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rivistagenesis@societadellestoriche.it – www.societadellestoriche.it

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Direzione:

Giulia Calvi

Redazione:

Enrica Asquer, Stefania Bernini, Ida Fazio, Laura Guidi, Manuela Martini, Monica Pacini,  
Maria Rosaria Stabili, Xenia von Tippelskirch

Segreteria di redazione:

Laura Schettini (rivistagenesis@societadellestoriche.it)

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#### Postilla redazionale

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Accogliamo al loro posto Manuela Martini e Xenia von Tippelskirch. Socia fondatrice della Sis, Manuela, vincitrice del premio Pieroni Bortolotti, Xenia, portano in redazione un'esperienza di ricerca e insegnamento a livello europeo.

Stefanie Michels

West African Families Sending Children  
to German Homes:  
Duala and Oesterle (1891-1896)\*



My paper takes the above photograph as a starting point. My leading questions are: what connects the persons on the photograph and how does the photograph connect them? The composition of the photograph conforms to specific conventions of middle-class Western family portraiture. This is a classic studio portrait and even without

\* I thank Giulia Calvi, Katharina Stornig and two anonymous reviewers for the interest in the article and for many helpful comments and Frank Jones for his language expertise.

any further contextual information we can date it between the 1880s and 1914. The group depicted consists of two adults, one male, one female and five children, including one adolescent. The male adult forms the centre of the photograph; he leans on the back of a chair on which the female adult is seated. Three female children encircle the two adults, one seated, two standing. One boy and one adolescent extend the group to the left and right. The adolescent on the right side leans casually on a sideboard while the boy to the left rests his hand on the arm of a chair. The group is close to each other in such a way that it is perceived as an extension of bodily contact. The dress and the accessories displayed underline the homogeneity of the group yet they also mark gender differences. While those identified as female wear high-necked dark dresses, their male counterparts wear coats, trousers and hold walking canes in their hands. The clearly visible cross worn by one of the girls places the group within a Christian context. In the photograph, gender difference is actively constructed by bodily practices. While it clearly presents a group of people in an intimate and equal manner, the two boys to the extreme left and right stand out. Their bodies form the boundary of the group with their outer sides not connected to the others. With Tina Campt we can thus ask whether “race” is the «governing logic» of this specific photograph and how it is interdependent with constructions of family and coloniality.<sup>1</sup>

In the binary opposition that biologicistic ideologies of racialism produce, the two boys are Black while the three girls and the adults are White.<sup>2</sup> Since the temporal setting of the photograph coincides with the era of high imperialism, the perceived “racial” difference of the individuals dominates our gaze.

Anthropologists have pointed out that in Western societies today a man and a woman are perceived as the genitors of children and that this relation is biologically determined.<sup>3</sup> In this perspective the two boys are further set apart from the group by the fact that the White woman and the White man cannot be their biological parents.

1. Tina M. Campt, *Image Matters. Archive, Photography and the African Diaspora in Europe*, Durham-London, Duke University Press, 2012, p. 38.

2. In order to highlight that these categories of difference are socially constructed, I have chosen to capitalize them. For an empirical study into the engagement of Africans from Duala with imperial racism see Ulrike Hamann, Stefanie Michels, *From Disagreement to Dissension. African Perspectives on Germany*, in *Racisms Made in Germany*, edited by Wulf D. Hund, Christian Koller and Moshe Zimmermann, Berlin et al., LIT, 2011, pp. 145-164.

3. Reproductive medicine has recently undermined this assumption, and the controversies about this are ongoing and will not be part of this article.



