for European readers, and as a result revenue and recruits. As a counterpoint, the missionaries intentionally inscribed their own presence in the photographic record. They did this either in the form of hagiographic figures, such as Abbot Pfanner, or in form of the mission’s photographer, in order to prove their own influence on competing subjects like diviners and chiefs. All three—as both generic figures and as historical individuals—remain prominent to this day. For this reason, they remain important constituents of the local society. Because these figures were historically co-dependent and their personhood and power is re-produced in similar ways, the respective processes need to be analysed in

⁷⁹⁸ Also Adam Kuper (1987) and in particular Paul Landau (1991) observed such triangular relationships of competition between missionaries, diviners and chiefs, but not their representational construction through material and photographic artefacts (also see Maxwell 2011).

conjunction. To do so, this final chapter dedicates two sections to each of the three figures. First, the use of images and relics within the Catholic religious imagination in relation to Pfanner's beatification; second, the performance of a colonial magic through photographs of the diviner Ugitschigitschi; in the third part, I will eventually deal with the politics and poetics around photographs and paraphernalia of Chief Lokothwayo.

Image and Body of the First Missionary

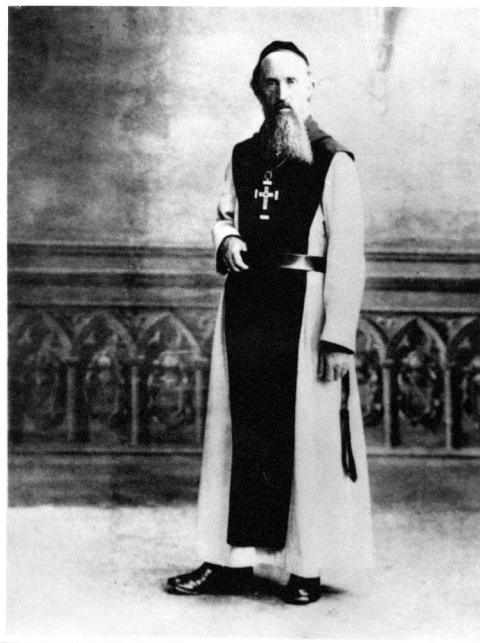
Abbot Franz Pfanner was the single most photographed person in the history of Mariannhill before 1909. His photographs have even been preserved since his student times, and the number peaks in the late 1880s and early 1890s, while he was Abbot of Mariannhill. They also do not cease after 1892, once he retired to the outstation Emaus. The occasions are mostly feast days, jubilees, or whenever the photographer came to visit Emaus. Many of Pfanner's photographs had initially been taken to promote the mission project and continue to be used for the same purpose until today. Photographs, but also paintings, busts and statues of Pfanner are virtually present in every public and private space at Mariannhill today. They can therefore be seen as iconic images that carry much more than only Pfanner's identity. Most insiders and outsiders to the monastery equate them with the identity and charisma of Mariannhill at large. In this section and the next, I hope to show that the missionaries considered the compounding of images and bodily traces as the most effective and affective way to achieve the goal of further promoting this equation. In order to explore the importance of intermediality in this effort, I discuss three examples, even if several more would be available: the first two concern the repeated translation process between photography, sculpture, and painting; the third the interdependence of photography and bodily remnants.

In 1947, Mariannhill Missionaries initiated the first official, but unsuccessful attempt to beatify Abbot Franz Pfanner, in order to develop his image as the congregation's altruistic figurehead.⁷⁹⁹ As I suggested in the introduction of this chapter, preparations for the beatification are likely to have started already in the mid-1920s. In the 1930s, confreres who still knew him were also consulted regarding their opinion on the success of beatification. Circulating ambivalent narratives about Pfanner's activist, but nevertheless choleric and disobedient character seemed to make a successful beatification unlikely at the time. Pfanner's portrayal as a difficult character in Mariannhill's oral tradition, disobedient to church authorities and a rather "un-saintly" person, were for example referred to with the paradox "obedient rebel" (eg. Hünemann 1959). Over time, the congregation portrayed him as an essentially practical person, who did what had to be done, in order to achieve the goals of the mission, while by bare necessity neglecting the obligation of contemplation and submission to the Trappist authorities. Today, the congregation employs this narrative to explain Mariannhill's separation from the Trappist order in 1909.

As the initial effort for Pfanner's beatification between the 1960s and 1980s was deemed unsuccessful due to historical inaccuracies of the congregation's researchers, the initiative remained dormant for another 20 years. In 2004, the case was once more reopened and in 2007 the Missionaries of Mariannhill celebrated the monastery's 125th anniversary. In 2009, a twofold

⁷⁹⁹ (1) First attempt in 1947. (2) Formal opening of the process (by the CMM General Council) in 1963. Lapsed after a few years. (3) Reopened by the Bishop of Umzimkhulu, Stanley Dzjuba in 2004 (Personal communication with Philippe Denis, member of Mariannhill's beatification committee).

centenary followed: the 100th anniversary of both Pfanner's death and the foundation of a congregation, which had evolved out of the encounter of a contemplative society with a complex mission field. Since the last centenary in 1982, and the official end of Apartheid in 1991, the congregation had developed a heightened awareness for certain layers of its own past. Images, in form of photographs and paintings, always played a crucial role, either in the initial moment when the photographs were taken for use as propaganda, or at a later moment, when they were re-used with ideas such as hagiography or "heritage" in mind.⁸⁰⁰ Today, editors still use photographs to illustrate historical accounts of the foundation period, essentially still as propaganda, but in a nostalgic key.



Figures 153 and 154: undated photograph of Abbot Franz Pfanner, 1880s, unknown studio in central Europe (CMM Archives); statue of Abbot Franz Pfanner at the cemetery of Mariannhill (photograph by the author, 2011).

In 1909, Abbot Franz Pfanner was buried at Mariannhill's cemetery next to his successor as Mariannhill's Abbot, Amandus Schölzig, who had already passed away in 1900. Three years after Pfanner's burial, a more than life-size statue was erected in 1912 on his tomb, created by the brother of Br. Nivard Streicher in Aachen, Germany. The statue is modelled mirror-inverted after a photographic portrait of Pfanner. After the re-opening of Pfanner's beatification process in

⁸⁰⁰ Mariannhill Missionaries have established Pfanner's last domicile at the mission station Emaus near Kokstad as the "Emaus Heritage Centre". The centre also distributes the "Emaus Heritage Papers", a small booklet published irregularly on aspects of Mariannhill's history.

2004, a signboard was installed on his tomb bearing a bilingual inscription: “*Sikhulekela ukuba ibe ngobusisiweyo inceku kankulunkulu U-Francis Pfanner*—We pray for the beatification of the servant of God Francis Pfanner”. It presents a direct invitation for visitors of the cemetery to join the communal prayer for Pfanner’s beatification on his way towards sainthood. In the same vein, the Mariannhill Monastery Repository—renowned in South Africa for selling Catholic paraphernalia—has installed an altar-like table with devotional items of Abbot Franz. These include for example pins with his image, as well as old and new hagiographies. The congregation’s effort of “creating” a saint by investing in a member’s beatification and eventually his canonisation, ultimately hopes to establish him as social capital in order to draw members and not least funds (cf. Hartel 2006). At the beginning of this process, in the early 1960s, Pfanner has so far been elevated to the first level in the Catholic hierarchy of canonisation: he became a so-called “Servant of God [*Diener Gottes*]”. To progress towards beatification it must be plausibly proven to a committee of the Vatican that active veneration of the candidate caused at least one miracle, for example in the form of curing illness. Since Pope Jean Paul II, one miracle is needed for beatification and one more for canonisation. However, up to today no evidence for a miracle has been produced.

During his lifetime, Pfanner was the main figure in external representations of the monastery’s endeavours, as he is again today. However, “backstage” he was treated ambivalently after the visitation of 1892 (cf. Denis 2014). The male community of Mariannhill rather avoided Pfanner after his death. The female community of CPS sisters, however, still cherished him strongly as their founder. Only with the release of hagiographies since the 1930s for the purpose of Pfanner’s beatification have these representations been reconsidered. Due to an illustrated translation of Mariannhill’s grand narrative into Zulu, photographs of Pfanner have had a wider circulation in the local African communities since the early 1980s (Balling and Khumalo 1983). But Pfanner’s legacy never seems to have caught great interest with Africans outside of the two congregations (CMM and CPS), not even in the local parish. While the memories and records of the earliest contacts with Africans disappeared in Mariannhill’s archives once the first generation of Trappists had passed away, the missionaries reinforced the focus on their own identity, which became embodied in the person of Abbot Franz.

Like in many parts of Europe during the second half of the 19th century, Catholics in South Africa were not exactly desired subjects, but nevertheless tolerated citizens (cf. Brain 1982, Brown 1960). Some of the hagiographic stories around exploration, administrative negotiations, or the purchase of land, therefore involve Mariannhill Missionaries travelling incognito in civil dress, and even explicitly in disguise (cf. Gütl 2005, 2017). Pfanner reported in the chronicle of his first foundation, Mariastern Monastery in Bosnia (Kempf 1981:474), that in the year 1873 he was forced to travel to Sarajevo disguised as a “Turkish Beg”,⁸⁰¹ for the dangers of being mugged (cf. Frey 1909:223). Not unlike Richard Burton journeying to Mecca in disguise, Pfanner arrived in Sarajevo and had his portrait taken in this fashion at a local

⁸⁰¹ “*Beg*”: A Turkish squire or landowner.

photographic studio (Figure 155).

In 1888, the Mariannhill associate Anton Schmidt (cf. Chapter One) reproduced the portrait photograph as a painting to be presented to Pfanner at the occasion of his 25th jubilee as Trappist priest (Gross 1888). Fr. Thimotheus Kempf CMM (1981), who collected evidence for Pfanner's beatification during the 1960s and 70s, argued that due to Pfanner's unpopularity after his resignation/deposition in 1892, all of his public visual and material traces at Mariannhill were erased. And thus the portrait of Pfanner as "Turkish Beg" was intentionally overpainted with an image of the crucified Christ (Kempf 1981:491). Nevertheless, another reproduction of the photograph as engraving was still used in 1909 (Figure 156), when the *Vergißmeinnicht* reported on Pfanner's death and recounted important episodes of his life, such as those in Bosnia (Frey 1909).



Figures 155 and 156: original *carte de visite* of Abbot Franz Pfanner, dressed as "Turkish Beg" (1873), unknown studio in Sarajevo (mounted in the "Pfanner Museum", CPS Generalate, Rome); reproduction of Figure 155 as engraving (published in *Vergißmeinnicht* 1909:222).



Figure 157: The painting of Pfanner as “Turkish Beg” being restored by the artist Willy Jakob, Würzburg, 1960s (CPS Generalate Archives, Rome).

During the opening years of the first beatification process in the 1960s, CMM rediscovered the original painting of Pfanner dressed as a Turkish Beg (allegedly by chance) and had it restored at considerable efforts by the Würzburg artist Willi Jakob (Figure 157). If both interventions (the overpainting in the 1890s and the re[dis]covery in the 1960s) had not been embedded in specific *institutionalised* social processes, they would not have been purposefully recorded in textual and photographic form. Both Pfanner’s resignation/deposition and his beatification process therefore were orchestrated and engineered efforts involving physical manipulations of images. The missionaries thus intentionally documented these interventions and their consequences, factually

resulting in the erasure of an image of Christ. Today, the rediscovered painting is placed near the entrance of the CMM/CPS Generalate's chapel in Rome, accompanied by the respective photograph showing its recovery. The particular effort of recording the paintings's recovery photographically, shows the importance given to the event at the time. The conjoined exhibition of both painting and photograph shows their ongoing importance today. The process of Pfanner's resignation in 1892, as well as his beatification process since the 1960s, were strong enough to first de-mobilise and later to re-mobilise Pfanner's image in a more general sense. Both moments anticipating the beatification—Bhengu's copy in the 1930s and Jacob's restoration in the 1960s—brought forth singularised appropriations of photographs in the form of paintings, both embedded in revelatory stories, which therefore promised even more powerful experiences for potential adorers, necessary for the success of the beatification process.

The missionaries and sisters also complemented the performances of paintings and photographs showing Pfanner with other strategies. They hoped to retain Pfanner's presence even more successfully by preserving parts of his very body. Immediately after Pfanner's death at Emaus Mission on 24 May 1909, his material presence was secured. A cult of his bodily remains and material belongings (ranging from garments to locks of hair) evolved and was mediated in various histories of Mariannhill. For example, Michael Green's novel *For the Sake of Silence* (2008) resonates with this past in its opening section, vividly describing Sr. Angela Michel excising Pfanner's heart immediately after his death, to remain with the community at Emaus, while the body itself was transferred to Mariannhill. Right after the release of the first edition of Green's book in 2008, a rather rational discussion evolved around the question where exactly the heart had been buried. Was it really the hill behind the mission, where Pfanner went for his daily stations of the cross, as Green suggests, or was it instead the cemetery behind the mission house, where the heart was buried in a glass of formaldehyde, as Sr. Annette Buschgerd (2009) insists? Oral history at the missions has it that the latter was the case and that the glass jar with the heart was exhumed several years ago, finding the jar broken and the heart gone. CPS sisters, rather than CMM priests and brothers, anticipated that one day Pfanner's physical remains might serve his reestablishment as a figure representing Mariannhill. Accordingly, they preserved things that belonged to the founder. CPS sisters today point to the contemporary status of Pfanner as a reason for preserving his remains, as former Abbot and founder of Mariannhill Monastery, but especially as founder of CPS. For both communities, Pfanner today represents something like an archetypal figure and a role model: the first missionary of Mariannhill, who initiated the transformation from contemplative monk to active missionary.



Figure 158: memorabilia ("*Andenken*" *an Vater Stifter*) of Abbot Franz Pfanner in a display case at the former CPS motherhouse in Aarle-Rixtel, Netherlands (photograph by the author, 2010).

The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (CPS) took on the stewardship of preserving and compiling every material trace that could be found in relation to their founding father, Abbot Franz Pfanner. This process of preservation performed Pfanner's corporeality on various levels. Before his body was buried, the head must have been shorn, or at least a considerable amount of locks been removed. These items have since been stored at the former CPS motherhouse Heilig Bloed in Aarle-Rixtel (Netherlands), as well as at the CPS Generalate in Rome. A variety of remains, sometimes referred to as "relics", sometimes as "memorabilia [*Andenken*]", is presented in an illuminated display case at Aarle-Rixtel, in a hall that serves as exhibition and community space, as well as archive (Figure 158). The paper envelope to the centre left contains some of Pfanner's hair locks and is labelled: "scalp hair of the venerable father founder blessed (Sr. M. Angela)". These items are approached for private devotions, or shown to the occasional visitor, like myself. The exhibition spaces in both repositories also contain much of Pfanner's wardrobe, from liturgical vestments to undergarments, as well as personal items, from the abbot's staff to a pocket watch.

The Catholic Church learned early on how to bind followers to the most virtuous, and

thus most saintly of their representatives, by developing and institutionalising a particular material culture around human remains, commonly referred to as “relics” (Angenendt 1994; Brown 1981; Geary 1986, 1990; Hirn 1957 [1912, 1909]; Kohl 2003).⁸⁰² A relic would establish a saint’s presence (“*praesentia*”) and thus mediate his or her miraculous powers (“*potentia*”) by touch, or even by sight alone (Brown 1981:82, also see Morgan 1998:60). Relics were, and still are either shown permanently inside churches, or annually presented outside to the religious community in processions. Indeed, as Patrick Geary points out, on occasion a relic needed to circulate socially, in order to remain powerful. After a relic’s initial installation in an altar, its so-called “invention”, any further transfer to another church is usually referred to as a “translation” (Brown 1981, Geary 1986). As Geary explains, it is particular stories of how relics had been acquired that give them their power (Geary 1986:186). Thus the story of how a relic entered its destined place of storage may be likened to the “backstories” of museum objects, which I explored in previous chapters (cf. Hamilton 2010).

Similar to the case of saintly relics in medieval times, narratives describing the process of an initial loss and a consequent rediscovery are still often part of an effort to bind allies to a religious community. Geary explains for the case of the remains of St. Mark, a major patron of Venice since the ninth century: “His remains were rediscovered in the eleventh century in the course of restoration of the Basilica of St. Mark—an orchestrated revitalization ritual that enhanced the value and importance of the saint in the community” (Geary 1986:178). As I showed for the case of Pfanner’s images, the logic of such “translations” still applies in the 20th century. After briefly sketching ideas on relics in general and at Mariannhill in particular, I establish how Mariannhill Missionaries engineered even more powerful objects by compounding a photograph with the materiality of its human prototype.

In previous centuries, relics constituted another way of dealing with biographies of saints, which were more effective than textual accounts and closer to the understanding of illiterate people. In the middle ages, the relic was even a medium that was easier to reproduce and circulate than paintings in the form of religious icons. Paintings were more laborious and expensive to produce, while one could instead just claim any bone to be an authentic relic. For this reason relics saw an immense inflation during the middle ages. Because of the supposed powers of relics and their potential to circulate, fraud was common, and their authenticity frequently disputed. Therefore, the Catholic church had to find ways of certifying relics (Geary 1986:177), which they achieved by introducing a canon and register of existing saints.

The transfer of power from a relic to the adorer can occur long after a saint’s death, either in the form of healing or general protection. Even if the investment with power was never argued in the cases I explore, there nevertheless exists a contemporary and often-cited edifice of ideas how relics actually worked by an academic outsider:

⁸⁰² These studies describe the rise and early forms of Catholic relic cults in Europe. For works covering more recent 20th century practices, also from interdisciplinary perspectives, see Geisbusch (2007), Hartel (2006), and especially Angenendt (1994), Cordez (2007) and Walsham (2010). The first explicitly “ethnological” study of Catholic relics was published by Yrjö Hirn, 1909 in Swedish and 1912 in English.

[...] the Catholic manufacture of relics is more interesting than anyone of the magical customs of primitive men. It demonstrates with unsurpassable clearness how materialistic was the conception of the effects of relics. It was, as already mentioned, through a bodily radiation that the magic vehicle assumed a part of its subject's being. This radiation could not be seen, for it was an *invisible*; but it was not an *imponderable*. Therefore, when so important a matter as the procuring of holy relics was in question, people wished to be quite sure that the magical transference had really taken place. The small pieces of cloth were weighed before and after their rest on the sacred coffins; and when they were lifted up it was found that they had increased in weight—a thing, indeed, that is not entirely incredible, if we take into consideration the damp air down in the sepulchral chambers. According to the believer's interpretation the increase in weight corresponded to the miracle-working power added to the piece of stuff by the contact. (Hirn 1957 [1912]:43)⁸⁰³

By this principle of exposure (*“brandea”*), an endless array of a single saint's relics could be produced. Not unlike photographic negatives, holy images, such as in “the Christian legend of Veronica's napkin [or veil]”, could reproduce by imprinting themselves by their own agency onto other objects (Hirn 1957[1912]:45). Hirn further suggested that the magical principal regarding the co-presence of imitation (iconicity) and contagion (indexicality) is useful to understand the working of relics (also see Crossland 2009). In the next section, following the “translations” and related backstories of relics, these eventually allow me to explore how a relic of Pfanner became purposefully entangled with one of his photographs.

