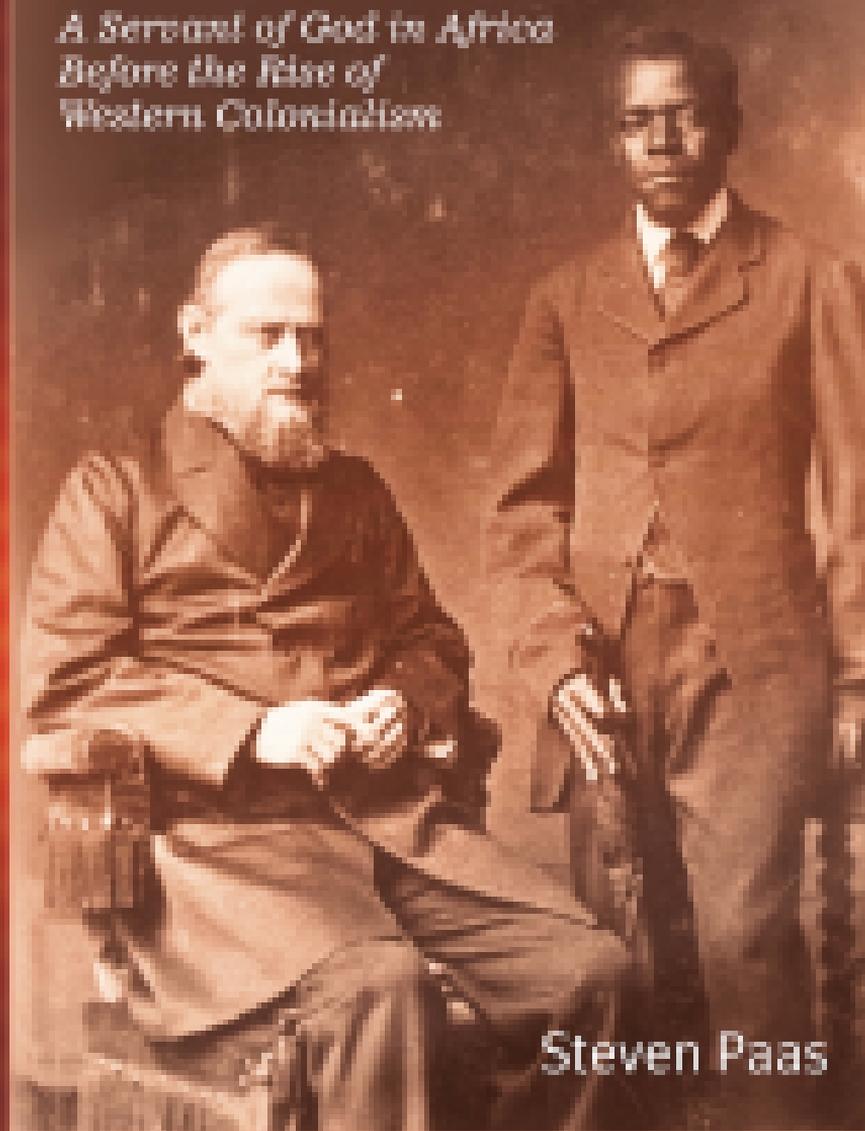


# Johannes Rebmann

*A Sermon of God in Africa  
Before the Rise of  
Western Colonialism*



Steven Paas

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**Johannes Rebmann**

**A Servant of God in Africa  
Before the Rise of Western Colonialism**

**Missiologica Evangelica**

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**Steven Paas**

**Johannes Rebmann**

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Before the Rise of Western Colonialism**

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# Preface

## Motivation

There are good reasons for studying the life and work of Johannes Rebmann and for writing his biography. Therefore I am glad that the publication of the results of my research in 2011<sup>1</sup> is followed now by an updated version. Some disturbing writing errors have been corrected. Moreover, this new edition has been slightly revised and enlarged. I am also grateful that in the meantime a German translation has seen the light.<sup>2</sup>

Rebmann was a 19th-century German Christian, who was trained in Switzerland to be a missionary, and joined an English Missionary Society, which sent him to Muslim-ruled East Africa, present-day Kenya; there he lived and worked for 29 years, before returning home, blind and sick, soon to die. This sounds interesting, but frankly speaking these details alone would not have motivated me to write a biography of Rebmann.