Anthropologists have also drawn attention to the cultural specificity of this notion.<sup>4</sup> The photograph is clearly connected to the specific cultural and historical case of late nineteenth century Europe. To this day, it is housed in the home of a biological descendant of the historic actors in a small town in Württemberg, Germany.<sup>5</sup>

The connectedness of the persons portrayed can be approached within the framework of a "family" both in a formal and in an affective way, as the term was a category employed by the photographed people themselves. I will however not presuppose the notion of "family" as an analytical category but rather try to develop a multifaceted and grounded actor-centred approach to it. My aim is to «relationize» "family" within this specific setting.<sup>6</sup> I will start and end with the object history of the photograph, which has connected people who perceive themselves as belonging to certain families over the generations. After presenting the historic setting in which the actors operated, "family" is discussed as a «contact zone»<sup>7</sup> and the connections and affections of the people and the photograph are explored. Strategies of homemaking and the tensions of race, gender and class in a colonial setting and the affections these create are central to the argument.

## 1. The history of the photograph

The photograph re-connected the descendants of those pictured in 1983. Jean-Pierre Félix Eyoum discovered it hanging in a picture frame in the house of Eleonore Röger in Kupferzell, Württemberg. It was in a black and golden frame and of medium-size.<sup>8</sup> Eleonore Röger

4. Cfr. Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands. Gender and Sex in an African Society*, London, ZedBooks, 1987; more generally: Fiona Bowie, *Adoption and the Circulation of Children: a Comparative Perspective*, in *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption*, edited by Fiona Bowie, London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 3-20.

5. Family archive Röger/Platino (subsequently FAR). I thank the Röger family for generously granting me access to their collection.

6. Angelika Epple, *Global- und Geschlechtergeschichte. Eine Beziehung mit großer Zukunft*, in «L'Homme. Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft», 23/2 (2012), pp. 87-100.

7. Marie Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 7.

8. The materiality of the photograph is important, since it provided the spectator, in this case the family and their visitor's, with a sensory experience. The frame underlined the importance of the picture, and the performance, it hanging on the wall, underlines its presence, Cfr. Tina Campt, *Image Matters*, pp. 23-34. It was possible to re-assemble the photograph in its original frame. The picture included in this article was taken by me in February 2015.

(1913-2012) was the granddaughter of the man in the photograph, Gottlob Oesterle (1852-1933). Her mother was Elise (1879-1946), the girl on the left side as seen from the spectator. Jean-Pierre Félix Eyoum (\*1951) grew up in Douala (Cameroon), he and his mother were members of the "Bell family".<sup>9</sup> He came to France in 1968 to study and later settled down as a teacher in Bavaria, where he eventually started his own family. Jean-Pierre had become interested in the research into the history of his ancestor Rudolf Duala Manga Bell (1875-1914) by the German film-maker Peter Heller, who produced a documentary film about Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Jean-Pierre's search for him. It was Eleonore's son, Rolf-Dieter (\*1946), who read about it in a local newspaper. The name Rudolf Duala Manga Bell was familiar to him, since in his family the story about two boys from Cameroon who had lived with them had been kept alive, their presence being an every-day experience in the family home by means of the framed photograph portraying them in the intimate surroundings of his ancestors. When Rolf-Dieter told his mother that a person from Cameroon related to them was trying to uncover their history, she decided to write to Jean-Pierre and to share her experience.

Jean-Pierre described his first meeting with Eleonore Röger – "Lore", as he calls her – as affective and emotional.<sup>10</sup> Jean-Pierre asked for a copy of the photograph and a reproduction was made for him. The original remained in the keeping of the Röger family. Recently further reproductions were made for the Bell family in Douala.<sup>11</sup> For my argument it is even more important to note that the photograph might even have been produced with the clear intention of sending it to Cameroon. But before elaborating this important aspect of the photograph's role in the connection of families, we will first look at the empirical background.

9. What is today referred to as "family" in Duala does not conform to Western notions of family and kin in a biologic way. Social rather than biologic ties determine it (this point will be elaborated in more detail below). Although not related to the family biologically, Jean-Pierre is a recognised member of the family through the husband of his mother, who was not his biological but his social father. For the ongoing practice of child fostering in West Africa, cfr. *Child Fostering in West Africa. New Perspectives on Theory and Practices*, edited by Erdmute Alber, Jeannett Martin and Catrien Notermans, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013.