Catholic canon distinguishes at least three types of relics in the descending order of desirability, according to their capability to mediate power (Hirn 1957:42, Kohl 2003:50-51): those consisting of organic material of a venerated person; objects that have been in immediate contact with the person; and objects that have been in indirect contact, or merely in the saint's presence. All three kinds exist at Mariannhill's houses, in South Africa as well as in Europe. Few, however, are actively venerated. Old relic display cases with a multitude of small relic fragments ascribed to individual saints are still preserved and exhibited at one of the monastery's libraries, as well as at its museum. It is undetermined whether these minuscule fragments are first- or second-degree relics. Furthermore, in the library and museum they are presented as things of the past, and no longer in an explicitly religious context of veneration. The church of Mariannhill Monastery is even said to contain a full body relic of a Roman martyr (cf. Pfanner 1889), which is however no longer venerated due to failed attempts at confirming the relic's authenticity. The glass case at Aarle-Rixtl and the museum in Rome also contain second-degree-relics of Pfanner. These are objects, which had been touched or even been worn by a venerated person for a prolonged period. Such items obviously exist in much greater numbers than first-degree-relics. Therefore they are not only stored and displayed, but at the same time were meant to circulate widely (cf. Geisbusch 2007). This also means that they may undergo the desired process of a “translation” much easier (cf. Geary 1986), as we shall see in the next section.

⁸⁰³ As the cited source by Gregory of Tours goes back to the 6th century, the weighing of relics may not have been a common practice any longer when Hirn wrote the book during the first years of the 20th century. It nevertheless serves him well to support his Epicurean theory. Note that Gregory of Tours is also the source for Brown (1981), and probably Kohl (2003) on *“brandea”*.

Photographs as Reliquaries

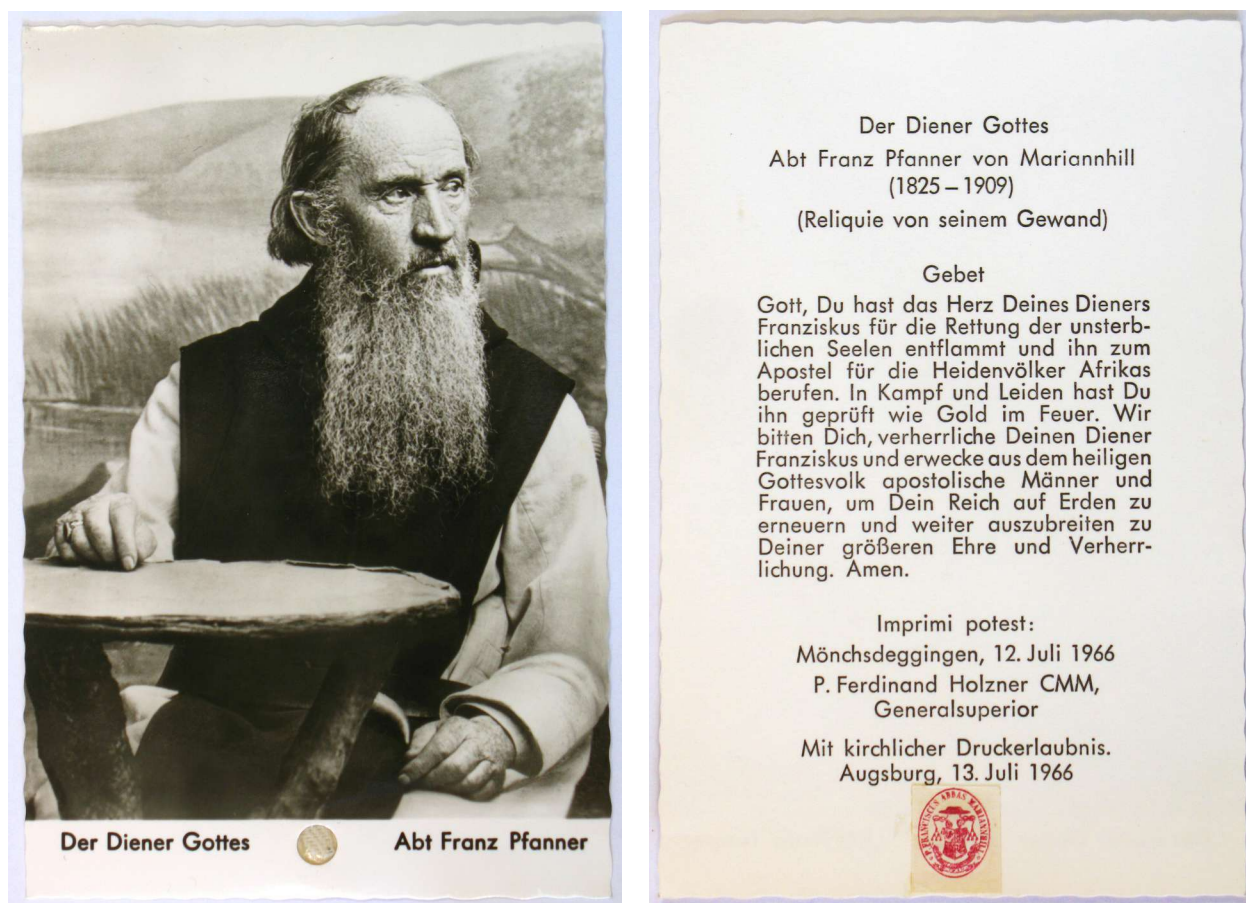
Besides the creation of permanent images, such as the church window of Centocow Mission, or the statue on his tombstone, Pfanner's legacy has been manifested through the wide circulation of mobile texts, images, as well as through religious relics. In particular the intermediality at play is essential: the missionaries modelled statues after photographs; combined photographs with relics, and illustrated biographies with photographs. Conversely, textual narratives and oral descriptions are often consciously or unconsciously inspired by photographs. In combination, they eventually performed positive connotations of Pfanner's moral and physical prowess. Starting with Bhengu's interpretation of Pfanner's portrait in the 1930s, and even more so since the official attempt for beatification in 1964, the congregation actively engineered Pfanner's photographs, as well as his body, in order to work as means of veneration.

From the 1840s, photography provided a possibility to return a seemingly realistic corporeality to dismembered body parts, also in combination as memorabilia in a non-religious context (Batchen 2004). Figures 159 and 160 show the front and verso of a devotional card, which technically belongs to the second class of religious relics, those that achieved power by contact. The front is a heavily cropped photograph of Abbot Franz, which originally included three of the first brothers who went with him to South Africa in 1880. It must have been taken between 1900 and 1905.⁸⁰⁴ A tiny piece of cloth has been embedded at the card's bottom and is explicitly identified as a "relic from his garment" on the verso. The verso also bears the church authority's seal of authentication in the position where the piece of garment is placed,⁸⁰⁵ as well as the approval in Latin: "*imprimi potest* [it may be printed]". By applying the seal, the CMM General Superior, Fr. Ferdinand Holzner, granted permission for reproduction.

This type of object is unique in so far that it combines image and body of a venerable person in a highly transportable way, making him accessible in a visual, as well as tactile way. It is unclear when this type of devotional cards first appeared, but they were at least not uncommon during the first and second half of the 20th century. Mariannhill's archive in South Africa holds several other cards of this kind: for example of Pope Pius X. (1835-1914) and of Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968), who were both canonised in 1954 and 2002 respectively. Like with these two successful saints, the project of distributing Pfanner's "relics" seemed to be so important that it legitimised the destruction of one of his garments, which the CPS sisters had consciously stockpiled as "mimetic capital", or in this case maybe rather as "contagious capital".

⁸⁰⁴ The image may be located near a wider Christian artistic tradition of an "aesthetic of disinterestedness": the distracted eyes, commonly pointed to the right of the image, were supposed to represent selflessness and contemplation, ideal features of a saint. See Morgan (1998:26-29), who however discusses it closer to a Protestant context. Even if the photograph was not taken with this idea in mind, it may have been selected for these reasons.

⁸⁰⁵ The seal bears Pfanner's coat of arms with the line "*P. Franciscus Abbas Mariannhill*".



Figures 159 and 160: front and verso of a devotional card of Abbot Franz Pfanner, including a “relic from his garment”. Produced for the first beatification attempt in 1966. 8 cm x 12 cm (collection of the author).

In anticipation of Pfanner’s successful beatification, CMM and CPS produced these cards in 1966 with an unknown number. The prayer on the card’s verso asks for the “glorification” of Pfanner and the “awakening” of new missionaries. The cards were given to people as gifts, presumably mostly within CPS and CMM circles. In the same way I received an original card from the secretary and archivist of the CPS Generalate in Rome. When she gave me a tour to the archives, we still found a stack of some fifty cards. Unfortunately, members of both congregations have difficulties remembering the original circumstances of production and dissemination.

What makes this situation paradoxical, however, is that the circulation of images and relics is restricted by the Catholic Church’s Canon Law under “Title IV. The veneration of the saints, sacred images, and relics (Cann. 1186-1190)”.⁸⁰⁶ Bodily remains and memorabilia of people who are neither beatified nor canonised cannot be called “relics”, nor can they “work” as relics—at least not officially—according to the Catholic Canon. But the particular constellation I just described, at the same time anticipated and demanded Pfanner’s beatification. It

⁸⁰⁶ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM, accessed 30.11.12.

consequentially also anticipated the object's own elevation, to be treated as a true relic. A recent case showed that opinions, as well as practices are indeed fluid and adaptable in this regard. In 2010, CPS sisters at the Austrian Kloster Wernberg wanted their newly installed convent altar to be equipped with a "relic" of Pfanner. The request was first turned down by the Mother Superior with the explanation that Pfanner was not yet beatified. Eventually, the request was still satisfied by diplomatically re-appropriating one small fragment of cloth from one of the devotional cards I just described. As every Catholic altar is usually inaugurated with the "installation" of a relic (Geary 1986:176, Kohl 2003:47), the local Bishop had negotiated a minuscule first-degree relic "*ex carne* [from the flesh]" of St. Maria de Mattias (1805-1866), who was canonised in 2003. The relic's relative scarcity is indicated by the number of equivalent pieces (1789) on the certificate next to it (Figure 161). This particular relic had been chosen because De Mattias was the founder of the female congregation of the "Adorers of the Blood of Christ" (ASC), who were with Pfanner during his time in Bosnia (cf. Kempf 1981:709-911).

Ideally, CPS would have only used "relics" of their own two founding members: Abbot Pfanner and Sr. Paula Edmund, the first CPS superior. However, the two were neither beatified nor canonised and could thus not have produced "relics" in the strict sense of the term. But the installation of Mattias' relic gave the opportunity to introduce "memorabilia" of both Pfanner and Edmund, thus forming a triptych with the relic proper. Even if a signboard near the church entrance indeed identifies all three objects as "relics" (as does the verso of Pfanner's memorial card), members of the wider church community are well aware of the canonical regulations, which denies this status, and forbids the dealing with the items as true relics. I was told by the local priest that he would thus rather consider them as "memorabilia [*Andenken*]". Apparently, even this status would still be able to inspire adoration, and ideally facilitate a miracle necessary for the process of Pfanner's beatification.

Next to their "relics", photographs of Pfanner and Edmund have been inserted into the triptych. As a gesture of affection, so the sister who designed the altar told me, she located the two pieces of cloth on the spots where the founders' hearts would have been on their photographs. All three "relics" exist in great numbers. In this case, however, they were "installed" by the local Bishop in a public ritual and in the process were appropriated as one unique and effective triptych or assemblage with multiple intersecting backstories. What Geary explained for the "translations" of medieval relics thus holds true for our case: "When a relic moved from one community to another, whether by gift, purchase, or theft, it was impossible to transfer simultaneously or reliably the function or meaning it had enjoyed in its old location. It had to undergo some sort of cultural transformation so that it could acquire status and meaning within its new context" (Geary 1986:181).



Figure 161: the relic triptych in the altar of the CPS Convent Church at Castle Wernberg, Austria (photograph by the author, 2013).

Pfanner's devotional card, combining a photograph with inscriptions had thus served as what Hirn called a "topical reliquary"—an iconic container that certified the identity of the relic's indexical referent (Hirn 1957[1912]:56, also see Brilliant 1991:127-128, Freedberg 1989:93ff, Geary 1986:177, Kohl 2003:57). This encasement enabled the "relic" to circulate outside the boundaries of a church or archive. In return, the supposed "relic" gave value to one particular photograph, one out of many depictions of Pfanner. The combination of photograph and relic resulted in a very particular type of object, the effects and affects of which exceeded the sum of its parts, forged together by explanatory text and a seal by an interpretive authority of the church. One could also say that an imitative and contagious bond was established between image and relic through the icono-indexical quality of the image and the even stronger mimetic capacities of the (second-degree) relic. Or as Hirn put it: "Contact had, to use the terminology of magic, allied itself with similarity" (1957 [1912]:57). As it is not an image itself, the relic could only develop these mimetic capacities through identification and authentication by image, text and seal. In turn, by the definition of contagion and the logic of "*brandea*", the photograph of Pfanner itself became a secondary relic (cf. Belting 1990:73, 336).

In the first two parts of this study I described the setup of an international "image world" (Poole 1997). In the third part, as well as in the previous chapter I analysed more localised "art worlds" (Becker 2010). This now allows us to turn to the even more minute interactions between subjects and objects, in what Gell (1998) called the "art nexus". This is a process in which an "artist (photographer)" intentionally invests an "index (photograph)" with the personhood of a "prototype (sitter/model)", in order to exert agency upon a "patient" or "recipient". The agency exerted by the index onto the patient is thus a "secondary agency". The patient, in our case, would be the intended consumer of the produced photograph. Of course we have to take into account that a photograph may be re-employed by other actors than the original photographer, and that a photograph may also be re-engineered with the inclusion of additional indexes, such as a relic. The moments in which secondary agency affects the patient is when the latter "abducts", or infers meaning from the index. There is of course no guarantee that these inferences are indeed identical with the one originally intended by the index's maker. Instead of anthropomorphising objects, what interests us here are people's ideas about what (or who) causes a photograph to act (cf. Gell 1998:17). In order to abduct meaning, social actors must actually *recognise* indexes. Only once an index bears resemblance to a familiar prototype, it may develop agency (ibid.:26).

In this orchestrated process of adoration, Pfanner thus became a "distributed person" (Gell 1998). His body and his garments had been dismembered, even dissected in a very literal sense, and accordingly stockpiled, so that his descendants may benefit from this "mimetic capital" (Greenblatt 1991). Beginning with the separation of his heart and hair from his body, the process involved the production of various types of "relics", photographs, paintings and statues. Gell described this phenomenon as "personhood distributed in the milieu, beyond the body-boundary" (1998:104). In Gell's terms the items in question, images and relics, are "indexes" of

the “prototype” Pfanner, engineered by Mariannhill Missionaries with textual inscriptions, so that they may work instead of him.

While Pfanner is clearly present in the minds of people in Europe and South Africa, the beatification case demands active veneration and adoration (see the prayer imprinted on the back of the devotional card). Nevertheless, even some members of the congregation have doubts that the ongoing process of beatification will be successful. The photograph in combination with a relic does still work as an aspiration, as it already provides possibilities for veneration, which otherwise only a person would be given, who is already raised within the spiritual hierarchy. Photographs have so far not been considered as evidence for the beatification cause, other than potentially being part of the historical report.⁸⁰⁷ They still have been very much involved in the practice of veneration and beatification, at least on the side of the White community. Pfanner’s veneration within the Black community today is still uncertain. People I engaged with did not openly display any devotional attitudes. The same experience is reported by Mariannhill priests, who engage in ministry. In contradiction to the idea that Pfanner was Mariannhill’s first and ideal missionary, not one single photograph shows Pfanner in active mission work outside of the mission stations, like many of his confreres. There is no clear evidence that Pfanner spoke Zulu (or English) fluently, but rather that he confined himself to administration and the communication with the European world. Still, due to similarities in dress and facial hair, Africans near Mariannhill identified many Trappists in the photographs I showed as Abbot Franz Pfanner. Furthermore, the common hagiographies evoked the expectation that he *must* have been present amongst the people, because he is the main protagonist in stories, and also has a conspicuous photographic presence all over Mariannhill (Rippe 2007).

Depending on these precepts, in particular through the perceived iconic and indexical qualities of photographs, the agency of a historical person can be mediated and re-distributed through his or her image. In combination with a bodily “relic”, as in the case of the memorial card, the effects and affects of the resulting compounded object can be multiplied beyond the mere addition of these two parts. Mariannhill Missionaries engineered the card for the particular end of Pfanner’s beatification cause. They employed both parts in question with a “secondary agency” (Gell 1998) of both themselves as makers and of Pfanner as a person. Independently of its makers, the image-object then became an agent with the specific intention of Pfanner’s beatification. Pfanner’s memorial cards as circulating reliquaries still undergo a transformation alongside Pfanner’s personhood. Social actors abducted and thus established personhood by oscillating between the cards and their referent—Pfanner, the person they virtually embody. The photo-relic-cards of Pfanner are supposed to instil veneration and provide space for prayer. By doing so, the cards at the same time open the possibility of Pfanner’s beatification, should a prayer be deemed successful, for example through a related miraculous healing. Eventually, in case the beatification would be granted, the beatified personhood of Pfanner would be transferred to the cards and they would rise along with the person. According to Catholic canon, they would

⁸⁰⁷ Personal communication with Philippe Denis, 2012.

then eventually be certified to be addressed and used as true relics. The card compounded of Pfanner's image and body was thus not thought of as *bearing* potential evidence for the beatification cause, but rather to *produce* evidence in form of a miracle.