I first stumbled on Rebmann when I lived and worked in Africa. It was in Malawi, more than 2000 kilometres from the place where Rebmann lived. In the city of Zomba I taught future pastors. Although English is the official language in Malawi, most communication is in the local language, Chichewa, also named Chinyanja. When learning that language, I noticed that no comprehensive dictionary was available. Lexicographical work in the past had produced several collections of vocabulary into and from English. However, somehow all attempts to create a permanent dictionary at the required scholarly and practical levels had failed. That undesirable situation belongs to the past now. In a process of research from 1997, together with a team of some students and other contributors, we managed to produce various editions of a Chichewa/ Chinyanja Dictionary.<sup>3</sup>

It took some time before I discovered that this lexicographical activity had closely connected me to Johannes Rebmann. He and his informant Salimini belong to the earliest fathers of Chichewa lexicography, alt-

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Paas, *Johannes Rebmann: A Servant of God in Africa Before the Rise of Colonialism*, Nuremberg/ Bonn: Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft/ Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2011; ISBN 978-3-941750-48-7/ 978-3-86269-029-9.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *Johannes Rebmann: Ein Diener Gottes in Afrika vor dem Aufkommen des westlichen Kolonialismus*.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Oxford Chichewa Dictionary*, fifth edition, Cape Town: Oxford University Press – OUP, 2016.

though they called the language *Kiniassa*. Probably they are preceded only by the Portuguese army officer Gamitto, who wrote a few pages of Chichewa vocabulary in 1831-1832.<sup>4</sup> Rebmann was not aware of Gamitto's notes. Independently he reduced Chichewa to writing. His collection is the first Chichewa (*Kiniassa*) Dictionary that was published.<sup>5</sup> In chapter 9 the story of its origin is told.

The history of Chichewa lexicography stirred my interest in Rebmann, but there was more than linguistics that attracted me to him. In his correspondence, in his journal, and in biographical notes by contemporaries I recognised situations that are familiar to the situations of present-day transcultural workers in Africa and elsewhere. Like Rebmann, today's missionary expatriates are challenged by the relationship or the failing communication with the sending agency at home, with relatives and friends far away, with foreign colleagues, with local fraternal workers or colleagues, with people of other churches and religions, with the poor and destitute at one's doorstep. Like Rebmann, they experience estrangement, solitude, threats to the safety and health of themselves and of their spouses and children, and difficulties in bridging the gap between cultures and languages. Like Rebmann, today's Christians feel called to be instruments in furthering God's Church. Like him, today's messengers of the Gospel are crippled by their own weaknesses, failures, and sins, and by the deep-seated animosity of worldly powers and Satan. Finally, like him, in faith they are victorious through the power of Christ on whom they are depending.

## Acknowledgments

I am happy to cite the institutions and individuals that have assisted in my research, and in the preparations for this book. First I acknowledge the *Johannes Rebmann Foundation* in Gerlingen for their moral and financial support.<sup>6</sup> The *City Archive* of Gerlingen provided access to their collec-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Appendix II, 'A History of Chichewa/ Chinyanja Lexicography'.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Appendix I where Andrew Goodson reviews Rebmann's *Kiniassa Dictionary*, deals with some linguistic characteristics of Salimini's language, and considers the place where Salimini came from.