10. My acquaintance with Jean-Pierre dates back to 2002 when he presented the film about Rudolf Duala Manga Bell in Hannover.

11. The photograph in the FAR also seems to be a reproduction of an original as a close material reading suggests.



## 2. The persons on the photograph

The photograph shows members of the family Oesterle in Aalen, Württemberg in the South-West of Germany. It includes two boys from Duala, Cameroon, who lived with them between 1891 and 1896 – at least one of them referred to himself as a brother to the girls as I will discuss in detail below. The elder of the two Black boys was Rudolf Duala Manga Bell.<sup>12</sup> In Douala<sup>13</sup> and in Cameroon as a whole he has become a national hero. He was executed on order of the German colonial administration on the 8th of August 1914. His execution was the culmination point of the Duala people's political struggle against German plans for expropriation and segregation of the city of Douala.<sup>14</sup> Rudolf Duala Manga and his political campaign have been a referent point in political and cultural life in Douala ever since. Our photograph was taken approximately 20 years earlier<sup>15</sup> and, as we will see, the tragic

12. Naming here already references practices of a contact zone. His personal name is "Duala". Manga is his father's personal name. In Duala naming practice the personal name is followed by the father's or mother's name. His German report cards bear the name "Dualla Manga". Rudolf was his "Christian name" that he adopted after baptism – a practice that his father "August" Manga Ndumbe had also already practiced and is common in Douala up to today. "Bell" is a name originally given by European traders to their trading counterpart in Duala in pre-colonial times. They identified him as "King Bell" – actually "Bele". The name and the office were transferred between generations and perceived by Europeans as successions. Manga Ndumbe referred to himself as "Manga Bell" when interacting with Europeans. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell signed most of his letters to Europeans "Rudolf M. Bell".

13. Douala is the name for the city today. The area was called "Cameroons" in pre- and early colonial times and later Duala – as were the people living here. I use the term Duala both for the people and the place.

14. This struggle is among the best documented and best researched themes in German colonial history. The seminal work of GDR-historian Adolf Rüger set the agenda, when he described Rudolf Duala Manga as an important figure in African anticolonialism: Adolf Rüger, *Die Duala und die Kolonialmacht, 1884-1914. Eine Studie über die historischen Ursprünge des afrikanischen Antikolonialismus, in Kamerun unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, II, edited by Helmuth Stoecker, Berlin, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1968, pp. 181-257. This was followed by works of African historians: Albert Wirz, *Malaria-Prophylaxe und kolonialer Städtebau: Fortschritt als Rückschritt?*, in «Gesnerus», 37 (1980), pp. 215-234; Ralph Austen, Jonathan Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers. The Duala and their Hinterland c. 1600-c.1960*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; Andreas Eckert, *Grundbesitz, Landkonflikte und kolonialer Wandel. Douala 1880-1960*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999, and most recently also by cultural scientists and postcolonial scholars Stefan Gerbing, *Afrodeutscher Aktivismus. Interventionen von Kolonisierten am Wendepunkt der Dekolonisierung Deutschlands 1919*, Frankfurt/M., Peter Lang, 2010, and Ulrike Hamann, *Von der Krisenhaftigkeit des Rassismus. Eine Machtanalyse seiner kolonialen Konjunkturen*, unpublished dissertation, University of Frankfurt/M. 2014.

15. The photograph was taken not long after Rudolf Duala Manga and Tube Meetom arrived in Aalen and in a letter from Klara to Rudolf's sister Franziska the photograph is mentioned – it has therefore been taken between 1891 and May 1892.

end to this life story was by then by no means predictable. However, Rudolf Duala Manga's fate was monitored by the Oesterles after he had left them, and there was a consensus in the family and among his friends in Aalen that his execution had been unjust.<sup>16</sup>

The younger boy is Tube Meetom. While Rudolf Duala Manga through his political and social position has become one of the most prominent Africans in German colonial history, Tube Meetom's life story is less known.<sup>17</sup> One of the fundamental reasons for this was the fact that his father – the prominent David Meetom – died while Tube was in Germany.