Photographing the Diviner

Br. Aegidius Müller progressively introduced the figure of the diviner to the photographic canon of Mariannhill once he had taken over the photographic studio in late 1897. Before this date—even if photographs had been taken at Mariannhill already for more than one decade—no depictions of diviners can be traced, neither in the periodicals, nor in the archive. The figure of the diviner had indeed already been present, but only in rather anecdotal textual accounts. The visual establishment of the figure is thus closely related to Müller's interest, as well as his skills of approaching, dealing, and conversing with various diviners. Also his success in photographing, while at the same time writing about diviners, is crucial to acknowledge. In this section I turn to a set of photographs, taken at about the same time as the one of Pfanner's devotional card. I describe the encounter of—and more importantly argue a reciprocal constitution by—two institutions and practices through the lens of text and photography: the missionary photographer and the Zulu diviner. In order to do so, it will be necessary to explore the respective historical establishment of the terms used to refer to the two figures in Zulu—*mathwebula* and *isangoma*—within the specific situation at Mariannhill. In the process, both individuals established the social role and power of photographs, depending on the available collateral knowledge. I shall further explore the idea of “expertise” and how it affected the relationship of the *isangoma*, Ugitschigitschi, and the photographer, Br. Aegidius Müller, through the very practice of photography. This will eventually show a similar empowerment of a photograph as in the case of Pfanner.

In 1906 and 1907, Müller published two articles on divination in the Austrian-based mission-ethnology journal *Anthropos*. Four of the eight published photographs show the female diviner, whom I mentioned earlier in relation to the jubilee publication. The diviner is here introduced as the *Isangoma* Ugitschigitschi.⁸⁰⁸ According to inscriptions on glass plate negatives, several of the photographs show Ugitschigitschi together with her partner, the *Inyanga* “Dr. Pika” at their homestead, which is set before the backdrop of a table mountain. The institutions of both *isangoma* and *inyanga* have complex social histories, which I can here only sketch briefly. While colonial writers referred to *izinyanga* also as “native doctors”, they alternatively referred to *izangoma* as “witch-doctors”, due to their occupation of identifying malevolent “witches”. Because chiefs were said to employ *izangoma* to liquidate their adversaries, *izangoma* eventually became a problem for the colonial administration during the 19th century (cf. Flint 2008:101, McClendon 2010:61). Before the *inyanga* was licensed, and, as a result, the *isangoma* was criminalised by law through the introduction of the *Natal Native Code* in 1891, both institutions—*isangoma* and *inyanga*—had constituted a system of healing (Flint 2008:129, also

⁸⁰⁸ The name Ugitschigitschi, I was told by people around Mariannhill, may be an onomatopoeic expression for a squeaking sound similar to the one produced when creating friction between layers of rubber material. In so far it could be related to the high-pitched “whistling” sounds, which some *izangoma* produced during practice. Allegedly these sounds came about when the *isangoma* ventriloquised the spirits possessing her during a consultation (cf. Bryant 1917, Kohler 1941).

see R  ther 2006). Despite these restrictions, Ugitschigitschi and her partner apparently still practised in cooperation beyond 1910.⁸⁰⁹ More commonly after their criminalisation, the trade of *izangoma* was to identify illnesses and locate lost objects. In the following I suggest that the construction of this figure has to be reconsidered by involving the ethnographic and photographic traditions in the work of missionaries. As we will see, photographing the diviner thus involved a host of other practices.

In their re-narrated conversations M  ller addressed Ugitschigitschi as *isangoma*, and also had her define herself as *isangoma*. The term “*isangoma*” was most likely introduced into the ethnographic and linguistic discourse (superseding the term “*isanusi*”) by Bryant (1905), at the very same time and in the same place where M  ller was writing his articles. M  ller’s photographs were therefore with some probability amongst the first, if not indeed the first ones, to be captioned with this term. The term “*inyanga*”, instead, is often translated as “healer/doctor”, but actually denotes the root word for the “expert” in a particular trade. Also the *isangoma* is an expert, and therefore “*inyanga yokubula*”⁸¹⁰ was an early alternative term (cf. Callaway 1870). To my knowledge, Bryant’s unpublished *A Larger English-Zulu Dictionary* (1914)⁸¹¹ is the only text, which also framed photographers as “*izi-nyanga yoku photograph*”, or later as “*izi-nyanga yokuthatha amaFotho*”⁸¹² (Bryant 1953:214).⁸¹³

After 1900, M  ller produced photographic portraits of at least ten individuals, whom he identified as diviners, and whom he named individually at the same time. In Mariannhill’s photographic collection, however, only Ugitschigitschi recurs repeatedly. M  ller visited her at least four times over a period of more than ten years, from about 1900 to at least 1913. M  ller referred directly to her photographs in his articles, pointing out the *isangoma*’s use of clapping hands as performative element, or her preference for white body paint. Ugitschigitschi is either portrayed in frontal full body portraits, or—likewise posed—while performing her profession. On the backside of an original photographic print showing Ugitschigitschi during a consultation, M  ller wrote that it shows a diviner at Mariannhill “exactly as the photographer found her as she performed eagerly in full action”.⁸¹⁴ Due to the existence of different glass plate negatives, showing people in almost exactly the same poses, it is evident once more that M  ller arranged the scene as one of his *tableaux vivants*.

⁸⁰⁹ Even in later years, the cooperation of cohabiting *izangoma* and *izinyanga* was not an uncommon phenomenon (cf. Kohler 1941).

⁸¹⁰ Someone who divines through the beating (*uku-bhula*) of sticks as a performative element.

⁸¹¹ This extended version of Bryant’s *A Larger English-Zulu Dictionary* only exists as a handwritten manuscript of three volumes at KCAL in the “Alfred Thomas Bryant Papers”, Files 18-20.

⁸¹² “Experts in taking photographs”.

⁸¹³ The first edition of this *Abridged English-Zulu Dictionary* must have been published at Mariannhill before 1920. Bryant’s unpublished *A Larger English-Zulu Dictionary* (1914) provides the same translation.

⁸¹⁴ My own translation from the German original.



Nach einer Photographie der Trappisten-Mission Mariannhill 2248a.

Fig. 3. Wahrsagerin Uyitshigitshi bel Mariannhill
in ihrer vollen Amtstracht.

Figure 162: original caption: “Fig. 3. *Wahrsagerin Uyitshigitshi* [sic] *bei Mariannhill in ihrer vollen Amtstracht*”—“Kafir Diviner Ugitschigitschi in her full official attire” (as published in Müller 1906, between pp. 771-772).



Nach einer Photographie der Trappisten-Mission Mariannhill 2248a.

Fig. 6. **Kaffrische Wahrsagerin in voller Amtstracht,**
Beine, Arme und Brust weiß bemalt.

Figure 163: original caption: "Fig. 6. *Kaffrische Wahrsagerin in voller Amtstracht, Beine, Arme und Brust weiß bemalt*"—"Kafir Diviner in full official attire—legs, arms and breast painted white" (as published in Müller 1907b, between pp. 49-50).

In his letter to Fritz Graebner at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum of Cologne in 1910 (cf. Chapter Six), Müller recommended *The Essential Kafir* by Dudley Kidd (1904) as “the best book on the Kafirs”.⁸¹⁵ Kidd (1863-1921) was a British missionary, who had travelled widely through South Africa in the 1890s while being affiliated to the South African General Mission. After having returned to England in 1905, he published several other popular accounts related to the South African “native question” (Maxwell-Mahon 1977). A comparison of the section on “The Witchdoctor” in Kidd’s *The Essential Kafir* to Müller’s articles on divination in *Anthropos*, shows that Müller had translated and plagiarised verbatim and extensively from the English to the German.⁸¹⁶ Only where he referred directly to the surroundings of Mariannhill and his own photographs, he used his own empirical data. But after all, it seems that this plagiarism was common and unproblematic knowledge amongst Mariannhill-related priests at the time. Fr. Franz Mayr casually mentioned in a letter to his benefactor Maria Ledochowska in 1905 that an article in the *Vergißmeinnicht* (an earlier version of Müller’s *Anthropos* articles) “had been taken from” Kidd’s book (Gütl 2004:203-4). The fact that Müller had extracted most of the contextualising information on *izangoma* unmentioned from another author may be explained by his own embarrassment:

Since the British Government strictly persecutes divination, gross excesses, such as murder do occur rarely. However, divination in secret is indeed flourishing. Not less than six diviners—mostly women—are practicing their dark trade in the ambit of one and a half hours around Mariannhill. Of course they deny their business when speaking to Whites, so that it becomes difficult to take photographs, and is even harder to collect information on their arcane practices.⁸¹⁷ (Müller 1907b:49)

Missionaries are commonly attributed with presenting the figure of the diviner in negative terms, until the general tendency to exoticise ceased in the 1960s (cf. Kuper 1987, Pels 1999). According to Müller, the South African *isangoma* was aware that his or her powers were not real, and thus consciously tricked his or her customers. After first describing the usual way of an *isangoma*’s initiation in his article, Müller presented the argument that the powers of the *isangoma* are never real, and that the effect or success is generally achieved by the *isangoma*’s good performance, trickery, good observation, and eventually the client’s imagination. Müller presented such good performance in trickery as the *actual* expertise of the *isangoma*. He also likened the *isangoma* to the figure of the detective, as he/she is able to read obvious signs by observing their clients well, in order to draw divinatory conclusions (1907:57).

In his descriptions Müller eventually maintained a clear division of the *isangoma* as actor on the one side, and her audience on the other. He presented superstition and irrationality as

⁸¹⁵ Some 30 years later, Max Kohler still commented on the book’s second edition of 1925 in a similar, but more considered manner: “With the eyes of an artist, with the feather of a writer, with the humour of a philanthropist, with the intuition of the prejudiced: the most entertaining description of the Kafirs”. My own translations from the German original. KCAL, uncatalogued Kohler Collection.

⁸¹⁶ Müller took some of his claims, but not his terminologies from Kidd. Kidd himself did not use any Zulu words to identify his subjects, but only the English term “witchdoctor”.

⁸¹⁷ My own translation from the German original.

existing with the African layperson on the one hand, and with the *isangoma*, as the expert of the transcendental on the other hand. While authors like Müller attempted to keep religion and technology apart from magic by presenting them as two incompatible systems, Kuper shows that practices indeed overlapped and ran parallel (Kuper 1987:160). Therefore, in a similar way, photographers and missionaries in colonial situations have often been presented (and presented themselves) as tricking their subjects into taking their photograph (cf. Behrend 2003). However, we only know about statements evoked by such confrontations through the descriptions by those colonial actors. One challenge of analysing this relationship is that the *isangoma* is a textual and illustrational construct by the missionary (cf. Taussig 2006:135). In his *Anthropos* article Müller mentioned the generally held assumption by some Europeans living in Natal that particular diviners (not all) were indeed genuine. Two of these “believers”—despite their academic ambitions—were Müller’s former confreres, Fr. Willibald Wanger and Rev. A.T. Bryant (cf. Chapter Three). Müller’s own high expectations in this regard had so far always been disappointed, he wrote, and he thus declared all diviners as frauds. As I shall explain, these two sides of opinions contributed to the effect of the exposure attempted by Müller.

Even with the inclusion of contemporary evaluations of photographs in the same area during my fieldwork, it is impossible to reconstruct how Africans around Mariannhill Monastery and its outstations experienced photography as both a social act and as a medium around 1900. It is thus impossible to reconstruct what ideas they held about being photographed and if and how they tried to influence the outcome. Accounts of these perceptions are only available to us through inflections by European writers, and especially the Zulu and Xhosa dictionaries compiled by missionaries. In this oeuvre we find at least some indications that photography was perceived (by missionaries through the accounts of their subjects) as a “magic” practice in its “contagious” form. Here it is important to ask what the intentions behind such framings were, and on what particular encounters they were based. Missionary thinking and writing, translation and representation, as I analysed them in Chapter One, were—next to spreading the gospel—explicitly produced for the information and entertainment of a European audience (cf. Behrend 2003, Strother 2013). At the same time, we cannot state off-hand that missionaries and Africans invented each other’s perceptions of the photographic medium from scratch (cf. Pinney 2011:75-76). Keeping this in mind, I discuss several studies analysing the nature of photographic understandings in colonial contact zones (Behrend 2003, Pinney 2011, Strother 2013, Wright 2013) against the evidence that photographic practice produced in Natal and the Eastern Cape around 1900 during conversations between missionaries and their subjects.

In the process of translation, three distinct word groups emerged that denoted, first, the image-object or photograph in a material sense, second the process of transferring the image onto the photograph, and third the transient *image* itself. I will deal with them consecutively. Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries made great efforts to translate the Bible into local languages. In the course of this work they had to come up with various renditions of “images”. The Bible does indeed not prohibit the making of images or representations of God himself, but

rather the worship of quotidian objects, thus idols *as* gods. The following quotes from the Bible in English and Zulu show only one example of many for this prohibition:

Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth, or in the sea under the earth.
(Exodus 20:4, The Bible, Contemporary English Version).

Ungazenzeli izithombe ezibaziweyo, namfanekiso wokusezulwini ngaphezulu, nowokusemhlabeni phansi, nowokusemanzini phansi komhlaba.

(Exodus 20:4, *Ibhayibheli* 1959)⁸¹⁸

Only by the 1890s, the two terms used in the first complete (Protestant) Zulu translation of the Bible (1883) for “idol [*isithombe*]” and “image [*umfanekiso*]” were applied in dictionaries to denote “photograph”. To my best knowledge, for the very first time in 1891 a German-Zulu dictionary translated “photograph” as “*umfanekiso*”. This dictionary was co-edited by a Mariannhill sister, Sr. Philippine Treumund, and a Mariannhill priest, Fr. Ambrosius Hartes. It was published under the pseudonym “*Phil. Mate*” (Mate 1891). The same dictionary instead translated “*isithombe*” with “figure [*figur*]”, “effigy [*Bildnis*]” and “copy [*Abbild*]”. The dictionary also employed both terms synonymously for “image [*Bildnis*]” or “painting [*Gemälde*]”. In 1899, the term “photograph” first appeared in a Xhosa dictionary (Kropf 1899) as *umfanekiso*, while *isi-tomo* was again rendered as three-dimensional figure. While *isithombe* was thus closely associated with the idea of a three-dimensionally modelled image or figure, *umfanekiso* instead implied two-dimensional images, but also the idea of copying, imitation, resemblance, and likeness.⁸¹⁹ Bryant (1905) and Colenso (1905) still upheld the same ontological division.⁸²⁰

After 1905, several other terms have been used in relation to photography. During my conversations with Zulu speakers, explanations of differences were either very imprecise, or when in doubt, people themselves often referred back to the available historical Zulu-English dictionaries. The most extensive and conventional bi-directional dictionaries (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana and Vilakazi 1990; Dent and Nyembezi 1995) are fusions of much earlier works: Doke and Vilakazi 1948 (Zulu-English) and Doke, Malcolm and Sikakana 1958 (English-Zulu). These

⁸¹⁸ Consistent since 1883: “*U nga zenzeli isithombe esibaziweyo, namfanekiso woluto oli sezulwini pezulu; nolu semhlabeni panshi, nolu semanziui panshi komhlaba*”. (*Ibaible, Eksodusi 20 Isahluko 4*. 1883). Translation by Ndu Makhanya, 2013: “Do not make **images** [*isithombe*] that are hand-made or an **image** [*-fanekiso*] of what is in heaven above, what is on earth below and what is in the water underneath the earth”.

⁸¹⁹ Bryant (1905): “Fanekisa (s. k.), v. Make a likeness of a thing (acc.), actually (as by a picture), or mentally (as by a comparison or imagination). Comp. *linganisa*”.

⁸²⁰ “*umfanekiso*”: Colenso (1905): “Fanekiso (Isi), n. Image or figure, such as an idol. Fanekiso (Um), n. Image, picture, likeness, resemblance. [in the section “Hybrid-Words” - “isipiki”] Fanekiso (isi), n. Picture, photograph”. Bryant (1905): “isi, or um-Fanekiso (s.k.), n.5. Likeness of anything, actually or mentally drawn; hence, statue, image, doll, picture, photograph. Cp. *isi-Tombe*”. “*isithombe*”: Colenso (1905): “TOMBE (isi), n. Figure of a man, &c, carved or moulded of clay, doll, puppet, *idol. **Bryant** (1905): “isi-Tombe (*Thombhe*), n. Image or small clay model of a man, ox, etc., such as are made by Native children; hence, doll, image, statue of any kind; sometimes applied also to a picture of a man or beast (not of a house or landscape - see *um-Fanekiso*) [Gr. tupos, image]”.

dictionaries again explicitly employed Bryant's Dictionary (1905) and we may also assume that Bryant too had borrowed from others. The translations from Zulu to English in these cases do not distinguish between *isithombe* and *umfanekiso*; both refer to two- and three-dimensional images, and both are translated as "photograph". The English-Zulu sections, however, clearly prefer *isithombe* in its verb-form (*uku-thatha isithombe*: to take a photograph). Zulu speakers indeed confirmed to me that the standard terms for photograph today are *i-fotho*, *isi-thombe* and *pic*, but no longer *um-fanekiso*. *Ifotho* and *pic* obviously are zulufications of English terms. For the case of *isithombe* and *umfanekiso* I was unanimously informed that only the first is used for photographs, but not the latter. *Umfanekiso* is only applied to painted portraits, as well as statues, or carvings. Apparently the original preference for *umfanekiso* over *isithombe* to denote "photograph" has been reversed since the 19th century.

In order to explain this, we may briefly consider possible underlying etymologies. Döhne (1857) claimed that *isi-dumbu*, the "corpse", is etymologically "allied with" *isithombe*. *Isidumbu*, so the Swedish missionary Berglund (1976:83) explicated, is strictly related to the corpse that is not yet buried, and has not yet decomposed; it is therefore still *recognisable*. A likely reason for the association of the terms may be that a corpse and a photograph resemble the living person most realistically (cf. Crossland 2009:73). This is one possibility why *isithombe* was accordingly favoured to denote "photograph".⁸²¹ The term *isithombe* has thus indeed a close association with notions of photographic realism—and indeed "identity"—through its comparison with the human body (cf. Bryant 1905).

The recent preference for *umfanekiso* to denote images that are not photo-realistic, and therefore are obvious copies of something and not "identical", can be explained with the term's meaning of "similarity", "resemblance", and "imitation". Bryant (1905) also saw a link between the verb *uku-fanekisa* and the verb *uku-lingisa*, which he translated with "[to] imitate a person (acc), as in dress, action, gesture, talk, etc.". Variations of the root imply notions of *attempting* to do something. Bryant further presented the noun *um-lingo* as "any unusually strange, awe-inspiring, preternatural, magical performance, as done by an *inyanga* when treating his patients by certain peculiar practices, or by a conjurer; might be used in plur. for 'magic' generally". This means that the only identified Zulu noun for "magic", like the older term for photograph (*umfanekiso*), are both based on the notion of performance through imitation, resemblance, and similarity, rather than identity or sameness.