<sup>6</sup> At present the Foundation is represented by the following members of its Board: Mr. Christian Haag, Mrs Martina Koch-Haßdenteufel, Mr. Jürgen Schilbach; and also by Mr. Tobias Schölkopf, who serves as the office manager. Other important names are mentioned in the footnotes, especially in chapter 12. <http://www.johannes-rebmann-stiftung.de/cms/missionare-aus-gerlingen/johannes-rebmann/rebmann-johannes-dokumente/>.

tion of original and secondary Rebmann material in German.<sup>7</sup> Some other material was made available by the Archive of the *Evangelische Brüdergemeinde* in Korntal.<sup>8</sup> An important place for finding original and secondary Rebmann documents in German is *Mission 21* in Basel, which keeps the Archive of the *Basler Mission*. I am grateful to its staff<sup>9</sup> who made my stay at the Archive a pleasure. The main treasury of original and secondary Rebmann material is the University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, located in the Muir Tower, which keeps the Archive of the *Church Missionary Society*. I am thankful to the members of the Special Collections team,<sup>10</sup> who faithfully assisted me during my stay in the Library.

In addition I thank Mr. Rob Kool, who acquainted me with the history of German Pietism in general and in particular with the movement of *Württemberg Pietism*, in which Rebmann was rooted, the late Pfarrer Rolf Scheffbuch and his wife Sigrd, who hospitably received us, organised board and lodging, provided us with indispensable details on Pietist church life, and with much needed introductions to persons and agencies, Dr. Jochen Eber, who sent me details on Rebmann collected during the research for his valuable Krapf study, Mr. Andrew Goodson of Kamuzu Academy, who –apart from adding an appendix – did a lot of proofreading of the text (NB, remaining mistakes are mine, not his.), and my brother Wim Paas, who designed the lay-out of the book. My wife Rita was especially helpful in searching for Rebmann details on the internet, and by asking critical questions when I reported results of my research to her.

I am especially grateful to God, who blessed me with health and perseverance to finalise this research.

Veenendaal, 2018

Steven Paas

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Klaus Herrmann (Archivleiter) and Mrs Beate Wagner were very helpful.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful for the help of Mr. Werner Bichler and Mr. Erich Hieber.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Guy Thomas (Head of the Archive), Claudia Wirthlin, Barbara Frey Näf, Anna Sommer, and former Head Dr. Paul Jenkins.

<sup>10</sup> Philippa Bassett (Senior Archivist), Jenny Childs (Archivist), Anne Clarke (Information Assistant), Mark Eccleston (Information Assistant), Helen Fisher (Archivist), Ivana Farlan (Project Archivist), Ian Killen (Library Support Assistant), John Lanchbury (Library Support Assistant), Fred Nicholls (Library Support Assistant).



## Abbreviations

ADB	Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie.
AIM	Africa Inland Mission.
AMZ	Allgemeine Missions Zeitschrift.
ATR	African Traditional Religion.
BBKL	Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon.
BDOM	Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions.
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society.
BM-B	Basler Missionsarchiv – in Basel.
BM-DZ	Basler Mission – Deutscher Zweig.
BMM	Basler Missionsmagazin.
Briefe	Letters in German by Rebmann to his closest relatives
BV	Brüderverzeichnis (preceding the numbers of the files in the Basler Mission Archive)
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.
CE	Chichewa/ Chinyanja – English.
CLAIM	Christian Literature Action in Malawi.
CLS	Centre for Language Studies (in Zomba, Malawi)
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission.
EC	English – Chichewa/ Chinyanja.
EH	Evangelischer Heidenbote.
G.H.	Gerlinger Heimatblätter
JFSG	Johannes Rebmann Stiftung Gerlingen.
LEM	Leipziger evangelisch-lutherische Mission.
LIM	Livingstone Inland Mission.
LMS	London Missionary Society.
MCP	Malawi Congress Party.
MWC	Mtanthauzir amawu wa Chinyanja.

SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission.
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
Tagebuch	Rebmann's Diary in German, 1848-1849
UMCA	Universities' Mission to Central Africa.
UMFC	United Methodist Free Church.
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association (CVJM).
ZTC	Zomba Theological College.

# I. Introduction

## German sources

Johannes Rebmann was one of the very first missionaries in 19th-century East Africa. This study is a comprehensive biography, describing and assessing his life and work, especially his impact as a missionary and as a language worker. Its scope is limited by the availability of original literature, i.e. material that directly originates from Rebmann himself, from his first wife and his second wife, and from contemporaries that were associated with him. The main corpus of primary Rebmann material is found in three countries: Germany, Switzerland and England.