The two adults in the picture are Karoline (1855-1925) and Gottlob Oesterle and their three daughters: Klara<sup>18</sup> (on the right, 1877-1962), Helene (sitting, 1880-1969) and Elise (on the left). Gottlob Oesterle was a school teacher in Aalen and according to family tradition a strong "Hausvater" (father of the house), pietistic and stern, while Karoline provided the motherly warmth to the house.<sup>19</sup> When the picture was taken, the seven people on it were indeed living together in the same house in Aalen, Württemberg. Tube Meetom and Rudolf Duala Manga stayed there from 1891 to 1895 and 1896 respectively. The background of this arrangement is fundamentally connected to the story of German colonialism and Cameroon's coloniality.

### 3. The historic setting

In 1884 Germany had started acquiring overseas colonies. This process had been initiated before the Congo-conference in Berlin laid down the regulations under which the European powers would acknowledge a territory as being under colonial authority of a given European nation in 1885. Thus, treaties and contracts signed between

16. Klara copied extensive parts of a book in which Rudolf's brother Richard Din politically campaigned in France in 1937 against Rudolf Duala Manga's execution, FAR.

17. The recently published monograph by Eve Rosenhaft and Robbie Aitken has unearthed the life stories of 285 Cameroonians who travelled to Germany during the colonial period. In their chapter on «schoolchildren and apprentices» they place Rudolf Duala Manga's and Tube Meetom's time in Aalen within the broader framework, cfr. Robbie Aitken, Eve Rosenhaft, *Black Germany. The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884-1960*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

18. Later mainly as "Clara".

19. Rolf-Dieter Röger remembered that Oesterle worked his way up. Growing up in an orphanage, he learned carpentry and later became a primary school teacher. He had bought a house in Aalen only shortly before Rudolf and Tube arrived and was just about managing financially.

German and African or Asian representatives initially founded a European nation's colonial claim. In the case of Cameroon a treaty was negotiated with the «Kings and Chiefs of Cameroon». The document was signed by 4 German merchants and 23 Duala men. The signature of Tube Meetom's father, David Meetom, features prominently second place under «King Akwa», while Rudolf Duala Manga's grandfather «King Bell» was the most prominent signatory, signing as the first person in the second column. Thus Rudolf and Tube came from the most politically influential families of Duala at the time.

Recent research has been able to unearth the political strategy that the Duala pursued in signing the document. It is important to bear in mind that the Duala had been in contact with Europeans for centuries. Duala was one of the port cities of the Atlantic trade and the people in Duala had been connected to the Atlantic world, its goods, technologies and ideas. The treaty of July 1884 was not the first treaty they signed with Europeans. In 1842 they had already negotiated the signing of anti-slavery treaties and since 1850 existed political institutions made up of African and European traders, the so-called Courts of Equity that were to settle trade disputes. The 1884-treaty was accompanied by a second document, the *Wishes of the Cameroon People* that was signed by the German consul. The historian Albert Wirz has convincingly argued for both documents that many of the regulations were made to «civilize» the Europeans in Duala.<sup>20</sup> The reservation that was to become politically most important was the third one: «that the land cultivated by us now and the places, the towns are built on shall be the property of the present owners and their successors».<sup>21</sup> During the above mentioned expropriation struggle that commenced in 1910 and culminated in a formal complaint of the Duala chiefs to the German Reichstag in 1913, the legal and political argument of the Duala was based on this clause.

For the purpose of this article it is worthwhile to focus on the reservations that concerned social matters. Both the treaty and the «wishes» explicitly excluded the private life of the Duala from European intervention. The way families and marriages were organised featured prominently.