Other than the two Mariannhill publications (Phil. Mate. 1891, Bryant 1905), earlier 19th century Zulu and Xhosa dictionaries were written by either Protestant, Wesleyan, or Anglican missionaries. One may therefore assume that they were developed in close connection to translations of catechisms or the Bible. In the case of Mariannhill this had the consequence that translators officially tried to avoid Zulu ideas with negatively charged supernatural connotations

⁸²¹ Other attempts at explaining related etymology within socio-cultural contexts appear to be unfounded: without referring to any sources Ashforth explains *isithombe* and *umfanekiso* by relating them to the word groups of *intombi* (girl) and *umfana* (boy) respectively (2005:236).

—as related to divination or healing—into crucial passages of the Catholic Canon (cf. Mettler 1967). Instead, such terms were used to create contestable entities, such as *izangoma*.

While Müller established the *isangoma* in Mariannhill's periodicals and *Anthropos*, he established himself as an equally ambiguous figure alongside of it. He indicated that Africans at times perceived him as “*umthakathi*”,⁸²² as in their perception he performed the respective characteristic actions with the help of his camera (Müller 1910:84, also see Müller 1906). This Zulu term for “wizard” or “witch” bears very negative connotations and is still used pejoratively today. It is commonly associated with harmful magic and witchcraft (Doke et al. 1990:454). Furthermore, over the years of collecting experience, language skills, and reputation as photographer, Müller may have been given the personalised name *Madwebula* by his African contemporaries (cf. Chapter One). He eventually adopted this name in his own practice of self-fashioning, by inscribing it on glass plate negatives showing himself (cf. Chapter One).⁸²³ The verb form *uku-thwebula* is what an *umthakathi* can do to a person: to extract a certain essence or life force from the body, and accordingly bring the person under his or her control. As I mentioned in the last chapter, similar stories exist about Gerard Bhengu: “old people especially seemed reluctant to pose for Bhengu. They feared he would *tagathi* them by taking something from them in his image and using it for witchcraft” (Miles 1997:32).⁸²⁴

The noun “*madwebula*”, as used by Müller, is derived from the verb “*uku-thwebula*”. In Xhosa, and Zulu (*uku-xwebula*), the term has been translated as the “peeling of barks” and the “flaying of hides” (eg. Ayliff 1846, and still in Kropf 1915, also see Bryant 1905). Kropf translated *uku-twebula* with “v.i. to tear from a hide the pieces of flesh that are still adhering to it after the animal has been flayed; to tear, strip bark from trees, or the thin fibrous parts from a thong; to cut a slice off”. The aspect of spatial transfer was always stressed when I asked Zulu speakers about the word: the professional translator Nduduzo Makhanya suggested to me that the root “-ula” indicates “removing something”, while the prefix “*thwe-*” refers to “that you help someone carry something”. Others explained the term to me as “taking something away, and using it elsewhere”.⁸²⁵ Again other Zulu speakers had difficulties deconstructing any etymologies at all, especially for how the word would have been used more than 100 years ago.

Similar to the translation of *umfanekiso*, it was only in 1905 that the verb *ukuthwebula* entered a Zulu dictionary with an explicitly “magical” connotation. Predating Müller's articles for only one year, A.T. Bryant had published his *Zulu-English Dictionary* in 1905 at the Mariannhill Mission Press. He translated *ukuthwebula* as “to spirit or conjure away, remove by

⁸²² Bryant (1905:607): “um-Takati (Thakathi), u. I. Person habitually given to secret poisoning, bewitching, etc., as above (see takata); surprisingly clever or skilful person; [...]”. Colenso (1905:569): “TAKATI (Um), n. Miscreant, villain, poisoner, wizard, witch; surprisingly clever person; an aching tooth”.

⁸²³ These plates can be dated to the timespan between approx. 1905-1910, due to Müller's appearance. The habit thus began most likely when he worked on his divination articles.

⁸²⁴ Elza Miles quoting an oral statement by Yvonne Winters from 1984. When Winters was a librarian at the Killie Campbell Africana Library, Bhengu regularly visited to sell his paintings.

⁸²⁵ As a European comparative it may be noted that also the etymology of the term “portrait” is often explained with the Latin *protrahere*, meaning “to draw away” (cf. Wendl 2001:93).

some magical process, the *isi-Tunzi* of a person or thing”. Bryant translated *isitunzi* in the same work with “shadow, of man or animal, or any small object e.g. a stick; the living principle in man, spirit”, but also with the “likeness or photograph of a person on paper”. In the same year, the third edition of Bishop Colenso’s *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1905) was published by his daughter Harriette Colenso. Like Bryant (and with a conspicuously similar formulation), she suddenly introduced an additional, apparently supernatural meaning to the verb “*ukuthwebula*”: “to spirit away or change by a sort of conjuring or magical process; change oneself or another into some animal, and back again, for good or evil purpose; a power for which the *amaTonga* are specially noted”.⁸²⁶ It appears that in this instance *ukuthwebula* was a derogative ascription to Tonga-speakers by Zulu-speakers. Colenso added the aspect of transitively or intransitively “changing (someone) into something (someone) else”. This can alternatively be read as “becoming”, or as “imitating” someone’s appearance and personality through the process of photography.

It is unclear whether the noun *mathwebula* was employed widely to denote “photographer”⁸²⁷ before Müller started using it in such a way around 1905. None of the common missionary dictionaries refer to it in this sense (but see Berglund 1976:88). Over the past decades it has eventually also been adopted to describe more recent technologies of reproduction, such as (photo-)copying (Kotzé and Wela 1991), as well as (digital) downloading.⁸²⁸ Eventually it appears that the verb *ukuthwebula* today serves widely for the description of both supernatural and technological practices in South Africa. Its meanings may vary regionally, also depending on urban and rural contexts.⁸²⁹

Similar to the Lucretian emanation theory (eg. Gell 1998; Hirn 1900, 1957; Taussig 1993), these imaginations of photographic technology and practice tried to capture the separation of an object’s outer segment, while leaving the remainder or original with less substance.⁸³⁰ The photographic image thus appeared as so “realistic” that Zulu speakers, and consequently missionaries established a connection between photograph and original, which oscillated between being physical and non-physical. This imagination thus collapsed material and image trace, icon and index, or put differently, imitative and contagious magic. The iconic and the indexical qualities of photographs, as conceived by Charles S. Peirce during the 1890s, match the principles used to explain sympathetic magic, which Richard Andree, James G. Frazer, Yrjö Hirn and other contemporary scholars thought to have found in ethnographic texts at about the same

⁸²⁶ After Bishop Colenso’s death in 1883, his daughter Harriette only left the Pietermaritzburg area by 1888 for King Dinuzulu’s trial at Eshowe in Zululand. She may have picked up the new meaning there from Zulu-oriented Africans from the Northern borders (Personal communication Jeff Guy, July 2014).

⁸²⁷ Dent and Nyembezi’s *Scholar’s Zulu Dictionary* (1995) is the only dictionary to translate “to take a photograph” with “*thwebula ifotho*”.

⁸²⁸ Personal communication Bheki Ntuli, March 2014.

⁸²⁹ I thank Hlonipha Mokoena for some general explanations on this matter (Personal communication, August 2012).

⁸³⁰ See Warner (2006) for similar framings in Northern America.

time.⁸³¹ Various scholars have realised this equivalence, but did not trace it historically, and hardly applied it analytically (Crossland 2009:73, Pinney 2011:66, also see Batchen 2004, Gell 1998:104, Taussig 1993, Wright 2013:136).

Around 1900, Frazer became the most prominent, but was not the only scholar theorising about “magic” (cf. Stocking 2001b). He also developed his ideas in reaction to others over time (eg. Hirn). His process of thinking between 1890 and 1911 has been rarely acknowledged, but will be crucial for the situation at Mariannhill (but see Fraser 1990). Frazer indeed refined his thoughts about “sympathetic magic” between the first (1890) and second edition (1900) of his work *The Golden Bough*. For the first time in 1900, he further separated “sympathetic magic”, by making a distinction between two relations of cause and effect. But only in the publication’s third edition (1911) did he eventually call this division “homeopathic” (or “imitative”) magic and “contagious” magic (by contact). Translated into semiotics, imitative magic equals the iconic sign in so far that “same causes same”. Things of a similar appearance are thought of as having reciprocal effects with their likenesses. Contagious magic instead shares principles with indexical signs, in so far that things that have been in contact, or were once one entity, still maintain an influence on each other after separation. Just like earlier explanations regarding iconicity and indexicality, these magical concepts are claims allegedly put forward in order to make sense of photographs.

Zoë Strother sketches a general history of ascriptions to photographs as being supernatural catalysers, as well as related ideas about “soul stealing” and the idea of photographic extraction. She concludes that photographs can not be considered indexical in the perceptions of the Central Africans (Pende) she studied, partially related to the missing collateral knowledge regarding technology (Strother 2013:200). To reach this conclusion, however, Strother transferred historical knowledge to her own research subjects. The icono-indexical perception described as *uku-thwebula*, which I traced for the case of historical Natal, however, can only be accounted for as a historical textual inscription. In this form it may therefore be considered as a literary construction, following earlier ethnographic traditions. By following relevant European conceptualisations in literature, and by taking into consideration the pervasive influence of missionaries, I now analyse the implications for the photographic occasion involving Müller and Ugitschigitschi.

⁸³¹ Many of the sources Frazer cited were missionaries, also for the case of South Africa.

Divining the Photograph

At the very end of his second article on divination in Natal (1907a), Müller lamented the evil of divination in South Africa by citing a passage from the Bible where “God warns the peoples of Israel, to beware of anyone amongst them, who asks the fortune tellers [*Wahrsager*] for help, who minds dreams or the screams of birds, or anyone who is a sorcerer [*Zauberer*], or even an enchanter [*Beschwörer*]; to beware of those who ask help of the devil enchanters [*Teufelsbeschwörer*], or who soothsay, or ask the truth from the dead: because all of this is an aversion to the Lord”.⁸³² “And”, Müller continued, “as diviners, sorcerers, consultants of the dead, all were a great evil thousands of years ago, so they are still today; amongst the Kafirs they are like an iron wall against everything that is new, progressive, pure, noble, Christian” (Müller 1907b:58). In other words, Müller described Christianity as a potentially perfect modernity, by projecting contemporary transcendent practices into biblical (European) history. But it was his very own “modern” attitude that produced the magic he described, while at the same time, as we shall see, he performed his own magic, in order to disprove the latter (cf. Pels 1998:201, Pels 2003).

In this section I explore two occasions in which social actors approached Ugitschigitschi’s photographs after their production. This will help to trace connections between European and supposedly South African understandings of photographic ontologies and efficacies. As Michael Taussig (2006)⁸³³ notes, the relation between anthropologists and individuals with supposed transcendental powers, such as healers, sorcerers, or diviners, has been produced by the ambiguous workings of the two binaries “faith” and “scepticism”, as well as “revelation” and “concealment”: the efficacy of magic seems to be strengthened by the exposure of its fraud, and often relies on “exceedingly curious objects” (ibid.:127), which are able to transgress bodily insides and outsides. One may here distinguish between *revelation* as “uncovering a viable perception of the world” and *exposure* as “unmasking false appearances” (Pels 2003:307).

The question in the case of Müller and Ugitschigitschi eventually is: who is working the “magic” and for what purpose? The relationship of missionaries and diviners becomes even more complex than the one involving anthropologists and diviners, because faith and scepticism as attitudes, as well as concealment, revelation, and exposure as skilled practices, are performed on both sides: when the Zulu diviner too finds him or herself in a situation where a foreign belief system is on offer and has therefore to be scrutinised (cf. Kuper 1987). Like the relics we already explored, also the performance given by a Catholic priest elevating the host during service, and its consequent transubstantiation into the body of Christ, is similar to a magical performance. The need for explanation is even greater once the missionary is a photographer, as an additional

⁸³² Müller here quotes the Fifth Book of Moses [Deuteronomy, Old Testament], chapter 18 [columns 10-11]. My own translation from the German original.

⁸³³ This article has been published four times in crucially different variations in 1998, 2003, 2006, and 2013 in German translation. I here refer to the last English version of 2006.

system of knowledge and skills is introduced to the equation in form of the camera's technology. It may even be infused, as Gullestadt (2007) suggested, with the previous system, as a camera is easily blessed by a priest, in order to safeguard the production of—not necessarily better—photographs.

Even if the profession and technology of photography in 19th century Europe was not open and comprehensible to everyone either, photographers and missionaries in colonial situations were said to have occasionally used the optical technology to trick and dazzle their subjects, in order to “overpower the natives and furnish themselves with an aura of superhuman power” (Behrend 2003:132, also see Prins 1992:221, Strother 2013:186). As I already stated in the last section, it must be considered that this “power”, as we perceive it, was indeed a narrative strategy in mission propaganda, as the act of “dazzling” was first of all represented to a benefactor audience via text. Within such texts photography helped to construct a distinctively modern notion of Christianity, not only as illustration, but also as a powerful narrative device and object.

Müller eventually attempted to prove his hypothesis about the non-existence of the *isangoma's* powers by performing his own experiment with a “magical” component. As I shall explain, Müller had acquired the necessary ingredients from both Bryant and Kidd. Of the common services provided by *izangoma*, the only legitimate way for Müller to establish a relationship with Ugitschigitschi in order to disprove her was via her skills of finding lost objects. He would not have motivated her to “smell out” witches, as it is unlikely that Ugitschigitschi had ever performed this skill. He would also not have approached her in case of sickness. At least he would not have mediated such a case to a European audience. He rather indicated in his article that the visit was for the main purpose of taking photographs: “One day my occupation as photographer brought me close to the diviner Ugitschigitschi, who lives one and a half hours from Mariannhill, and of whom the Kafirs have the greatest respect and immense fear, due to the alleged sinister powers she possesses” (1907a:49).⁸³⁴ He interviewed the diviner about her occupation and tried to convince her of the advantages Christianity would have in comparison to her present beliefs. Then he used a photograph in a rather unusual attempt to reveal Ugitschigitschi's alleged fraud regarding her divinatory powers. Müller recollected parts of the conversation in direct speech:

“So, if you are really able to soothsay, tell us what is in this bag.”

“It contains fruits and bread.”

“This one you guessed; what else is in there?”

“There are other things as well.”

“So, you do not know what it is. It is your picture inside, and—being a diviner—you should have known this” (I had taken a photographic image of her some time before). With the words: “Look, here are three pictures; which one is yours?” I pulled three closed envelopes out of the bag. She first guessed for a while—at least to observe the effect this had on me—and finally pointed to the one in the middle, however without having picked the right one. Now I opened the designated envelope with the words: “Do you see now that you are not capable of divination?” She did not show the slightest sign of embarrassment and even demanded one shilling, because she had to answer so many

⁸³⁴ My own translation from the German original.

questions.⁸³⁵ Müller (1907a:51-52)

According to Müller, Ugitschigitschi failed two times: first, to identify the concealed photograph as an object category; secondly, to identify it as a photograph of herself. I suggest that Figure 163 was the very photograph, which Müller used to test Ugitschigitschi.⁸³⁶ If we assume that this event indeed took place as recollected by Müller, he must have planned the attempt beforehand, prepared the envelopes carefully, and may have even thought of writing about the experiment's results prior to his performance. The intriguing aspect of this retold conversation is the relationship, which Müller expected to exist between Ugitschigitschi and her photographic likeness ("this you should have known"): Ugitschigitschi appears in the story as both subject and object in form of a photograph, but Müller presented her as failing to emerge out of this semiotic relationship, which he only reveals to the article's readers (cf. Crossland 2009:74). Müller apparently postulated that Ugitschigitschi would have had a supernatural sense of perception, in case she was a real diviner.

Such a sense of perception, and thus "true" divination, indeed existed according to Müller's contemporaries Bryant and Wanger. In particular Bryant held this belief by elaborating on the earlier mentioned *isithunzi*, which can be "*twebulad*" from a person, but which also was an alternative Zulu term for "photograph". Bryant (1917) argued that the *isithunzi* forms part of the Zulu's perception of an individual. The term *isithunzi* in fact has a much more complex biography within Bryant's Zulu-body-cosmology, but he only translated it with "soul" in an uncertain major gloss in his *English-Zulu Dictionary* (1912). Many other contemporary ethnolinguists—most often missionaries—equalled terms applied to photographs and souls (cf. Ankermann 1918, also see Quack 1990, Wright 2013). These translations, however, may have been conflation (cf. Strother 2013). Missionaries were in most cases the first to produce dictionaries for African languages, and the idea and metaphor of "gathering souls" apparently was important to them.⁸³⁷ Be that as it may, through the idea of the *isithunzi* the photographic object was equalised with something that Africans were familiar with as being an essential part of the body, and for which a convention of extraction (*ukuthwebula*) already existed. Bryant (1905) not only translated *isithunzi* with "living principle", "shadow", "likeness or photograph", but also as the

[...] quality in a thing which imposes, is commanding of respect, impresses with power or superiority (*i-nZimba*); hence, imposingness, impressiveness; moral weight, influence, prestige; nobleness, dignity of appearance or bearing;

⁸³⁵ My own translation from the German original. It is likely that this conversation was originally carried out in Zulu.

⁸³⁶ This is the earliest and only portrait of Ugitschigitschi predating the occasion under discussion.