In Germany, his relatives, including his second wife, were the keepers of his personal letters (*Briefe*) and his Journals (*Tagebücher*). In 1976 Rebmann descendants transferred the letters to the City Archive (*Stadtarchiv*) of Gerlingen, where they were transcribed and published.<sup>11</sup> In the same year the City Archive received Rebmann's Journal of 1848-1849. It was transcribed and published in 1997.<sup>12</sup> Apparently a lot of effort to assemble and save these original Rebmann documents was made by Rebmann's grandnephew Oskar Rebmann. The City Archive is in possession of a manuscript, written by Oskar about 1935, which is an almost literal representation of Rebmann's *Briefe* and *Tagebuch*. Unfortunately Oskar was killed in the Second World War, and his manuscript has remained un-

---

<sup>11</sup> Schenkungs-Urkunde of '22 Originalbriefe Johannes Rebmanns' by Bertha Rebmann, widow of Gerhard Rebmann, of 19 November 1976 to the City Archive of Gerlingen. According to City Archivist Otto Schöpfer in the *Gerlingen Anzeiger*, 25/ 1958, it was Lydia Rebmann from Stuttgart-Pfeningen who transferred 21 Original-Briefe to the Gerlinger City Archive.

<sup>12</sup> Rebmann's 'Tagebuch des Missionars vom 14. Februar 1848-16. Februar 1849' was possessed by Walter Ringwald until 1976. In a *Schenkungs-Urkunde* of 6 November 1976 Ringwald handed over the *Tagebuch* to the Mayor of Gerlingen to be kept by the Stadtarchiv. In the *Urkunde* Ringwald said that the document was inherited by him from missionary Gerhard, who received it from Gerlinger missionary Rudolf Höhn (1874-1897), who worked in India. Höhn had received it from Rebmann's colleague Thomas Sparshott. The *Tagebuch* was transcribed by Edelgard Frank, and edited by missionary Klaus-Peter Kiesel in Moshi, Tanzania, who also added explanatory notes, cf. his correspondence with Gerlinger Archivist Agnes Maisch; it was published by the City Archive in 1997. cf. *Gerlinger Stadt Anzeiger*, 12-11-76.

published.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Archive keeps an interesting file of mainly secondary material.<sup>14</sup>

Since 2002 there has been a *Johannes Rebmann Foundation*, based in his birthplace Gerlingen. Its bilingual website and the memorial room in the Rebmann House at the Kirchstrasse (Church Street) 18, offer interesting details on Rebmann's life and work.<sup>15</sup>

Switzerland is the base of the Basler Mission (*BM-B*) and most of the material of the German missionaries who studied in Basel is supposed to be there. However, since the beginning of Nazi rule in the 1930s there has also been a German branch, called Basler Mission Deutscher Zweig (*BM-DZ*). Hitler did not want German money to go to Switzerland or Germans to study there. This situation may have waylaid some of the archive material.<sup>16</sup> Anyway BM-B used to keep Rebmann's initial biographical material accompanying his application for the BM Seminary, and the letters they received from him throughout the years of his stay in England and

<sup>13</sup> Oskar Rebmann, 'Missionar Johannes Rebmann' ['Manuskript eines Grossneffen des Missionars Johannes Rebmann': unpublished document, n.d., about 1935, transcript of 154 pages is kept by City Archive Gerlingen, KAT 5/ 17.1/ 23a No 876]. An addendum of 10 July 1958, signed by Maria Müller says: 'Die Unterlagen für vorstehende Arbeit sind von einem Großneffen des Missionars Johannes Rebmann, Oskar Rebmann (gefallen im letzten Weltkrieg in Lemberg), der sie in mühevoller Arbeit zusammengetragen hat. Die Schwester Elisabeth Rebmann (meine Base) hat sie mir in liebenswürdigster Weise zur Verfügung gestellt'. Besides, the Rebmann Foundation possesses an unpublished manuscript of appr. 360 pages by Oskar Rebmann, consisting of e.g. a journal of Rebmann's travels, which is also included in Krapf's *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*, and of extracts from Rebmann's letters.