20. Albert Wirz, *Vom Sklavenhandel zum kolonialen Handel. Wirtschaftsräume und Wirtschaftsformen in Kamerun vor 1914*, Freiburg i. Br., Atlantis, 1972.

21. Printed in Kum'a Ndumbe, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in Kamerun. Wie Deutschland in Kamerun seine Kolonialmacht aufbauen konnte 1840-1910*, Berlin, AfricAvenir Exchange&Dialogue, 2005, p. 165.



We need no alteration about our marriages, we shall marry as we are doing now. [...] No man should take another man's wife by force or else a heavy fine.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Notions of family in Duala

As seen above, Tube Meetom and Rudolf Duala Manga came from highly influential Duala families. When we speak of "family" in Duala, however, we find no adequate translation. The Duala language does not differentiate between family and kinship. The boundaries of the family are defined by social exchanges and not only by biologic kinship.<sup>23</sup> The households were referred to simply as the "people of" ("bona") a respective person ("sango"), e.g. Bonanjo, the people of Njo. The *sango* of a household fulfilled certain duties for all those within it, blood and social relations: debts, marriages, subsequent families.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that marriages were explicitly mentioned in the *Wishes of the Cameroon People* from 1885 shows that controversies had been perceived, and that marriage was identified by the Duala as something they wanted to explicitly protect from outside intervention. This intervention was present in Duala starting from 1845 when the first Baptist mission stations were opened. As in many similar cases, the Christian demand for monogamous life-long marriages fundamentally clashed with marriage and consequently family organization in polygamous settings. Being the *sango* of a large household was the most visible proof of a man's prestige, wealth and influence.<sup>25</sup> The

22. *Ibidem*. In the main contract, a more general reservation was entered: «that during the first time of establishing an administration here, our country-fashions will be respected», treaty printed in Rüger, *Duala*, p. 259. Why this reservation is itself reserved «during the first time» is not fully evident.

23. Winifred Weekes-Bagliani, Manga Bekombo, Lynn Wallisch, *Family Life and Structure in Southern Cameroons*, Paris, OECD, 1976, p. 15. Anthropologists have constructed "lineages" that connect – and often construct – families over generations. European travellers, early anthropologists, historians and the Duala themselves have engaged in the charting of "genealogical trees". A certain canonical form of these trees and the number of their branches exists today. Its most striking aspect is that it always traces the generations through the male line, although there are ample discussions both in colonial sources and especially among the Duala about the importance of the female line (*mwebe*). For a serious engagement with these genealogies by a Duala-social anthropologist: Prince Dika-Akwa nya Bonambela, *Les problèmes de l'Anthropologie et de l'histoire africaines*, Yaoundé, Editions Cle, 1982, for a more general critique into the unilineal and patrilineal descent bias, cfr. Catrien Notermans, *Fosterage, Marriage and Kinship in East Cameroon*, in *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption*, edited by Fiona Bowie, London, Routledge 2004, pp. 48-63, esp. 54-55.

24. Dika-Akwa, *Anthropologie*, p. 133.

25. For a more detailed account of this cfr. Jean-Pierre Félix-Eyoum, Stefanie Michels, Joachim Zeller, *Bonamanga. Eine Familiengeschichte und die große Politik*, in *Duala und*

number of wives a man married depended on his ability to sustain them and their offspring. The wives each made their own house, anthropological literature speaks of female-headed hearthholds within male-headed households.<sup>26</sup> Common residence and the way it was materially organised represented social organisation. Prominent Duala men, like Ndumbe Lobe ("King Bell", 1839-1897), who allegedly had 99 wives, are in Duala today still remembered for the high number of descendants.<sup>27</sup>