⁸³⁷ As an alternative form of "medium" Behrend and Wendl (2008:137) suggest that "in many African languages, the word for 'negative' is the same as for ghost or spirit, [...]". While they do not provide any examples, Wendl (1999:294) in fact only gives evidence for two West-African languages, Fante and Ewe, where the same words for "negative" also denote "ghost or spirit of the dead".[1] This is however not the case in Zulu, and the idea has only been adapted with the anglicisation *i(li)nekethivu* (Doke et al. 1990). Also see Wright (2013) for a counter-example, where people did not actively engage with the idea of the negative.

inspiring with awe, dreadfulness, as of a dark deep pool or chasm;

In 1905, this translation, which could be framed as a part of an individual's personhood, was the one of the four meanings of *isithunzi*, which Bryant explored most extensively. Similar to how the shadow is drawn onto a surface, this "quality in a thing [or person]" imposes itself on a receiving mind. The basic meaning "shadow", which the body in its entirety produces as an indexical trace, is cast onto the ground by light, as a character impresses an interlocutor. More than a decade later, Bryant (1917:140) had developed his work by compiling an entire corporeal cosmology of the Zulu:

According to Zulu philosophy man is composed of two parts, the body (*umZimba*, pl. *imiZimba*) and the spirit or soul (*iDlozi*, pl. *amaDlozi*). Besides these, there are the *inTliziyo* (heart, feelings, mind), the *iKanda* or *inGqondo* (brain-power, intellect, understanding, memory, mind), as well as a hazily defined something called the *isiTunzi* (shadow, personality), which may have been originally one and the same thing as the *iDlozi* or spirit. But whether all these things are attributes of the body or of the soul, of the *umZimba*, or of the *iDlozi*; and whether at death they die with the former, or depart with the latter, does not seem clear to the Zulu, although the last hypothesis (that they accompany the departing spirit) would seem to be that which would most logically follow from other tenets of their belief.⁸³⁸

Here Bryant introduced an allegedly unified "Zulu philosophy", judging from his overall style with a certain ironic implication. He suddenly equals "soul" with "spirit", while the *isithunzi* is reduced to a "hazily defined something". Originally, Bryant had separated *isithunzi*, "the living principle in man, spirit" from *idhlozi*, "shade" the same principle, but after death. In the interaction between the ex-Trappist Bryant and his interlocutors and informants, the Zulu body became dissected into various parts, as well as moments of knowledge-production on Bryant's side. Eventually, Bryant himself, along with his informants, was no longer sure what it all "meant", and in the fifth edition of his abridged *English-Zulu Dictionary* (1953, the year Bryant died) he translated "soul" with no less than five terms: "*umOya (imi); iDlozi (ama); isiThunzi; inHliziyo; umuNtu (aba)*". Despite the changes in Bryant's thinking about the *isithunzi*, I see no reason why Zulu-speakers around 1905 could not have understood the act of taking a photograph as an entirely non-magical act of "reproducing" (*ukuthwebula*) a person's "dignity" or "imposingness" (*isithunzi*) on paper, which would then equally constitute the expressed dignity as a photographic object (*isithunzi*).⁸³⁹

To better understand what Müller may have intended when writing about the trick he played on Ugitschigitschi, we need to follow back the tradition of involved publications. It is thus important to distinguish Müller's performance and the literary references it referred to on the one hand, from Ugitschigitschi's performance on the other. At the time of the encounter between Müller and Ugitschigitschi in approximately 1905, J.G. Frazer (1900) would have called Ugitschigitschi's performance (as described by Müller as a failed attempt) "sympathetic magic in

⁸³⁸ For an updated discussion of this cosmology see Berglund (1976).

⁸³⁹ For other translations and explanations of the concept "*isithunzi*" see Berglund (1976), Schweiger (1917) and Vilakazi (1962).

the strict sense of the term” (1900:10). This Frazer would call “contagious magic” only by 1911. In a more general sense, Frazer referred to this as “imitative magic”, where same “causes”—or in the case of Ugitschigitschi rather evokes—“same”.

Müller would have had immediate access to Bryant’s *Zulu-English Dictionary*—even prior to publication—at Mariannhill’s press in 1905.⁸⁴⁰ As several of Müller’s descriptions are very similar to Bryant’s, it is likely that Müller had read Bryant’s dictionary (1905) by 1906 and applied Bryant’s new (“magical”) translations for both *ukuthwebula* and *isithunzi* to the understanding of his own experiment with Ugitschigitschi. As a “*Nota Bene*” to his entry on the *isithunzi*, Bryant had added the following lines in 1905:

N.B. The peculiar uses of this word would seem to indicate that the Natives possess a natural power, much stronger than our own, for perceiving or feeling an invisible presence, occult influences, etc., when working upon them.

It is very likely that Bryant himself had read Frazer’s work when writing the dictionary. We do know that Bryant owned copies of the *Golden Bough*, and eventually possessed the third edition’s entire 12-volume set, when he sold his personal library to Mariannhill Monastery in 1925 in anticipation of migrating back to England.⁸⁴¹ By 1917, Bryant explicitly mentioned the “sympathetic” quality of the mimetic faculty, which he thought to exist with some Africans (1917:144):

Curious experiences that we have personally made in connection with the performances of these Native *abaNgoma*, and which would be inexplicable unless attributed to intuition or clairvoyance or some other such occult power; as well as other equally curious instances we have met with in many Natives, of a quite abnormal “sense of direction” (akin to that possessed by certain animals and birds), as also of a certain strange sense of “mutual sympathetic or telepathic feeling” existent between Natives (generally blood-related) distantly separated, and between Natives and the animals, all these things have sufficed to convince the present writer that our supposition is more than probable; that our Natives are really in natural possession, in a greater or lesser degree, of divers mental attributes which we lack wholly or in part.

Furthermore, Müller was also certainly inspired by the work of Dudley Kidd. Other than Bryant and Wanger, Müller and Kidd did not believe in the powers of diviners. Kidd even explicitly postulated a tradition of exposing diviners as frauds (especially by missionaries) and their incapability of detection (Kidd 1904:168, also see Flint 2008:101). Here Müller was also introduced directly to Frazer’s ideas on magic, whom Kidd quoted (and praised) extensively. By 1908, Müller himself had translated, published, and once more plagiarised the section on the magical use of photography, which Kidd (1904:144) had directly quoted from Frazer (1900:295-297). As Müller’s articles (1906, 1907) heavily relied on Kidd’s text, Müller was likely to have already integrated these ideas in the description of his encounter with Ugitschigitschi in 1905. I

⁸⁴⁰ As I explained in Chapter Six, Müller had studied the common Zulu dictionaries at least since 1898.

⁸⁴¹ This collection of books still exists, however mixed with other content of the “Mariannhill African Library” at the CMM Generalate in Rome. The collection was initiated by Fr. Salesius Esser in the early 1920s. Bryant transferred his collection to Mariannhill in 1928, and it was moved to Rome at an unknown later point in time after the 1960s. The Roman Archive contains a register of the purchased books, drawn up by Bryant himself.

therefore re-translated Müller's German rendering (1908) of Kidd's quotations (1904) of Frazer (1900) back into English, as Müller augmented it and took poetic license in various sections:

It is further a widely held assumption that the shadow or the image of a person can be influenced magically [*magisch*], because these things were regarded equally as emanation [*Emanation*] or effluence [*Ausfluß*] of one's personality [*Persönlichkeit*]. The connection of the image and the person it depicts, is so close that even after the person's death, one can affect one with the other. It is thus understandable that many Kafirs are in great awe of the photographic apparatus. Even brave men run away or hide somewhere, once the white man approaches with the feared box in order to collect their image and to bewitch them for all times. It therefore has its own difficulties to acquire good photographs of heathen natives, or the inside of a Kafir hut. From this idea it is only a tiny step to another idea, namely that an object can be perceived as a symbol or representation of a person, and that everything one afflicts the symbol with, happens to the person at the same time.⁸⁴² (Müller 1908:203)

Müller eventually suggested to Ugitschigitschi that if she was a real diviner she would have been able to guess, or even been drawn to sense the presence of her own image within the envelope: through her mimetic faculty, as described by Müller, the person Ugitschigitschi was supposed to "correspond" with her photographic image.

The same photograph of Ugitschigitschi thus appeared twice in the article: once as an illustration next to the text, and once as a narrated, but initially concealed object. Accordingly, Müller thought to use the photograph in a twofold way to overcome superstition: first, appearing himself as a "witchdoctor", he so to speak "smelled out"⁸⁴³ Ugitschigitschi by employing her photograph as a material object concealed in an envelope; second, he used the same photograph in his article to illustrate his argument: readers could see the photograph, while Ugitschigitschi herself could not. Evidence of Ugitschigitschi's fraud and the process of how she generally conjured "images" by divination, could not be found *in* the photographic image showing herself. Instead, Müller presented a photograph as an object which he introduced into the very *practice* of Ugitschigitschi's alleged fraud. For this purpose he required an object, which was somehow connected to Ugitschigitschi. No other kind of object than a photograph, however, would have allowed Müller to produce the necessary effect on both Ugitschigitschi and the article's audience. Also, any other object than a photograph, Müller would have had to purloin from Ugitschigitschi unknowingly. Only a photograph could have been taken with Ugitschigitschi's consent during a prior occasion and later be returned, in order to be first concealed and then revealed for the desired effect. Had Müller for example taken one of Ugitschigitschi's hairs, she could have simply claimed that it was not hers. Only a photograph provided the "mimesis" (iconicity) and "contagion" (indexicality) necessary to make Müller's "magic" work.

The fact that Ugitschigitschi consequently failed to pick the right envelope, as well as her resulting temporary exposure, had two consequences as recounted in Müller's article (Müller 1907b:52): first, it confirmed Müller's assumption that she was a fraud, which he thought to have

⁸⁴² Müller, however, omitted one important line from Kidd, which may have questioned his own photographic practice: "It is this dread of witchcraft that makes it so difficult to obtain photographs of natives in their kraal, while it is quite easy to dress up some civilised native in a studio in a European town" (Kidd 1904:144).

⁸⁴³ "*Ukunuka*": identifying "witches", one of the *isangoma*'s trades.

proven thereby not only to his own readership in Europe, but also to Ugitschigitschi's present customers and the people of her homestead. Second, Ugitschigitschi felt the need to respond that her skills of divination had not been successful, because Müller was a White man and thus did intentionally trick her, instead of trusting her like her other customers did. Müller again concluded that by saying this, Ugitschigitschi may have temporarily restored her credibility with her own customers. But eventually, so Müller, this very fact confirmed to him the general superstition amongst the African population, with both customers and practitioners of divination (ibid.).

According to Müller, Ugitschigitschi thus used his scepticism to keep her own magic intact (also see Kuper 1987, Taussig 2006). But eventually the trickery and suggestion of magic was not with the diviner, but entirely with the photographer: Müller was a self-fashioned witch (*umthakathi* and *mathwebula*) in his own textual universe, conjured (and indeed plagiarised) from the contemporary ethnographic record. Africans may have indeed perceived him as an *umthakati*, but he even more so presented this ambivalent identity to an European audience (Müller 1910), and additionally cultivated it privately by adopting the name *mathwebula* on his glass plate negatives. In the process of Müller's own self-fashioning and his simultaneous ethnographic construction of Ugitschigitschi, both he himself and Ugitschigitschi appeared as both "witch"⁸⁴⁴ and "witch doctor"⁸⁴⁵ at the same time. Both performed skilled concealments, revelations, and exposures.

As I explained in Chapter One, contemporary professional studio photography was supposed to reveal a customer's personhood by establishing an "identity", rather than recreating a mere "resemblance". Also African diviners catered for customers to reveal evidence and aspects of personhood, whether by detecting personal objects, origins of sickness, or criminal identity. Both commercial services were rewarded with the very same monetary value: one photograph⁸⁴⁶ equalled one shilling and one divinatory sitting (cf. Bryant 1905, 1917; Müller 1907b). The photographer's technological products were a commodity, based on the exact employment of technological skills to reveal a portrait as an alleged factual situation, while in fact concealing parts of it; as much as the result of the consultation with a diviner emerged out of a commercial interaction, facilitated by skilled concealment and revelation. Both services were performances, which at the time were often questioned for their respective claims to authenticity by successfully translating resemblance into identity. Like I explained in Chapter One for the very subjective notion of "photographic resemblance", also the African diviner was supposed to sense his customers' identities (rather than resemblances), and to conjure them accordingly. Once the two service providers, photographer and diviner, met, the photographer, Müller, not only photographed the diviner, Ugitschigitschi, but he asked her to divine her own photograph. In so

⁸⁴⁴ *Umthakathi*: "Miscreant, villain, poisoner, wizard, witch; surprisingly clever person; an aching tooth" (Colenso 1905:569).

⁸⁴⁵ *Isangoma/isanusi*: someone who identifies "witches", for them to be prosecuted and eliminated.

⁸⁴⁶ As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the photographic sitting as such may have been more expensive, but it can also be argued that the product that the diviner was paid for was a successfully conjured "image".

far, Müller claimed an ability to mediate truth objectively, superior to the one of Ugitschigitschi.

As we have seen, the situation in Natal differs from the one of Evans-Pritchard's Zande, as described by Taussig (2006). First, because the very particular object of a photograph was involved, which transgressed the article's narrative and its materiality. This is similar to a diviner's interaction with a patient's body, extracting a peculiar object by magical means from the body's interior, to be revealed as evidence for the successful healing of a sickness. Thus also Müller procured (partially concealed) photographs from the narrative's "inside" to its "outside" in the form of the article in the journal *Anthropos*. It was thus the performance of a particular and peculiar object on several levels that made Müller's magic work (cf. Taussig 2006:140). Second, one group of resident missionaries cum ethnologists (Bryant and Wanger) were outspoken believers and thus wilfully provided ethnographic material confirming the reality of divination. Even if Müller had worked through this material and used some of it for self-fashioning, he instead remained a sceptic and followed the tradition of exposing diviners, as suggested by Kidd. We may explain this by reconsidering the implications of Taussig's hypothesis (ibid.:123): in the case under discussion, Müller first performed a "skilled concealment" by preparing an envelope containing a photograph. This was necessary in order to make Müller's own magical experiment of exposure work.⁸⁴⁷ The experiment's success eventually relied on the textually and photographically mediated colonial relationship. As I explicated in Chapter One, this relationship (already/but still) claimed in its narrative the resistance (or scepticism) to the Christian effort of assimilating others (cf. Taussig 2006:135), in order to retain the relevance of mission. Anthropology, and even more so Christian mission, therefore had their own established "shamanic rites" and forms of performances (ibid.:144).

Similar fault lines of interpreting photographic occasions occurred during an experience with Ugitschigitschi's photographs I had during my own fieldwork. As I had experienced with other topographic formations (cf. Introduction, Chapter One, Chapter Seven), I assumed it would be possible to locate Ugitschigitschi's homestead by comparing the historical photograph to the current landscape around Mariannhill. This exercise would enable the collection of more information on Ugitschigitschi by interviewing people living there today, or by tracing her in the colonial archive through the coordinates of her homestead. Müller had indicated in his article that she lived about one and a half hours from Mariannhill. Traveling south for the proposed time on horseback would have taken the photographer far into what was then the "Umlazi Native Reserve".

When I told my acquaintance S. about my plans to search for the cliff, he offered to accompany me. S. had been living in the area for years and therefore knew it well. Whenever he could spare time from his otherwise busy life, we explored some aspects of the past and present landscape together. Both of us took photographs as a form of visual field notes during these

⁸⁴⁷ One may wonder what comes first anyway, and whether this constellation constitutes a repetitive cycle (cf. Taussig 2006:140). Müller elaborately staged the concealment of Ugitschigitschi's photograph. This photograph was their cooperative creation of a revelation. Ugitschigitschi in turn again attempted to reason that Müller was a fraud, etc.

occasions. After I had picked him up at his home, we drove towards the first cliff he had identified as a potential candidate for comparison. S. immediately announced that the search would not be successful, as his left eye was twitching, which according to him was a sign of bad luck. We checked several possible perspectives on the cliff, crossed a river and approached a hill. Eventually we realised that the photograph did not match the landscape. The car was also not able to climb the very steep hill, and we had to turn. At the bottom of the hill we showed the photographs to people living close-by, and discussed them at length. Two young men volunteered to take us to an area further southwest, where they thought there was another cliff to compare. I had just reversed the car and driven for a minute, when S. suddenly seemed to experience a seizure, bent over in the seat next to me and clasped his right shoulder as if in very great pain. I stopped the car, he got out and the pain slowly seemed to recede. The seizures occasionally came back, and S. showed continuous belching, combined with deep rolling groans, as we continued our search.

Only later during the day did S. explain to me what he thought had happened: in the past he had repeatedly been subject to invasions by *amadhlosi*, or ancestral spirits. In a way, he told me, the *isangoma* we carried around in the form of photographs had approached him to question the reason for our investigation. Consequently it seemed that Ugitschigitschi's *idhlosi* was not willing to reveal the whereabouts of her previous residence. I do not question whether this was a dismissive comment about an anthropologist's inquisitive research (my exposure), or indeed a supernatural intervention (a revelation); I merely consider it as a statement triggered by the material presence of a photograph. Either way, the occasion triggered S. to attribute power to Ugitschigitschi's photograph, as we physically moved it through the landscape it supposedly represented.

Similar to the past and present social mechanism related to relics and their "translations", the diviner and the photographer performed their relationship through repeated concealments, revelations, and exposures. Furthermore, just with the relic card of Abbot Franz Pfanner, it was essential to present audiences with a combination of a photograph and yet another specific material anchorage or prostheses, which was inherently related to the respective individual. In the case of the diviner Ugitschigitschi, this even more involved the idea of collapsing icon and index within the photo-object. More than 100 years after the photographs had been taken, my acquaintance S. performed, and if you so will divined, Ugitschigitschi's personhood through her photographs, while we attempted to move towards the location where they had allegedly been taken. But this time, Ugitschigitschi herself was said to have concealed her previous residence and prevented its exposure.

Re-connections

The *Amanganga* under the Shozi clan were the biggest African group living on the land where Mariannhill Monastery was built in 1882 (cf. Part Two). Following his father Manzini as *inkhosi* of the *Amanganga*, Lokothwayo was officially appointed by the Natal government on 1 February 1900. Other than his father, he was able to establish a reasonable relationship with the missionaries at Mariannhill soon after. The description of Lokothwayo's visit to Mariannhill in the course of 1902, which I analysed in Chapter Three, ends with the sentence: "Only in the evening the 'noble visitor' left us with the comment that he would send his children for education. For himself however, so he said, the time for conversion had not yet come" (Hanisch 1903:30).⁸⁴⁸ The baptism register of Mariannhill Parish shows that 37 years later, in 1940, Lokothwayo died at Mariannhill's St. Mary's Hospital. He had been baptised one day prior to his death on the name Petrus, and was buried "at home".

The *Embo* under the Mkhize clan were close neighbours to the *Amanganga* from the mid-19th century onwards. Siyabonga Mkhize had published a history of the *Embo* in 2007, which became part of the ongoing dynamics of re-emerging, but also contested "traditional leadership" after the end of Apartheid (cf. Ntsebeza 2008, Oomen 2005, also see McNulty 2013). During my conversations with Siyabonga Mkhize about the photograph of the meeting between Trappist monks and Chief Lokothwayo (Chapter Four), I learned that the latter's mother originated from an *Embo* lineage (cf. Rippe 2007). Only one single original print of this image exists in the Roman Mariannhill archive (Figure 85), and it had only been published once in a very small format (Frey 1907:153).