<sup>14</sup> Stadtarchiv Gerlingen: Missionar Johannes Rebmann, KAT 10/ 17.1/ 1 and KAT 5/ 17.1/ 19-25.

<sup>15</sup> Cf.: <[www.johannes-rebmann-stiftung.de/en/start.html](http://www.johannes-rebmann-stiftung.de/en/start.html)>; see especially publications by: Imanuel Stutzmann, 'Johannes Rebmann: Leben und Werk des Missionars', address in the city hall of Gerlingen, 11-5-2003; Idem, 'Johannes Rebmann im Spiegel seiner Briefe: Auszüge aus den Briefen von Johannes Rebmann', in: *Gerlinger Anzeiger*, Februar-Mai, 1998; Idem, 'Vor 150 Jahren sieht Missionar Rebmann den schneebedeckten Kilimandscharo', in: *Schwäbische Heimat*, S. 53-55, Januar-März, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Apart from the Basler Mission, other missions must keep information in German on Rebmann, for example the Hermannsburg Mission started by Ludwig Harms; also the Leipziger Mission missionary Bruno Gutmann collected details about Rebmann and his wife (see: bibliography).

in East Africa. They also keep the relevant mission magazines, which contain articles by Rebmann himself and by contemporaries.<sup>17</sup>

His fellow Basel brother and colleague Johann Ludwig Krapf, with whom he cooperated in Africa for seven years from 1846 to 1853 wrote an account in two volumes of his journeys in East Africa, in which he refers to Rebmann on several pages.<sup>18</sup> Other fellow-workers and important informants are Jakob Johannes Erhardt, who worked with Rebmann in East Africa from 1849 to 1855, and Johann Gottfried Deimler, who was with him from 1856 to 1858. In addition, Rebmann is mentioned in the journals and reports of Von den Decken and other explorers who visited him when searching for the sources of the Nile. Comments on Rebmann's account of spotting Mount Kilimanjaro became a special source of information. His report of the event made him a target first of criticism and later of praise by European geographers. References to his life and work are found in several encyclopaedic works.<sup>19</sup>

## English manuscripts

Almost all English Rebmann material was received or sent by his employer the Church Missionary Society in London. It mainly consists of manuscripts for publication, annual or biennial reports and especially letters. There is also information in the *CMS Proceedings*, the *Records*, and the magazines *Intelligencer* and *Gleaner*.<sup>20</sup> For the CMS Rebmann translated part of his German journal in English. It is included in the *Intelligencer*, and in Krapf's *Travels and Researches*.<sup>21</sup> All these documents are kept in the Special Collection's Department of the Archive of the University of Bir-

<sup>17</sup> Of special importance may be the large number of hand-written original letters from Rebmann's second wife, Luise, née Däuble (Finckh), which I have been unable to study.

<sup>18</sup> Johann Ludwig Krapf, *Travels and Researches*, 1860; cf. Jochen Eber, *Johann Ludwig Krapf: Ein schwäbischer Pionier in Ost Afrika*, Fiehen/Basel: arte Media Johannis, 2006; Karl Friedrich Ledderhose, 'Johann Ludwig Krapf', in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 17 (1883), S. 49-55.

<sup>19</sup> Eg. E.K.A.H. Dammann, 'Johannes Rebmann', in: Bautz, *Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 7 (1994) col. 1457-1458 <[http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/r/rebmann\\_j.shtml](http://www.kirchenlexikon.de/r/rebmann_j.shtml)>; Dammann, 'Rebmann Johannes', in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart – Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 3<sup>d</sup> ed. vol. 5. Tübingen 1961, S. 815.

<sup>20</sup> I scrutinised the 1844-1875 issues of these minutes and magazines.