The household as described above was referred to as *mboa* (home) in Duala.<sup>28</sup> The higher the number of wives the more biological children could be expected by the *sango*. There existed in Duala prior to 1884 a number of institutions which allowed non-blood-related children and adults to become part of the *mboa*. One way was if the *sango* married a woman who already had children as we have seen was the case for Jean-Pierre. This option was part of the way marriages were organised in Duala. Apart from such marriage arrangements, non-related children entered Duala households as pawns or *etumbe*, these are today sometimes referred to as "adopted children".<sup>29</sup>

#### 4.1. Pawnship

The institution of pawnship was practiced between groups who had trade relations but lacked central institutions to completely control

*Deutschland - verflochtene Geschichte. Die Familie Manga Bell und koloniale Beutekunst*, edited by Jean-Pierre Félix-Eyoun, Stefanie Michels and Joachim Zeller, Köln, Schmidt von Schwind Verlag, 2011, pp. 4-31.

26. Felicia Ekejiuba, *Down to Fundamentals. Women-Centred Hearthholds in Rural West Africa*, in *Readings in Gender in Africa*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, Oxford, James Currey 2005, pp. 41-46.

27. Cfr. Iye Kala Lobe, *Douala Manga Bell. Héros de la résistance*, Paris, Kathala, 1977, p. 27. Former Governor Theodor Seitz also spoke of King Bell's 90 wives (cfr. Theodor Seitz, *Vom Aufstieg und Niederbruch deutscher Kolonialherrschaft in Kamerun*, Karlsruhe, E.F. Müller, 1927, p. 65).

28. Weekes-Bagliani, Bekombo, Wallisch, *Family Life and Structure*, p. 17. Anthropologists have made us aware, that men in such polygamous settings usually married at a relative late age and – especially if they could afford it – married the co-wives shortly after each other, making them a rather homogeneous group with regard to age and status. In polygamous households a strong senior wife (whether actually the first or not) was important for the husband, since she could take care of a number of conflicts herself and leave time for the husband to occupy him with other tasks. For a general discussion on anthropology's obsession with lineages and the passive place of women in these discussions, see: Luise White, *Women in the Changing African Family*, in *African Women South of the Sahara*, edited by Margaret Jean Hay and Sharon Stichter, London-New York, Longman, 1987, pp. 53-57. For a bilateral genealogy of Rudolf Duala Manga, Kala Lobe, *Douala Manga Bell*, pp. 34-35.

29. Aitken and Rosenhaft, *Black Germany*, have gone for this option.

them. Trade in West Africa up to the 20th century was organised by giving goods as "trust", i.e. goods were given in advance, and repaid when trade goods had been obtained from more distant people on trading expeditions. This "trust" – or rather "debt" – was at times secured by pawns: people from the debt-taking group were left with the debt-giving group and upon failure to clear the debt, they remained. Pawnship was thus practiced between groups who knew each other well and were interested in stable social relations. The Duala exercised pawnship with their coastal neighbours with whom they shared many cultural and linguistic traits. The pawns were called *tunge* or *dikoti* in Duala and were always integrated into the household on equal terms.<sup>30</sup> This system was operated both between the Duala trading partners in the hinterland as well as the Europeans at the Atlantic. When in 1788 the Duala pawns were indeed sold as slaves by the European traders to the West Indies, the Duala in turn seized principal European traders.<sup>31</sup> In general this system operated until the 19th century.

#### 4.2. *Etumbe*

In contrast to the pawns, *etumbe* came from more distant areas away from the coast. These areas and the people that lived there were referred to in Duala as *bakom*. In Duala terms *bakom* were those who lived apart from them and who were more different from them linguistically and culturally than those with whom they practiced pawnship. Duala traded with *bakom* and entered a number of relations with them within their trading empires along the rivers Mungo, Wuri and Sanaga to the inland. One important practice here was marrying a *bakom* woman and fathering children with her. The women and children remained in their place of origin and did not move to Duala. The children were especially important in the organization of trade.<sup>32</sup>

30. Ralph A. Austen, *Slavery and Slave Trade on the Atlantic Coast, the Duala of the Littoral*, in «Paideuma» 41 (1995), pp. 127-152, here p. 130. For a general discussion on the institution in West Africa see Paul Lovejoy, Toyin Falola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa*, Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2003.