With the photograph of Lokothwayo as a visual link between the two communities, Siyabonga and myself arranged to meet the present *inkhosi* of the *Amanganga*, E.B. Shozi. On entering the *inkhosi*'s living room, Siyabonga and myself encountered a chronologically arranged ancestral photo gallery. I recognised the first and oldest image as a photograph taken by Br. Aegidius Müller (Figures 164 and 165). The depicted person was introduced as Chief Lokothwayo, the great-grandfather of the present *inkhosi*. Unlike Lokothwayo, the present *inkhosi* had been baptised as a Catholic in his childhood, but subsequently converted to the Nazareth Baptist Church, also known as Shembe. After his installation in 1989, he found the syncretist qualities of Shembe more compatible with his position, drawing ideas from Christianity and Zulu traditions alike. Since Shembe is not antagonistic to Christian symbols, but rather considers itself a part of Christianity, a crucifix accompanies the photograph on the wall. During the meeting, the *inkhosi* also called in an elderly woman, whom he introduced as Gogo Jingela, a daughter of Lokothwayo, who was born in the early 1930s. As she had known Lokothwayo only in old age, her ability was limited to recognise Lokothwayo in photographs made around 1900.

⁸⁴⁸ My own translation from the German original.



Ein Kaffernhäuptling.
Die Hörnchen an der Halskette enthalten geheime, abergläubische Medizinen, meistens aber Pflanzengifte.

Figure 164: caption on glass plate negative: "403. Lokotwayo [sic]", approx. 1903 (CMM Archives); caption on published print: "Ein Kaffernhäuptling. Die Hörnchen an der Halskette enthalten geheime, abergläubische Medizinen, meistens aber Pflanzengifte".—"A Kafir Chief. The small horns on his necklace contain secret, superstitious medicines, but mostly plant toxins" (Frey 1907:141).



Figure 165: framed photograph of Chief Lokothwayo, home of *Inkhosi* E.B. Shozi (photograph by the author, 2007).

Müller took at least three more photographs during the same photographic occasion, but these had so far not been known to the Shozi Family. The additional photographs show Lokothwayo in very similar poses to the one in Figures 164 and 165. Müller only dated his photographs in few cases, but the glass plate negatives of this particular occasion are inscribed with the date 30 March 1903.⁸⁴⁹ The account of Lokothwayo's tour over the premises of Mariannhill with Fr. Emanuel Hanisch had been published in the 3rd edition of the *Vergißmeinnicht* in 1903, dated 1 March (Hanisch 1903). Lokothwayo's visit therefore took place in late 1902, or early 1903. The photographic occasion resulting into Lokothwayo's four portraits was therefore likely a return visit by Müller to Lokothwayo's homestead, after only a short while.

Unlike the photograph on the wall of *Inkhosi* Shozi's living room, two of the photographs, which Siyabonga and myself brought along, reveal Lokothwayo's entire body including his feet. When I presented these photographs to *Inkhosi* Shozi, he embraced them as a more complete and thus more resemblant corporeal rendition of Lokothwayo than the one he

⁸⁴⁹ Even if the plates bear the additional note that Müller treated them with two drops of "Ricinusöl [castor oil]", I believe that the date refers to the day of the plates' exposure, rather than the application of oil. The oil may have been applied in order to make certain parts of the negative more translucent and thus darker on the positive print.

already knew.⁸⁵⁰ Feet are characteristic and recognisable with the Shozi family, so he told me. In all four portraits, Lokothwayo's feet are clearly positioned in conventional *contrapposto*, with his weight resting on the left leg, a typical feature of Greek classical statues and early European portraiture. In Figures 164 and 168, Lokothwayo's *assegai* is prominently resting tip-down on his right thigh. *Contrapposto*, the presentation of regalia in the right hand, and the left arm akimbo are all characteristics with common depictions of eminent rulers, as I already hinted at for Max Kohler's portrait in the last chapter.

When visiting Mariannhill in late 1902 or early 1903, Lokothwayo was decorated with a silver medal bearing the image of King Edward VII., who had been crowned only a few months earlier on 9 August 1902 (cf. Chapter Three). Also King Edward's official coronation photograph, in an almost identical pose to Lokothwayo's, must have circulated widely at the time. Even though it is very likely, it must nevertheless remain speculation whether Lokothwayo and Müller had indeed seen and restaged the popular coronation photograph of the British monarch. Lokothwayo nevertheless consciously performed a relationship with King Edward by wearing a silver medal showing the latter's image (also see Sagne 1998:117). Other African rulers, such as Samuel Maherero in Namibia and King Njoya Ibrahim in Cameroon at about the same time posed for photographs in similar fashion, even in uniform. Geary and Njoya (1985:25), as well as Gewald (1998:118-119) suggest that these rulers in German colonies were inspired by portraits of the German Emperor Wilhelm II. in the very same portrait tradition.⁸⁵¹ The fact that Müller also photographed other African men in similar poses suggests that he also directed Lokothwayo's pose.⁸⁵² It may also be that he only started doing so once the pose had been established by Lokothwayo. Even if a limited number of similar photographs showing African men exist in Mariannhill's collection, these never form a series of more than two images. Lokothwayo is thus the only individual in the entire collection of whom an extensive series of "dignitary" portraits exists (cf. Bank 2008, Sekula 1986). The negotiation of the photographic occasion would have been infused with particular notions of respect, dignity, and the performance of power from both sides, the African chief and the mission's photographer. For this reason, the photographs' composition apparently required particular poses, which were adequate to this particular occasion. Both photographic occasions involving Lokothwayo must have been formal visits, one on the ground of the Trappists (Figure 85) and one on the ground of Lokothwayo's homestead, which is under discussion here. This is plausible if we consider

⁸⁵⁰ See Pinney (1997) and Wright (2013) on similar preferences for whole bodies in photographic portraiture in India and the Solomon Islands respectively. These are generally appreciated as more corporeally complete impressions.

⁸⁵¹ Portraits of Wilhelm II. can be related to the same tradition of "ruler portraits" as the one of King Edward VII., both referring back to portraits of Louis XIV. Prins (1992) and Milbourne (2012) even discuss the influence of a direct visit by the Zambian ruler Lewanika to King Edward's coronation ceremony in 1902 and Lewanika's approach to photographs in this regard. Also see Codell (2012) for other examples of "imperial crossdressing" from India and South Africa.

⁸⁵² See for example the studio portrait of an unidentified man, published in the third edition of *The Living Races of Mankind* (Johnston 1906:400-401).

Lokothwayo's entourage including two senior *izinduna* in the first occasion, and the very formal and elaborate series of poses in the second.



Figure 166: original caption: "H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, à la 'Knobkerrie.'" by Wilhelm Schröder (Cowen 1894:92 [1884]).

In 1884, while still Prince of Wales, King Edward himself had been presented in the dress of a “Zulu”-like native in the satirical magazine *The Knobkerrie*, edited by the well-known South African artist and caricaturist Wilhelm Schröder (Cowen 1894, also see Schoonraad and Schoonraad 1989:320-325). Schröder’s drawing is captioned “H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, à la ‘Knobkerrie.’” and shows the prince posing with the common regalia attributed to Zulu men at the time: an *umutsha*, a large oval cowhide shield, a stick, and a *knobkerrie*.⁸⁵³ Prince Edward is wearing these in combination with his own cylinder, monocle, and overcoat; a sartorial trope we already saw in Chapters One and Seven. In the drawing’s imagination, these items had been sent as a present from South Africa to England, as indicated on the wooden crate’s label. With crossed legs and holding the regalia behind his head, Prince Edward appears in a highly casual pose and dandy-like fashion. According to the common stereotype of the “Zulu” at the time, the drawing may have been a comment on Edward’s permissive and promiscuous lifestyle. The drawing thus resonates with the attention the illustrated press had given to Zulu King Cetshwayo’s visit to London in 1882 and 1883. Multiple satirical papers presented Cetshwayo’s success with British women, while at the same time being ambivalently dressed up either way: on the one hand in impeccable Victorian fashion, while still maintaining his head ring and his traditional “war paint” (Codell 2012:506-508). As I already discussed in Chapters One and Seven, this extended notion of a colonial mimicry performed and created a “Zulu” identity as caricature by rubbing it against its alleged inversion in form of a flamboyant European identity. Regalia and the poses they were presented with, were supposed to either reconfirm or question power. Like with Prince Edward’s and Max Kohler’s performances, the connotations preceding and succeeding Lokothwayo’s portraits abound and must be considered relative to the beholder and the time in question. Only relative to the moment of their employment can the development of various forms of agency be analysed: the one of the photographed on the one hand, and the one of the photograph on the other.

Lokothwayo’s four portraits can be arranged into a specific order with the help of the numbers inscribed by Müller, ranging from “402” to “406”. Only one of the images (“1175”) is inexplicably out of place.⁸⁵⁴ Assuming that this is indeed the order in which the photographs were taken, we can conclude that Lokothwayo changed his dress during the occasion. In the very first image he can be seen with his two brothers Uviane and Bulawayo. We remember Bulawayo from his portrait in the photographic studio (Chapter Four). Lokothwayo here wears an *umuthsa* of thin segments of animal skin and a necklace of multiple buckhorns and at least two teeth, possibly of a leopard. For the following three images he upgraded not only the *umuthsa* to one of genet tails,⁸⁵⁵ but also added two beaded belts, as well as a necklace of fur. This suggests that Lokothwayo was highly aware of dress and reconsidered it for his three solo portraits. We can

⁸⁵³ Both are here transformed into large writing quills in the style of the journal *The Knobkerrie*.

⁸⁵⁴ The fact that the photographer had to write on the glass plate negatives in reverse (for the writing to appear correctly in the positive) may explain this as a potential confusion of numbers. Such misspellings can be found on various other plates.

⁸⁵⁵ A genet is a small feline with a very distinct tail pattern.

therefore assume that he was consciously performing particular objects, which he considered adequate to his status as chief and most appropriate for the occasion. Recalling my discussion of the social history of leopard claw chokers in Chapter Five, we realise that these chokers were indeed not the first choice of representative decorations for all chiefs at all times. Instead, there were also other kinds of necklaces with representative value, such as those made of buckhorns. They achieved their power by other means, as I will show in the rest of this section.



Figure 167: original caption on glass plate negative: “402. *Uviana u. Bulawayo fechtend*”—“Uviana [left] and Bulawayo [right] while fencing” (digitally inverted glass plate negative, CMM Archives).



Figure 168: original caption on glass plate negative: "1175. Lokotwayo [sic] 'Nkosi'" (digitally inverted glass plate negative, CMM Archives).



Figure 169: original caption on photographic print: “406. Mariannahill” (CMM Archives).

Lokothwayo's portrait (Figure 164), as well as the group photograph (Figure 85) are featured in the anniversary publication (Frey 1907:141, 153). The group photograph showing Lokothwayo and his *izinduna* is presented under the title "Visit to a Kraal". The page includes three more photographs, all situated in rural homesteads. In addition to this misplacing (the encounter took place at the mission's mill) the photograph was retouched. The original caption reading "391. *Kafferchief Lokotwayo & Indunas.*" was eradicated, leaving behind a visibly blurred trace of the manipulation. The portrait of Lokothwayo (Figure 164) appears in the same publication, titled "A Kafir Chief" in combination with the above caption "The small horns on his necklace contain secret, superstitious medicines, but mostly plant toxins" (Frey 1907:141).⁸⁵⁶ In summary, Lokothwayo is wearing a head garment, two necklaces, a belt consisting of four coloured bead rings, as well as a loincloth of genet fur. He also handles a spear and a *knobkerrie*. According to texts by the missionaries, only the necklace indicates his status. In the same publication Müller explained in a section on "Kafir dress and adornment" that such *umgexo wezimpondo* were made of goat- or buckhorns and filled with "medicine and poison, such that supposedly have the power to make girls fall in love with certain boys". Furthermore, they are worn by "chiefs, their advisors, doctors, diviners and sorcerers" (ibid.: 124). Here, a necklace similar to Lokothwayo's was shown in a photographed display of the monastery's museum collection, next to other objects, equally framed as "pagan", if not "superstitious" (Figure 170, also see Chapter Five).

⁸⁵⁶ My own translation from the German original.

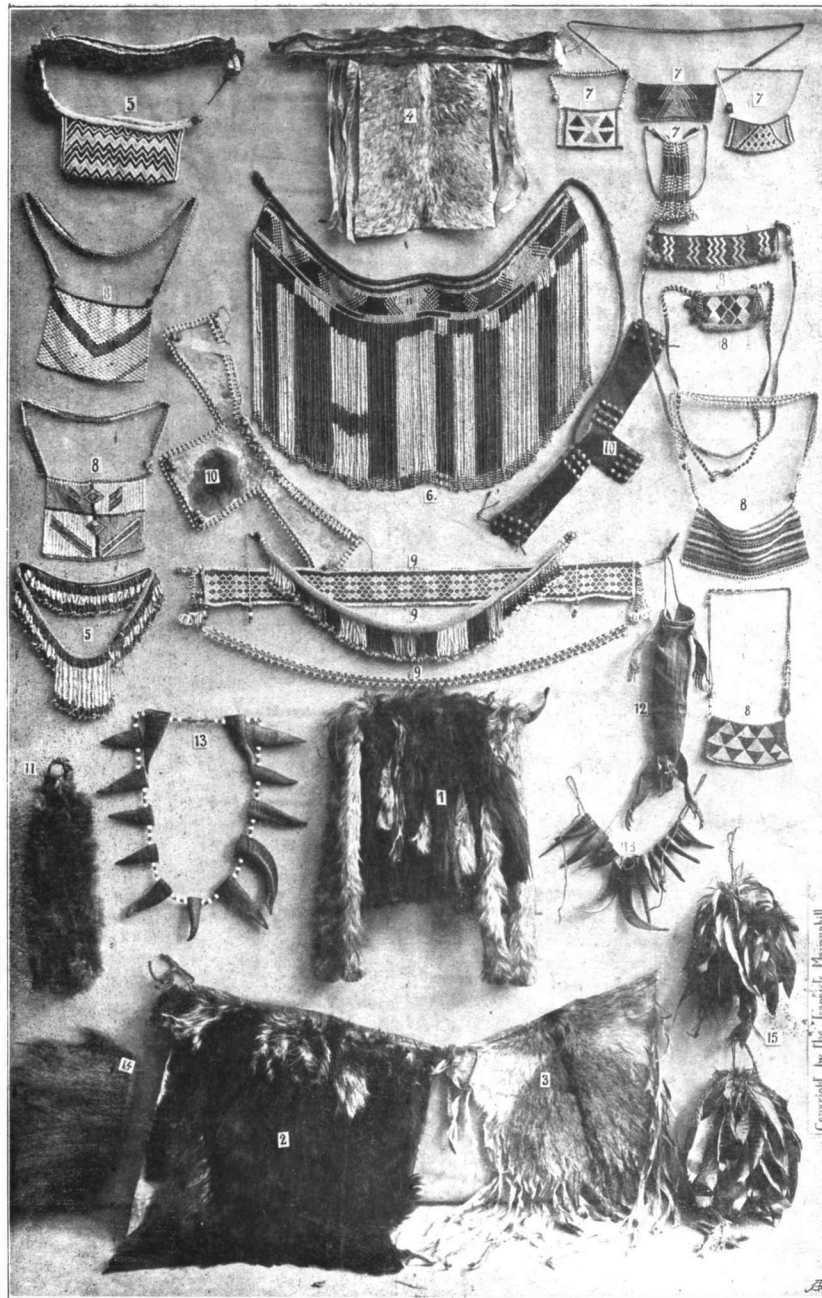


Photo von Br. Müller.

Tafel I:

Anthropos XII—XIII.

Kleidung und Schmuck der Kaffern.

Figure 170: original caption: “*Kleidung und Schmuck der Kaffern*”—“Clothing and adornment of Kafirs” (photographed in 1906, published in Frey 1907, Müller 1917/18).

As I mentioned earlier, many Black South Africans I interviewed with the photograph Siyabonga and I brought along to the meeting with *Inkhosi* Shoji (Figure 85), indicated that the chief must be one of the two senior men, wearing head rings, signs of experience and seniority. Now that it was possible to compare this photograph with a confirmed portrait of Lokothwayo, the *inkhosi*, one of his *izinduna*, and Lokothwayo's daughter concluded that the central young man on the photograph must be the chief, because he wears the very same buckhorn necklace as Lokothwayo in the photograph they had (Figure 165). The group photograph (Figure 85) also shows a delicate metal chain, leading from the chief's coat buttons to his pocket, indicating a pocket watch. *Inkhosi* Shoji interpreted both the buckhorn necklace and the pocket watch as insignia that only a chief would have worn. Other than the Trappists in 1907, the present *inkhosi* identified the necklace as a symbol of power, which was instead charged positively. Once more, a necklace played a role in the identification of a historical person. Similar to the case of Umdamane, social actors adapted the necklace's meaning over time. Furthermore, the meaning applied to the two necklaces was reversed: according to the ethnographic record around 1900, the necklace worn by Umdamane was thought to be exclusively worn by chiefs (cf. Chapter Five), while the necklace worn by Lokothwayo was primarily associated with the *umuthi* employed by *izangoma* and *izinyanga*.

According to these confusions, concealments, and revelations, the photograph showing Umdamane with the leopard claw choker and the one showing Lokothwayo with the buckhorn necklace, developed evidentiary power during my fieldwork. Several traces, some laid out, others eradicated by Müller, were eventually reconsidered by the interpretative authority of the *inkhosi's* family. They overruled previous interpretations, such as the contemporary ones by the Phewa family (Chapter Four), as well as those historical ones by the Trappists. Chief Lokothwayo had, according to his descendants, a good relationship to Mariannhill Missionaries. Figure 85 was often quoted as visual evidence of this fact, as it showed Lokothwayo and the missionaries in friendly conversation. Lokothwayo also died as a Christian and was buried by a Mariannhill priest. Nevertheless, his photographs had been disconnected from the family within the public sphere of publication. Whether Müller had given a copy to Lokothwayo privately, or whether the family acquired a copy elsewhere is unclear.⁸⁵⁷ In the latter case, this must have happened when people could still recognise Lokothwayo at first glance, as no caption relating an image to the name had ever been published. Only in one known case an identified photograph of Lokothwayo had been displayed publicly in the area, as I will show in the next section.

For the occasion of my interview with *Inkhosi* Shoji and his family in 2007, the presence of the photographed buckhorn necklace was able to connect both photographs. In turn, the portraits of Lokothwayo and the group photograph facilitated a re-connection working in two directions. On the one hand, they enabled his descendants to draw him closer and establish his personhood by reading visual traces. On the other hand, the photographs re-connected the

⁸⁵⁷ *Inkhosi* Shoji only remembered that one of his late uncles had given copies to several members of the family, but he could not retrace how his uncle had obtained the photograph in the first place.

information about their own origin to the family: even though *Inkhosi* Shozi had been told by his uncle that the photograph on his wall was made by the “*Amathilaipisi*”, he had not established the link to the “*Amaroma* [Roman Catholics]”. Only now he realised that the etymological origin of “*Amathilaipisi*” was “Trappists”.