<sup>21</sup> Johann Ludwig Krapf, *Travels and Researches*, part II, p. 56-73; cf. Rebmann, *Tagebuch*, 15-4-1848, 13-10-1848.

mingham.<sup>22</sup> Not all the English Rebmann material is in Birmingham. BM-B has a typed extract of an account of the years after 1852, written from her memory by Rebmann's first wife Emma Kent, known under the name of her first husband Tyler. It bears a hand-written note saying that the unabridged original is with the City Archive of Stuttgart.<sup>23</sup> Probably these original Kent papers were destroyed by the end of the Second World War.<sup>24</sup> Rebmann sometimes features in books and reports by contemporary explorers and geographers like Burton, Speke, Cooley, and in manuscripts held by other missionary organizations, like the Universities' Mission and the United Free Methodist Mission, but we have not targeted this material as it probably would not have added much to the available original sources.

### Lost material

With regard to the primary Rebmann literature there is a serious problem. The file at BM-B indicates that a lot of material got lost. The missing German papers concern two categories. First, his biography and application (*Meldungspapier*) sent to the BM, and personal letters, e.g. to the Inspektor of the BM, and to Johann Ludwig Krapf.<sup>25</sup> It appears that in 1887 the BM sent a packet (*Faszikel*) of manuscripts including Rebmann's biography and correspondence to an interested pastor in Baden, Karl Frie-

<sup>22</sup> <<http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk/Overview.aspx?src=QuickSearch.Catalog>>; An excellent listing and guide to any Rebmann study is: OMS Archive, Section IV: Africa Missions, Parts 16-19, London: Adam Matthew Publications, 2004. The majority of relevant Rebmann documents are in Part 16, Kenya Mission 1841-1888. They are available on microfilm: Peel 316.

<sup>23</sup> Emma Rebmann/Tyler (née Kent), 'Journal 1852-1857', Basler Mission Archive. A. Jehle in a letter to BM-B (secretary Leuschner) of 21-1-35, states: 'at the Stadt Archive of Stuttgart there is a Journal in English by Mrs Rebmann, it consists of 119 small pages.'

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Christina Wewer of Stadtarchiv Stuttgart of 14 April 2011 to Tobias Schölkopf of the Rebmann Foundation, Gerlingen: 'In den Beständen des Stadtarchivs Stuttgart konnten leider keine Hinweise auf das von Ihnen gesuchte Tagebuch von Emma Rebmann ermittelt werden. Das Stadtarchiv Stuttgart verlor 1945 durch Kriegseinwirkungen sein historisches Archiv sowie etwa die Hälfte der zentralen Aktenbestände des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts. Möglicherweise befand sich das gesuchte Tagebuch darunter'. Emma's Diary was possessed for a time by Bruno Gutmann (1876-1966), a German missionary of the *Leipziger Mission* in German East Africa (now Tanzania), who translated portions of it into German (see: Bibliography).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Rebmann, *Briefe*, 27-4-1864, where he refers to correspondence with Krapf.

drich Ledderhose.<sup>26</sup> The papers were not returned, and after Ledderhose's death in 1890 they are said to have been burnt by his heirs.<sup>27</sup> A note in the Gerlinger City Archive, possibly derived from the BM-B Archive, says that Ledderhose's son-in-law Karl Hesselbach confirmed this unfortunate event.<sup>28</sup> Friedrich Schaffer, City Archivist of Gerlingen thinks it is possible that not all papers were burnt and that they may turn up sooner or later.<sup>29</sup> However, this hope has not been fulfilled until now. Ledderhose's article on Rebmann in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, based on the lost documents, is probably the only existing reflection of that original material.<sup>30</sup> The second category of missing papers pertains to the Rebmann letters that were received by his relatives in Germany. Unfortunately that file is far from complete. Apart from his journal (*Tagebuch*) of 1848/ 1849, there seem to have been journals of other years which have disappeared.<sup>31</sup> Imanuel Stutzmann, who published extracts of the remaining letters in 1998, assumes several are permanently lost.<sup>32</sup> *BM-B* blames

<sup>26</sup> Karl Friedrich Ledderhose (1806-1890), Dekan Pfarrer in Baden-Baden, a church historian, who wrote in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* more than 40 contributions on German missionaries in the service of the Basel Mission, including one on Rebmann and one on Krapf.