31. Cfr. Austen, Derrick, *Middlemen*, p. 33, 75.

32. The children of such marriages (*mulalo*) enjoyed the advantage of being protected by the family of their father in Duala and their mother in the inland and could thus even continue trading during wars. The *Balalo* were however not members of the father's house, cfr. Rüger, *Duala*, p. 185 and Austen, Derrick, *Middlemen*, p. 78. Austen and Derrick mention Eduard Schmidt as a third one, but this seems unlikely since in 1884 he lived with a Duala woman but had no children with her and by 1892 had transferred to Lagos. Cfr. Max Buchner, *Aurora colonialis. Bruchstücke eines Tagebuches aus dem ersten Beginn unserer Kolonialpolitik, 1884-1885*, München, Piloty und Loehle 1914, pp. 88-90 and Edwin Ardener, *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon. Studies in the*



*Bakom* were also sold to Duala. The purchased *bakom* mainly came from the grass fields and were passed to the coast on long-distance trading routes. These were the people the Duala sold to the European slave traders until about 1840, when the overseas slave trade came to a practical end in Duala. The Duala had however not only traded *bakom*, they had also kept *bakom* for themselves. Ralph Austen has aptly spoken of «conceptions of servitude», circumventing the problematic term «slavery».<sup>33</sup> However the Duala fundamentally differentiated between *bakom* and *wonja*, often inadequately translated as «slave» vs. «free». In fact, the *bakom* were considered the lowest status people in Duala. Their main duty was agricultural labour. The more *bakom* a *sango* could command, the more likely that their settlements were at a considerable distance of the settlement of the *sango*. The towns of the Duala were built close to the water (*mudongo*) to which they attributed prestige. The *bakom* settlements were *koto* (in the hinterland) and *mun'a koto* (child of the hinterland) was another way of referring to lower status.<sup>34</sup>

*Bakom* women were at times brought into the household as concubines.<sup>35</sup> *Muyabedi* were the children born between Duala and *bakom* or between two *bakom*. Their children were officially barred from succeeding the *sango*'s position and inheriting his wealth although they might take over important duties in his business. If however, a *mukom* or *muyabedi* married a daughter of the *sango*, this could be circumvented. Duala marriages usually compensated the family of the girl – an institution which is generally described as “bridewealth”. The children born to the girl then belonged to the family of the husband. If bridewealth was not given, the children remained in the original family.

Apart from the *bakom* women and their biological children, unrelated *bakom* children also entered the household in Duala. These were called *etumbe*.<sup>36</sup> The *etumbe* lived within the household, but were treated differently than the *wonja* children. The relations to their families of origin were permanently cut off. They started working at a much younger age and were therefore often able to acquire high

*History of the Cameroon Coast, 1500-1970*, edited by Shirley Ardener, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 1996, pp. 270-271.