Lokothwayo’s personhood—similarly to that of Pfanner and Ugitschigitschi—is distributed across several images and objects. They signify him, but only once they had been reassembled in combination. As his portrait is not as widely known as Pfanner’s, relations between photographs and objects within them became crucial in the identification of Lokothwayo as a historical person. During these efforts, the necklace connected several photographs: first, as a marker of superstition in the jubilee publication of 1907 and later as a status symbol, which was able to confirm and empower Lokothwayo’s identity. Social actors recollected images and objects in order to solidify personhood.

We are now in a position to reconsider the authorship of colonial photographs as more multilayered. But how can we reconstruct photographic occasions as co-productions by photographer and sitter? How can we reconsider the agency of the African sitters and how they used “the creative potential of portraiture” (Garb 2013:42)? Merely for us as researchers to imagine a *desire* for agency of African sitters and models, as for example presented by Garb (2013) and Griffiths (2002:108), may not be enough. We may assume that Lokothwayo himself saw and handled his photographs at one point. But we do not know which of the four portraits he would have preferred above the others to better “resemble” himself, or to depict his desired “identity” as chief/*inkhosi*. We also do not know whether he would have considered the photographic image as an “*isithunzi*”: either as a material object, or in terms of “imposingness” and “stature”, and thus as a “honorary” portrait in the sense of Sekula (1986). As there often is a lack of evidence for the sitter’s involvement in the decision-making-process during a photographic occasion, it is unclear what the exact nature of “agency” is after all. In most cases we are left with the possibility of a forensic analysis of the photographic image surface. The persuasiveness of photographs as surface is based on their quality as allegedly “magical” representations, constituted by a convincing illusion of a historical situation as undoubtedly “truthful”. Depicted historical subjects and objects thus lay claim to historicity.

We may nevertheless distinguish between two kinds of agency enabled by the personhood of the depicted. First, the agency of the historical sitter involved in the production of a photograph, and second, the “secondary agency” a photograph itself may develop throughout its biography on the basis of the sitter’s personhood within performances of the photographic portrait (also see Edwards 2015:241-242). In the process of analysis, I emphasised the role played by texts, artefacts, and photographs on the agency of subjects. All have their distinct and mutually influential ontologies, either in a material, or a supernatural sense. However, we realise that an object’s potential for secondary agency multiplies exponentially when social actors consider and employ all three in combination.

Re-collections

The figures of the missionary, the diviner, and the chief are present in Mariannhill's jubilee publication of 1907, which relates the photographs to a textual narrative and the occasion of the mission's 25th anniversary. A photograph can be entirely disentangled from the space or context where it was taken or published originally. Instead, it can establish equally strong ties to the space where it is eventually stored, published, or exhibited for a particular purpose (cf. Edwards 2003:85): Abbot Franz Pfanner's first abbey is inherently related to his presence, as is the altar at Wernberg; the landscape around Mariannhill, which is visible in Ugitschigitschi's photograph, became a performative space, which my acquaintance S. and myself physically crossed when we tried to locate the photograph within the landscape; also the house of *Inkhosi* Shoji constitutes such a performative space, part of which is a chronologically arranged ancestor gallery, tracing and thus reconfirming a chiefly lineage.

All these spaces have an inherent relationship to the photographs that people performed in relation to them. Eventually, as antagonistic figures, who challenged, but also stabilised each other, portraits of Abbot Franz Pfanner, several "witch doctors", and an unidentified photograph of Lokothwayo, were still present within the public space of Mariannhill's museum when I first visited in 2007. Also the Natal Government Museum curated White settler history, chiefs, and diviners in a similar way, when it opened in 1904. In this final section I delineate both museums as spaces where figures have been curated in particular constellations, but also excluded through the selection, arrangement, and presentation of particular past and present relationships in form of photographs and objects.

For Mariannhill's centenary of 1982, CMM and CPS decided to rehouse and rearrange the museum collection once more. To do so, they could only draw on exhibits from earlier museum setups, or objects still in stock at other CMM mission stations. All items presented in the museum are generally termed "mission artefacts" in the only available pamphlet. The new exhibition, however, has a split setup, which none of the earlier installations had, as I described them in Chapter Five. Every of the museum's four pre-1982 instalments united all objects in one room, however excluding objects relating to church service or the workshops. As I explained, these were nevertheless presented to visitors as part of guided tours along the workshops and other institutions since the 1880s. In 1982, the involved CPS sisters and the architect Robert Brusse, who had renovated the former tannery building and transformed it into a museum, curated the new version with the available material at hand for the ethnographic section. Furthermore, they added a new section dedicated to the historical life at the monastery. This section is once more divided in two parts, one relating to religious material culture and one to objects relating to the historical workshops, all culled from the various mission stations. These two rooms are situated to the right of the museum's entrance. They contain, on the one hand, religious paraphernalia including relics, and on the other hand, old artisan's tools and farming equipment. A clear distinction is therefore established by spatially and thematically separating

the world of the historical Trappist monastery into prayer (*ora*) and work (*labora*). The first room thus represents the interior of the historical monastic compound and the second room its exterior.

The centenary museum exhibition had to be finalised before celebrations started in 1982. According to a late start of renovations, however, time pressure was extremely high. Therefore not much conceptual thought could be given to the installation of the ethnographic section. Since then, neither time, interest, or money has been available to change, or even improve the arrangement. On entering this section to the left side of the museum's entrance, one finds objects collected from the local population as early as the mid 1880s. Today, however, only a fraction of the great variety of objects I described in Chapter Five remains. Members of the congregation and supporting lay people commonly refer to this section as "ethnographic-", or "Zulu-" section.

Immediately to the right of the museum's entrance door, a relief bust of Abbot Franz Pfanner is integrated into the wall, towering above the busts of the second and third Abbot of Mariannhill, Schölzig and Wolpert. Whenever one of Mariannhill's guides gives a tour to visitors, the narrative therefore automatically starts with Pfanner. Either the visitors are drawn to the peculiar position and form of presentation themselves when signing the visitors book, or the guide embeds Pfanner in his story. Guides then usually proceed to the two rooms concerning the monastery, and only if time and interest remains, they conclude with the room on the local population.



Figure 171: photograph of Lokothwayo at the Mariannhill Museum (photograph by the author, 2007).



Figure 172: photograph of “witch doctors” on the wall to the left of the display showing *isangoma* whisks and wigs, as well as other paraphernalia (photograph by the author, 2007).

The collection of objects in this “ethnographic” section consists of numerous weapons, adornment, tools, and wooden household utensils. Above a table cluttered with axes, small spears, and other weaponry, we find the very same photograph of Lokothwayo as in the house of *Inkhosi* Shoji (Figure 171). Like the other exhibits it had been recollected from the previous setup. None of the former curators responsible for the the 1982 setup knew why and by whom it had been chosen to be enlarged and set into a frame. A newspaper article used to fix the photograph at the back of the frame, points to the first half of the 20th century. Very different from its presentation in the living room of *Inkhosi* Shoji, the photograph here depends on, and at the same time illustrates the objects surrounding it. The weapons amassed below, left and right to the photograph, deem the person in the photograph a “warrior”, a generic figure, not a portrait. After our conversations in March 2007, the Mariannhill priest Fr. Peter Nkomazana CMM and myself arranged for *Inkhosi* E.B. Shoji to apply a caption underneath this mounted photograph. By applying this identification, he once more transformed the photograph into a true portrait, in the sense of an identified reference to a historical person (Brilliant 1991).

On the same wall further to the right, an entire corner is dedicated to the paraphernalia of

converted *izangoma* (Figure 172), such as decorated wigs with gall bladders of goats (*umyeko*), or ceremonial staffs and whisks (*ishoba*), such as the one we saw in the photographs of the “court hearing” (Chapter Four). One of the two photographs accompanying the object display is titled “two witch doctors in consultation”. All other photographs in the museum not being captioned,⁸⁵⁸ these two *izangoma* thus constitute the only labelled category of people, but are equally associated to a specific category of material culture. Lokothwayo instead, before the application of the label by *Inkhosi* Shozi, had only been related to the weaponry as “warrior”, but not as “chief”. While the stereotype of the warrior is self-explanatory, the figure of the *isangoma* and related material culture was apparently in need of explanation, especially for European visitors. Lokothwayo, the “witchdoctors” and related material culture are only presented within the historicised enclosure of the museum. Abbot Franz Pfanner, instead, is visible in almost every private and public space at Mariannhill. As an aspiring saint he appears as the only historical individual in the museum who is claiming a relevance in the present.



Figure 173: caption by Max Kohler: “The museum of Rev. Fr. G.[regory] Zier. [...] Phot. Rev. Fr. Fischer SCI.” Exact historical location unknown, possibly Kevelaer Mission (KCAL).

⁸⁵⁸ The second photograph on the display case (cf. Figure 172) had been published in the journal *Das Atelier des Photographen* in 1907 (Figure 18).

The present collection of *isangoma* paraphernalia is only a small part of what had originally been collected, foremost by the before-mentioned Fr. Gregory Zier during the late 1920s and 1930s.⁸⁵⁹ Zier was a contemporary of Max Kohler at Centocow, who collected and exhibited these items in the style of trophies (Figure 173).⁸⁶⁰ He himself can be seen smoking a pipe to the lower left. Zier had a particular reputation to focus on the conversion of *izangoma*. This reputation and Zier's adventures together with Max Kohler were recollected and used for Mariannhill's last wave of propaganda attempts in the early 1950s, which made use of exoticising topics (Schimlek 1950, 1953). Kohler, too, wrote about Zier and in particular about the photograph below: "The museum of Rev. Fr. G. Zier. [...] when being converted the *izangoma* deliver their heathen garbs and cult objects. [...] This is only a part of his yield [*Ausbeute*]"⁸⁶¹ Zier originally intended his "museum" to be an exhibition and performance of power regarding his ability to supersede the power of the *isangoma*. Kohler, for example, presented the collected objects as material evidence, thus "converted artifacts" (Thomas 1991, cf. Chapter Five). The collector, Fr. Gregory Zier, presented himself in front of his trophies for the particular reason of being photographed. The photograph is yet another performance of power, now involving and making visible Zier's own agency, first as successful collector and consequently as successful missionary. Through its circulation, the photograph also involves the appreciation of the photographer Fr. Fischer, as well as of Max Kohler in form of an explanatory caption. Both the collected objects, as well as the photograph are media pointing to particular occasions of collection. In the current museum, however, this backstory is excluded, and like with Lokothwayo, the identity of both collector and collected is concealed.

Since after the Second World War, earlier versions of the museum had been curated by inspired, but theoretically and practically untrained priests, sisters, or secular lay people, who had been called upon for help. Like with the earliest museum setups (Chapter Five), since the 1950s curators only made minor advances to properly preserve and analyse the material. As I was told by former curators working on the exhibition, superiors considered the museum to be only secondary to the main purpose of providing a ground to re-collect the history of Mariannhill. They considered objects to serve a concrete purpose, as means to an end, and not an end in themselves. When there was eventually a possibility for Black South Africans to reclaim land after 1994 by proving their historical rights with respective title deeds, the monastery received an unprecedented influx of requests to consult its archives. On top of this development, valuable objects had been lifted from the museum collection, and the archivist, Sr. Adelgisa Herman CPS, eventually died in 1995. The CMM and CPS communities therefore decided to temporarily close both institutions for public access in 1996. A policy of archival closure was upheld for more than ten years, while the museum was again opened in the late 1990s. While

⁸⁵⁹ Mariannhill staff involved with the instalment and curation of the museum told me that several items of Zier's collection had been discarded of, due to the infestation with insect pests over the past decades.

⁸⁶⁰ Whether Zier was inspired to mount the objects in particular ways, so to explicitly resemble hunting trophy displays, is unclear (cf. Chapter Five).

⁸⁶¹ KCAL: Kohler Collection, album 116. My own translation of the German original.

Mariannhill had no incentive to adapt its archival and curatorial approach after the first free elections in 1994, as well as neither financial means, nor sufficient staff to do so, the public museums of KwaZulu-Natal were under far greater public and political pressure and thus underwent greater transformations. In the process of wider re-collections of material and histories, at least the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (KZNM, formerly “Natal Government Museum”) relied on its historical collection of photographs, parts of which had been sourced from Mariannhill in 1905.⁸⁶²

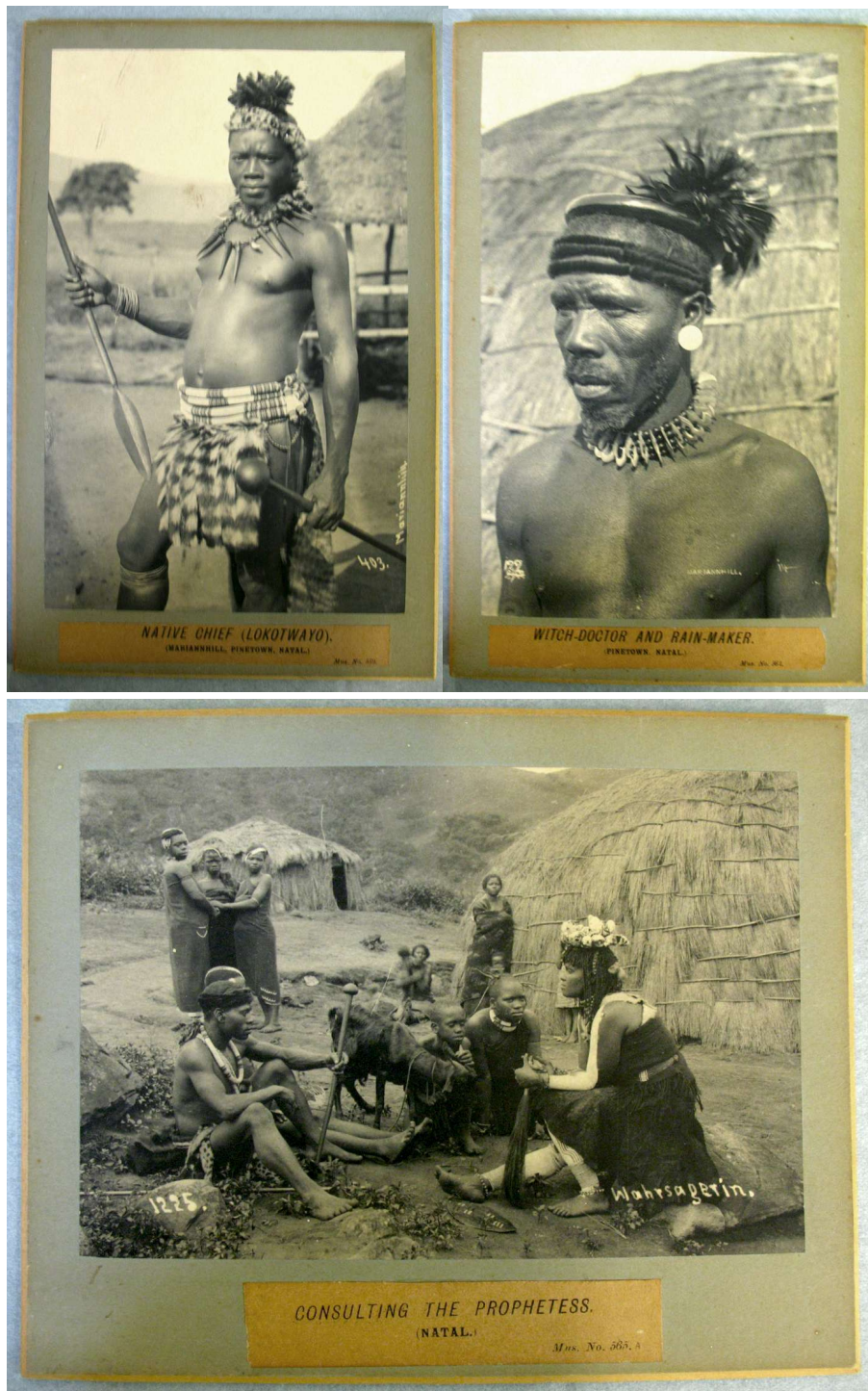
Even if Lokothwayo’s photographs in publication (Frey 1907) or public exhibition at Mariannhill had never been named, one identified photograph of Lokothwayo and two of his *izinduna* were on display at the Natal Government Museum in Pietermaritzburg from late 1905 onwards. Rating among the earlier described “colonial museums”, it opened its doors on 30 November 1904 (cf. Chapter Five).⁸⁶³ In the second annual report for 1905, the director, Ernest Warren, payed exceptional attention to one purchase, which appears to have been the biggest from one single photographic studio: “Some fifty platinotype photographs, illustrating native customs, dress, weapons, etc., have recently been purchased from the Trappist Monastery, Mariann Hill [sic], and these are now being mounted for exhibition” (Warren 1907:8). The photographs were exhibited in the so-called “Ethnology Room”, under the “Department of Ethnology and Antiquity”. The room was relatively small, located on the ground floor, and not only contained objects from local African life, but also “of local interest” referring to the history of Europeans, as well as a small section dedicated to “Madagascar, Egypt and objects from Various Countries”. The section including photographs was described as follows: “The various divisions of the wall-cases are devoted to African Ethnological objects classified under different headings. (1) *African Races*, include a series of mounted photographs of typical African Natives of the various tribes and races” (Warren 1906:13).

After the end of Apartheid, the institution was renamed “KwaZulu-Natal Museum” (KZNM). Of the 50 photographs purchased in 1905, only nine remain in the archival stock that can be attributed to Mariannhill. Among these, Lokothwayo’s image is still pasted on a cardboard carrier with the caption “Native Chief (Lokotwayo). (Mariannhill, Pinetown, Natal.)”. He is accompanied by Umdamane, labelled as “Witch-Doctor and Rain-Maker. (Pinetown, Natal.)”, as well as Ugitschigitschi, referred to as a “Prophetess. (Natal.)”. Müller provided this information in several letters, of which only one remains.⁸⁶⁴ The latter two individuals are not identified by name, but it is still significant that Warren cared to distinguish their places of residence so accurately.

⁸⁶² When Mariannhill’s photographs entered commercial circuits after 1900, to my knowledge only the South Africa Museum in Cape Town and the Natal Governmental Museum in Pietermaritzburg purchased selections. The Durban Museum may also have purchased Mariannhill’s photographs, as it too had an ethnographic exhibition with elaborate photographic displays. The museum’s current staff, however, was not able to locate either the historical photographic collection, or any collection of “ethnographic” objects.

⁸⁶³ Most rooms were dedicated to natural history, but also to ethnology and local settler history.