<sup>27</sup> BM-B archive, file BV.246, see a letter from Karl Biegel, 1907; letter of 21-10-1927 by BM-B to Ledderhose's successor, asking him to search for 'these very valuable papers', and a letter of 22-2-1940 by BM-B to one Paul Schwär of Machame Mission in Moshi, Tanganyika, BM-B admitting that the 'Originalakten von Rebmann' got lost, and a letter of 1948 by BM-B informing Oelschner that after Ledderhose's death in 1890 these papers were burnt by L's heirs.

<sup>28</sup> Note by U. Bächtold of 8 May 1959.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Friedrich Schaffert, 28-8-1976, to the Schiller Nationalmuseum in Marbach: 'Anfrage bei Erben erfolglos. Es ist ja nicht auszuschließen, daß die Sachen irgendwo abgegeben worden sind'.

<sup>30</sup> Ledderhose, 'Rebmann', in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 27 (1888), S. 485-489. The article refers to Rebmann's autobiography of his childhood and youth sent to BM-B, to his diaries, and also to letters sent to BM-B's executive head Hoffmann: 'Wir besitzen eine Reihe von Briefen von ihm an den damaligen Inspector Hoffmann ...in welchen er seine Erlebnisse in Isington schildert'.

<sup>31</sup> Eg. a holiday report (*Praktikumsbericht*), 'Tagebüchlein in der Vacanz des Jahres 1840', mentioned by Eber.

<sup>32</sup> Imanuel Stutzmann, 'Johannes Rebmann im Spiegel seiner Briefe: Auszüge aus den Briefen von Johannes Rebmann', in: *Gerlinger Anzeiger*, Februar-Mai, 1998. In Teil III Stutzmann says '...besitzen wir aus den Jahren 1847 bis 1854 keine Briefe von Rebmann. Vermutlich gingen sie verloren'. In Teil IX, referring to the years 1864-1868, he says: '...scheint mancher Brief verloren gegangen zu sein'.

Rebmann's relatives for this loss.<sup>33</sup> According to my count the Rebmann Foundation and the BM-B together possess 32 personal letters (*Briefe*) sent by Rebmann from his departure for London in 1844 until his return to Gerlingen in 1875.<sup>34</sup> The hand-written originals and a typed transcript of 23 letters are with the City Archive of Gerlingen.<sup>35</sup> All letters were sent to his closest relatives, except for one to Hermann Gundert, and one to Christian Gottlob Barth. Rebmann is likely to have written more letters to friends and relatives, which are now missing.<sup>36</sup> Of the period 1864-1868 no letters at all to relatives were found in the files of the Rebmann Foundation, of the Gerlinger City Archive, or of the BM-B.

The problem of loss also pertains to the English Rebmann material. There are at least three leakages. First, of the manuscripts Rebmann sent to the CMS in London, ahead of his return to Europe, some could not be traced, e.g. the fair copy of his Nika Dictionary. Secondly, on Rebmann's return to Gerlingen in 1875 he carried with him a chest full ('eine Kiste voll') of diaries and letters. They may have included the correspondence of his wife Emma Kent (Tyler), and letters received from friends of the CMS, which cannot be found now. Probably the chest also contained German material that is missing, e.g. his correspondence with German friends like BM Inspektor Hoffmann, and letters received from his relatives. Thirdly, in March 1876, after Rebmann had moved to Korntal, he received from the CMS in London a bookcase containing manuscripts that he and Krapf had to work on. A lot of it seems to have disappeared.

<sup>33</sup> A letter of 24-5-29 to one R.F. Merkel, from BM states that from BM correspondence can be concluded that on Rebmann's return in 1875 extensive diary material was at hand: 'eine Kiste voll ... Leider sind auch diese Tagebücher bei den Verwandten verloren gegangen'. The lost material is likely to include letters he received from e.g. his relatives, friends, e.g. Krapf, Stange, and his BM director Hoffmann.