⁸⁶⁴ KZNM, uncatalogued correspondence collection: letter, Müller to Warren, 07.04.1906. There must have been more letters exchanged prior to this date as the bulk of photographs had already been purchased in 1905.



Figures 174, 175 and 176: original captions: "NATIVE CHIEF (LOKOTWAYO). (MARIANNHILL, PINETOWN, NATAL.) Mus. No. 559."; "WITCH-DOCTOR AND RAIN-MAKER. (PINETOWN, NATAL) Mus. No. 561."; "CONSULTING THE PROPHETESS (NATAL.) Mus. No. 556." (KZNM, purchased approx. Between 1902 and 1906).

In 1998, the KZN Museum installed the so-called *Sisonke*⁸⁶⁵ exhibition, which still existed as a permanent display during my fieldwork in 2011 (cf. Dlamini 2009; Rodéhn 2008, 2015).⁸⁶⁶ While the production of the exhibition has been thoroughly studied, in particular by Rodéhn, both researchers did not consider how objects and in particular photographs had been dealt with in this process. Even though Rodéhn rightly stresses the importance to study the exhibition's production as a process, and in particular as a performance by the curators, I insist that it is equally important to study specific objects and images, in order to trace the mediation or suppression of both makers and models in the process of curation.

In 1997, the Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) had diagnosed that the museum had “no displays of African culture relevant to contemporary KwaZulu-Natal” and thus urged for “a strategy to present history most relevant to museum visitors” (Dlamini 2009:478, also see Hamilton 2002:224). During Apartheid in the 1970s and 80s, museums in the province of Natal on the one hand, and in the Bantustan of KwaZulu on the other, had developed separately. Museums in Natal focused on constructing exhibitions on settler history up to the 1920s, while museums in Ulundi, KwaZulu's capital, showcased how the Bantustan directly evolved from the “Zulu Kingdom”. The latter excluded colonial and apartheid influences (Wright and Mazel 1992).

Accordingly, in 1997, “the history and anthropology departments met and jointly combed through existing collections to see what could be utilised for this purpose, hoping to construct an exhibition that integrated objects that DACST would consider ‘historical’ and ‘anthropological’”. A White and a Black curator eventually came up with the objectives to overcome stereotypes and nostalgia related to “Zuluness”, and also to show that “there was no rigid tie between Zulu ethnicity and membership of the [political parties] IFP, UDF, or ANC” (Dlamini 2009:478, also see Rodéhn 2015:177).⁸⁶⁷ As the years prior to 1997, and in particular 1994, had been politically tense, involving violent conflicts between ANC and IFP supporters, the curators decided to avoid strong political statements. As a compromise they decided not to reference the Zulu royal house in the exhibit, or images of kings, which may have functioned as concrete political identification markers (Rodéhn 2008:216, 2015:179).

The exhibition's script eventually contained two lines of historical development: the display's top wall segment chronologically shows the development of weaponry from the late 19th century to the late 20th century, while the bottom segment displays the development of beadwork (Figure 177). Despite being strongly gendered, this setup was still considered as revolutionary, because it does not exoticise “Zuluness” as homogeneous and timeless, but instead as highly adaptable, fluctuating, and diverse within a development process. At the same time, this setup includes material culture of other ethnic groups, such as Bhaca (Rodéhn 2008:217). However, exactly because it did not reify “Zuluness” in form of clearly temporally and ethnically

⁸⁶⁵ Zulu for “we are together”.

⁸⁶⁶ Despite repeated efforts to contact the two curators I did not succeed in interviewing them and therefore have to rely on the studies by Dlamini and Rodéhn.

⁸⁶⁷ IFP=Inkatha Freedom Party; UDF=United Democratic Front; ANC=African National Congress.

attributed material culture, so Dlamini argues, the exhibition was incomprehensible and thus unpopular with both museum staff and visitors (Dlamini 2009:479).

For the exhibition in 1997, the curators reused three photographs from the Mariannhill purchase of 1905 in a considerably enlarged format, in order to illustrate weaponry and adornment of the 19th century. These included Lokothwayo, one of his *induna*, and an unidentified woman (Figure 177). The caption with Lokothwayo's name and the colonial title "native chief", as well as the location "Mariannhill" on the image itself and beneath it, have been cropped from the current display. Dlamini and Rodéhn showed that the newly exhibited enlargements avoided potential political friction by concealing personal and geopolitical identifications. As the caption is still present with the KZNM's original archival copy, the curators would have had all the information necessary to research the photographs' time and place of production, as well as the depicted individuals. Despite the curators' indicated objective for liberation, Lokothwayo had been once more reduced to a stereotype, a carrier of a spear in an exhibition on weaponry.

Through the very same photograph, Lokothwayo also became a model in the German Wikipedia entry for "*assegai*". He is even presented as "Zulu King Dingiswayo"⁸⁶⁸ on the official website of the oldest Game Reserve in Africa, the Hluhluwe Umfolozi Park in the North East of KZN. Like these other producers of history, the curators of the *Sisonke* exhibition had rediscovered and utilised Lokothwayo's photograph as mimetic capital, after literally having "combed through existing collections" (Dlamini 2009:478). Being given a name, Lokothwayo would have been too politically potent, just like the curators feared would have happened with involvement of members of the Zulu Royal house. Like in the case of relics, such a backstory would have made it possible to charge the photograph, materialise political history, and to transform it into actual power within an exhibitionary context of a state-funded institution.

⁸⁶⁸ As Dingiswayo died before the 1820s, he could have hardly been photographed.



Figure 177: one display of the *Sisonke* exhibition at the KZNM, showing three enlargements of photographs purchased from the Mariannhill Studio (photograph by the author, 2011).

Lokothwayo's photograph, those of several unknown *izangoma*, their material traces, as well as Abbot Franz Pfanner as the first missionary of Mariannhill, are simultaneously present in the mission's museum. The missionaries initially emphasised tension and power relations between these figures for propaganda purposes, but clearly did not invent them from scratch. The fact that these presences are still very prominent in the current museum is not connected to the fact that missionaries today still need and want to uphold the same narrative oppositions. Curators rather relied on already existing mimetic capital, which eventually brought forth this constellation of figures. Next to the necessity to involve Pfanner in the museum narrative, depictions of Lokothwayo and two *izangoma* had been the only old photographs in historical picture frames available for the hasty setup of the 1982 centenary exhibition. Both at Mariannhill and the KZN Museum, weaponry, beadwork, and ceremonial paraphernalia constitute the bulk of the original collection, as these were the common objects stockpiled since the early "Zulu curio" economy I described in Part Three. In a mission museum with not much of a public profile or scientific reputation, the *isangoma* or "witchdoctor" still has a place. Even if *izangoma* are generally dressed with plenty of beadwork, it would have been difficult to fit them into the "modernising"

narrative of the 1997 *Sisonke* exhibition at the KZN Museum in Pietermaritzburg.

On the basis of a pre-selected and still available set of imagery as mimetic capital, the figures were not re-invented, but indeed re-collected in both the Mariannhill Museum and the KZN Museum.⁸⁶⁹ As I showed throughout this chapter, this process of “recollection” is part of the process of “reconnection” by the figures’ descendants during later photographic occasions. The term “re-collection” can thus be understood in two ways, either as culling existing mimetic capital, or as remembering something of the past. Similar to the mechanism of the “translation” of Pfanner’s relics, and the exposure and revelation of Ugitschigitschi’s photograph, Lokothwayo’s personhood was revealed by *Inkhosi* Shoji at Mariannhill’s museum for private and political empowerment, but for the very same reason had to remain concealed at the KZN Museum.

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. Hamilton’s (1998) argument about the construction of the image of Shaka Zulu and “the limits of historical invention” according to the available historical sources.

Conclusion

Mariannhill Missionaries established the abbot's presence by preserving his photographs, and especially his bodily remnants as potential future religious relics. In order to document their potential subjects' "heathen" nature, they attributed stereotypical material culture objects to the chief and the diviner in photographs, publications, and the museum. The establishment as social figures in photographic genre scenes provided them with aesthetic qualities, a certain buoyancy, and accordingly with reproductive power. This guaranteed the photographs' ongoing circulation and repeatedly motivated publishers and exhibition makers to select them above others.

Based on these visual, textual, and material traces, both Mariannhill Missionaries and nearby African communities created quasi-hagiographic discourses on historical individuals, even many decades later. Partially influenced by my agency as a researcher, these social actors re-assembled the personhood of the three figures, which had been distributed through photographs and objects in space and time (cf. Gell 1998). Accordingly, social dynamics during my research were still infused with reverberations of colonial and apartheid relationships. Each figure's persistent eminence and reproductive power thus evoked a potent mix of associations with emotional, moral, political, and supernatural powers. In the previous chapters I explained how specific media constellations involving photographs were used to muster allies (cf. Latour 1990, 2005). In this chapter, I expanded this idea by involving the establishment of personhood through such image-object assemblages.

Unlike many others of his African sitters, Müller considered Ugitschigitschi and Lokothwayo as important enough to account for the inscription of their names onto, or next to their photographs. Even more than for the intensity of their relationships, this accounted for their status as antagonistic dignitaries. Whenever Müller inscribed photographs with an equivalent of the title "diviner" or "chief", he also attributed a personal name. Through the power of naming, these photographs achieved a potent afterlife as true portraits, equal to those of Abbot Pfanner. All three individuals, however, had been rather unpopular during their lifetime, at least as contemporary reports by the missionaries indicate. Eventually, their descendants—biological or institutional—conjured all three individuals from the past by redeeming them from previous lapses.

Historicity accrued political value in post-apartheid South Africa, thus reinvigorating photographs and other material culture as mimetic capital. While some people indeed use them to write new histories, others simply position them within preconditioned pasts. Authorities of the *Amanganga* around *Inkhosi* Shoji have done their own research and have read their Bryant and Balling (cf. Chapters Four and Five). They compiled their own shadow archives of relevant references from various archival repositories, in order to re-establish rights to land and "traditional leadership". Accordingly, they placed the photographs partially within these preconditioned histories, at least to play them off against their own interpretations and oral histories. All three figures I discussed in this chapter eventually accrued reproductive power over

time: political, moral, and supernatural. In their own time, as well as posthumously, they accrued agency and performed as eminent protagonists in social narratives and actions.

It is therefore imperative to acknowledge the figures in a still ongoing situation of encounter between missionaries, religious, and non-religious communities around Mariannhill, as well as academic researchers. Even if the reestablished presence of Lokothwayo and Ugitschigitschi involved my own agency, I do not conceptualise it in terms of “repatriation” or “restitution”. Without doubt there are past and present ethical issues regarding power relations involved. However, due to their reproducibility, the photographs had never been “expatriated” in the strict sense of the term and had long circulated in South Africa. One photograph had even made its way to the descendants of Lokothwayo a long time ago. As the photographs have always been accessible to people who were inquisitive enough, I prefer to employ the notion of “reconnection” instead (cf. Rippe 2007, 2015). This may be accomplished by conjoined oscillation between archive and field, as well as between the internal and external narratives of photographs (cf. Banks 2001).

Due to the distance in time, the re-assembling of “distributed personhood” was in need of additional anchorage. This was provided through the compounding of various media. The personhood of all three figures had been “distributed beyond the body boundary” in form of photographs and related objects. Later on, social actors reassembled them in different ways, thus investing them with a “secondary agency” for very specific purposes (Gell 1998). In the first place, this agency was the one of the missionaries, the photographer and editors of the journal, for the purpose to create mission propaganda. As far as the often-invoked agency of the photographic subject is concerned, and as I suggested earlier, these too can be divided into a primary and secondary agency. On the one hand, there is the alleged agency of the sitter, his or her range of possibilities to position himself in photographic space, and thus the way the image came to appear on paper. On the other hand, there is the agency of the depicted person, or rather the effect through the presence a portrait photograph may have in social situations, according to the photographically established personhood. In order to become effective evidence, social actors eventually had to “abduct” and re-perform personhood (Gell 1998). Within their state as photographic images, especially Pfanner and Ugitschigitschi, as aspiring saint and diviner, still developed mediumistic qualities by allegedly channeling divine will and *isidhlozi* respectively. Their photographs thus worked as mediumistic devices. At least Pfanner’s photograph holding his “relic”, can eventually be conceived of as a “reliquary”. Eventually, also the photographs of the other two individuals are carriers for the imagination of objects, which provided them with additional power.

The fact that people socially employed image-object-compounds in various timeframes and environments thus created particular forms of power. A European tradition of saintly relics, an ethnographic tradition of African divination, and leadership symbolism, constituted three empirically derived explanatory frameworks. The relic in the case of Pfanner, the photograph of Ugitschigitschi, and the necklace of Lokothwayo are culturally specific and ethnographically

constructed objects. In so far, the objects are inherently related to the respective social figure, as well as to the depicted individual's personhood. A relic would only have been preserved and circulated if it was of a Catholic dignitary; a photograph can be considered as a statement of divination; and a buckhorn necklace containing *umuthi* can signify political power. Material and visual signs had thus been laid out in particular ways, redistributed, and reassembled: in all three cases, interpretive authorities took, preserved, evoked, identified, and combined the respective image and object during primary occasions. During secondary occasions, individuals once more claimed the right to determine the meaning of photographs and related objects, as well as how they related to the past.

The catalysts enabling these individual redemptions were particular combinations of images and objects, specific to each of the three figures. In the case of Pfanner, power evolved by compounding an image *and* an object; with Ugitschigitschi it appeared through an image *as* object, and for Lokothwayo through an object *in* an image. The powers released during moments of performance thus depended on two facts: first, that the photographs depict a historically traceable persona, and second, that a particular object was connected to the attributes of the respective social figure. In all three cases, image and object were employed in a conjoined way to effectively and affectively constitute personhood:

First, the spiritual descendants of Abbot Franz Pfanner still move him towards beatification, through and alongside his material, visual, but now mostly textual traces. Pfanner's "relic" in combination with a photograph reestablished his bodily presence in today's religious practice. Even though the photograph of Abbot Franz is endlessly reproducible, there is supposedly only a limited number of "relics" available. By compounding object and image, index and icon, Mariannhill Missionaries created a heightened authentic presence that can much more effectively manifest the abbot towards adorers than any single line of text, image, or piece of garment could ever achieve individually. The photograph identifies the person, while the relic is the actual carrier of power. As I explained in the introduction to this chapter, photographs have been considered to have both indexical and iconic qualities. But precisely the combination of tactility (piece of cloth) and sight (photograph), bound together by an authorising text and seal, produced mimetic excess, to the end that the artefact was installed as a "relic" in an altar.

Second, the mission's photographer Br. Aegidius Müller exposed the *isangoma* Ugitschigitschi as fraud by having her unsuccessfully divine her own photograph. The tension was doubled by a photograph being both an illustration, as well as the quintessential object of a narrative and performance in 1905. In a similar way, the photograph was the object of a much later counter-performance of Ugitschigitschi by/through my acquaintance S., preventing the exposure of her previous residence. The object of power in the case of Ugitschigitschi was her own photograph, which Müller used to confront her. He manifested Ugitschigitschi in the article as printed image and additionally described her photograph as a concealed object, which drew consequent power from its exposure. Müller's production and interpretation of Ugitschigitschi's photograph was similar to divination, because he revealed her fraud by attempting to perform an

act of “sympathetic magic”. During the trip with my acquaintance S., the photograph of Ugitschigitschi also manifested the question of place in form of the table mountain depicted in its background. Our attempt to trace the location of Ugitschigitschi’s previous residence, and thus the movement of the photographic object towards it, triggered my acquaintance S. (for whatever reason) to perform Ugitschigitschi’s photograph (and consequently her personhood through himself).

Third, in 1907, Müller constructed Lokothwayo’s image according to the conversion narrative as a depiction of embodied superstition. This he mediated through the necklace, which allegedly contained superstitious medicines. During my fieldwork, the photograph was on the contrary recognised in its potential to reconfirm a historical community leader. Aided by the depicted necklace, Lokothwayo’s descendants transformed the photograph from an ethnographic stereotype into one of a politically and emotionally valued ancestor. While it is not an actual material object, Lokothwayo’s photographed necklace connects two photographs. Initially, it had been deemed “superstitious” in the photograph’s caption and in Müller’s display case, but later it confirmed the identity of Lokothwayo in one image and reconfirmed it in the other. The necklace’s repeated appearance made the photographs meaningful to each other and in a way established a relationship resulting in the strengthening of Lokothwayo’s personhood.

In all three cases, historical social actors carried out performances of social relationships inside a text-image narrative. Also outside of it, social actors extracted and re-socialised respective artefacts in particular ways. I do not claim that all three cases employed the logic of Frazerian “magic” in equal measures. Nevertheless, all three cases can be compared on a spectrum between technological and magical principles. These can be compared to semiotic principles, as claims and explanations of how the transfer of power took place. On both levels (historical and contemporary) social actors expressed relationships between the prototypes, their photographs, the photographer, current descendants, and myself through qualities that can be described as “magic”, either where contagious magic resembles the indexical quality of the image-object compound, or where mimetic magic resembles its iconic quality. As I showed, Frazer himself was present in Müller’s imagination when writing about his encounter with Ugitschigitschi.

According to Michael Taussig (2006), many ethnographic descriptions of conjuring by healers and diviners in colonial situations worked on the basis that the practitioner extracted a harmful object from a patient’s body. The practitioner *revealed* previously concealed objects within a performance before an audience, and thereby rendered a problem visible. With the same result ethnologists and missionaries documented and thus *exposed* such processes as fraud. The revealed objects were said to bridge the interior and exterior of the body, due to their particular tactile or visual quality. All three situations I described are characterised by a compounded image-object, while in each case the relationships are of characteristically different ontological qualities. In all three cases, both *revelations* and *exposures* took place historically, as well as during my fieldwork. Apparently, systems like canonisation, divination, and politics need both

the performance of public secrets and the occasional sceptic, in order to be reinvigorated (cf. *ibid.*:138).

The three individuals thus received their powers not despite, but exactly because their personhood had initially been concealed and contested. We may therefore wonder whether there is anything at all to be exposed behind the magical “skin of [photographic] appearance” (*ibid.*:151). Photographs developed agency through the revelation of personhood as religious, magical, and political mediators. People are often aware of photography’s artificial nature, but as often prefer to maintain its illusion: the magic of realism. As I mentioned in the introduction, several authors have argued that photographs in fact conceal the past, instead of revealing it. The “translations” of relics, and respective image-objects in the other two cases, needed the revelation of backstories in order to be activated and to remain alive. But rarely do these established stories take account of the actual photographic occasion. Instead, a historical object that already had a presence with social actors through related collateral knowledge was necessary to connect the past and present of photographs.