<sup>34</sup> Eber suggests that the typed letters at BM-B are transcripts taken there by Rebmann's grandnephew Oskar Rebmann.

<sup>35</sup> Johannes Rebmann, *Seine Briefe*, Idem, *Tagebuch des Missionars vom 14. Februar 1848-16. Februar 1849*, City Archive Gerlingen, 1997.

<sup>36</sup> In a letter of 22-10-1940 to Machame Mission, Moshi, Tanganyika, BM-B gives a list of 23 letters from Rebmann, 14 of them are similar to the list of Stadt Archive Gerlingen. In 2011, I found only 9 in the BM-B Archive. The other 5 seem to be missing, perhaps one of them is the letter of 16 November 1866, which is referred to in BMM 1867, S. 429, 430. One letter possessed by BM-B in typed transcript was missed by City Gerlingen, i.e. 1 October 1853 [BM-B Archive: r10.21; Auszug für Oelschner, IV 1948]. Another letter from Rebmann in Cairo to Barth in Calw, of 4-12-1851 I traced on the internet, <http://www.zvab.com/display/BookDetails.do?itemId=156026619&b=1>

## Biography

Previous studies on Rebmann were articles or compositions mainly based on German material.<sup>37</sup> The present study is different in two aspects. First, it is meant as a scholarly presentation of the known facts of Rebmann's life and work. As such it is a monograph and a biography. Secondly, this study taps not only the limited number of German literary sources, but also the more numerous Rebmann documents in English.

We trust the following chapters will throw more light on the life and work of the missionary, and of his place in the pattern of 19<sup>th</sup> century relationships between Europe and Africa. *Chapter 2* pictures the setting of German Pietism that fed Rebmann. *Chapters 3-8* describe the course of his life. *Chapters 9 and 10* deal with his work as a linguist, particularly as a lexicographer. The two *Appendices* to the book are especially related to these chapters. *Chapter 11* reviews the various aspects of his work as a missionary. *Chapter 12* is an evaluation of Rebmann's significance for developments after him.

I am aware that my survey of Rebmann's life on two continents still leaves a lot of blank spots and hazy clouds. Sources, as far as noticed, have been relatively or completely silent on his early 19 years in Gerlingen, his 5 and 2 years as a student in respectively Basel and London, the 2 years of exile of the Rebmann family in Zanzibar, and the final 18 months of his life in London, Gerlingen and Korntal. His close relatives, his first wife Emma Kent, and his second wife Luise Däuble could have revealed details about themselves and about him. However, they have remained in relative obscurity. May this study set the trend, and encourage others to discover more.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Ledderhose 1883/1888, Oskar Rebmann approximately 1935, Jehle 1935, Weishaupt 1926, Lehmann 1955, Dammann 1961, Ringwald 1977, Staiger 1988, Kustermann 1992/1997, Stutzmann 1998/2003, Rösler 2007, Scheffbuch 2010.



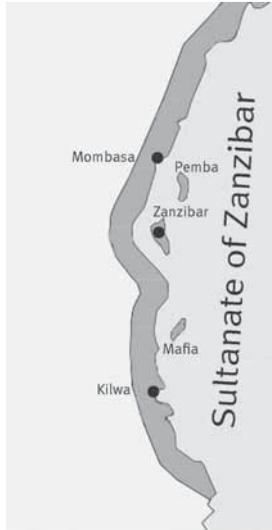
*Rebmann's mission field in Mombasa, Rabai and Kisuludini  
(CMS Annual Report 1877).*



*Fort Jesus on the Mombasa coast,  
built by the Portuguese, in 1593  
(Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, by Zeljko).*



*A slave dhow in the harbour of  
Mombasa (through Eber, p. 82).*



*The Sultanate of Zanzibar in Rebmann's time  
(Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, by Algovia and HCB).*



*Johannes Rebmann, bust in the  
Town Hall of Gerlingen  
(Stadtarchiv Gerlingen).*