33. Austen, *Slavery*, p. 127.

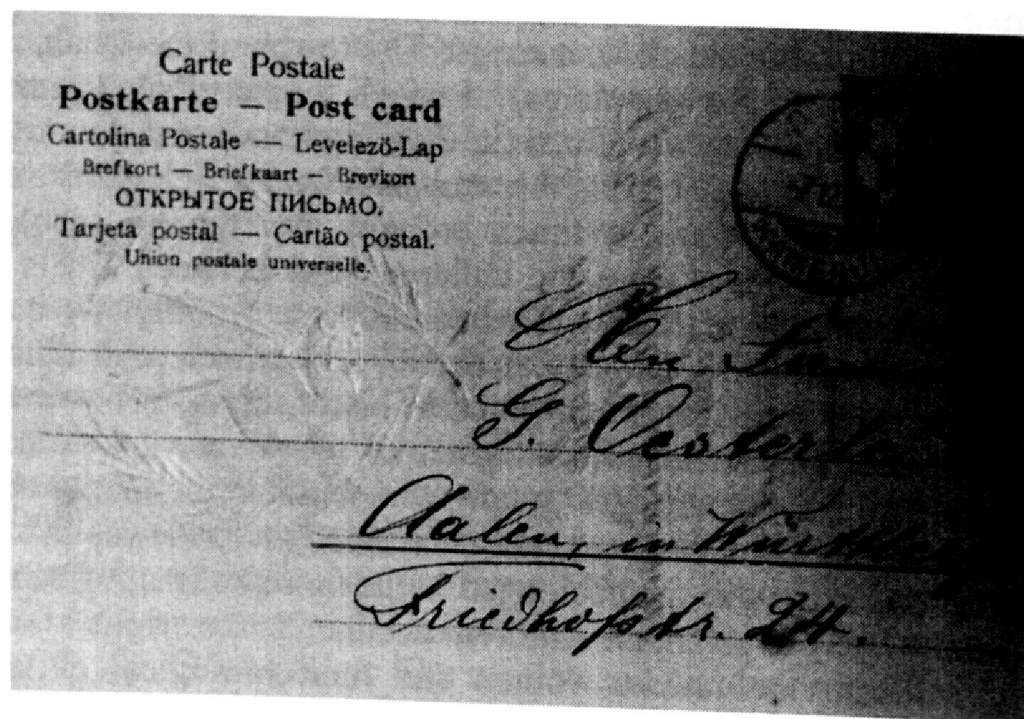
34. Cfr. *ibidem*, and Félix Eyoun et al. *Familiengeschichte*.

35. The term “concubine” is of course also inadequate, and only for lack of more knowledge about the institution used here.

36. Cfr. Austen, *Slavery*, p. 130.

status and wealth.<sup>37</sup> David Mandessi Bell is the most prominent case. Around 1870 at the same time when Rudolf Duala Manga was born, he entered the household of Ndumbe Lobe Bell (Rudolf's grandfather) as an *etumbe* from the grass fields. He became a prominent figure in the Bell family and one of the wealthiest men of Duala. In the absence of suitable sons, his first-born daughter Maria Mandessi Bell was one of the few African women to receive an education in Germany.<sup>38</sup>

## 5. Notions of family in Württemberg



In contrast to the background of Tube Meetom and especially Rudolf Duala Manga Bell the Oesterles did not belong to the elite of German society. Their status as a “family” (*Familie*) is underlined in both the public and private correspondences. The reference “Familie G. Oesterle” identifies Gottlob Oesterle as the centre and head of it.

The “Familie G. Oesterle” consisted of Gottlob Oesterle as the male head of the family endowed with certain rights, for example

37. Cfr. Aitken, Rosenhaft, *Black Germany*, pp. 186-193.

38. *Ibidem*.

consenting to his daughter's marriages. With his wife Karoline he made up the nuclear unit of procreation – as was the norm in Germany their union was monogamous and recognized by the church. Their postnuptial residence was neolocal, although Karoline's home in Kupferzell and her relations – the cognate kin – remained important. Patrilineal authority and descent were thus combined with bilateral kinship organization.<sup>39</sup>

The term *Familie* only started being used in Germany by the 18th century as a direct loan word from the French *famille* which itself traces its roots to the Latin *familia*. It replaced the term "house" referring to the «extended household family».<sup>40</sup> Next to biologically related and married people these were also the menial staff (*Gesinde*) and other non-related people like foster children. Those who represented the house to the outside and were responsible for order inside were the house fathers (*Hausväter*). The "Western family"<sup>41</sup> that developed in Central and Western Europe, was characterized by bilateral descent and neolocal residence. As in Duala, in Germany the relatives of the woman as well as the man were important.<sup>42</sup>

Christianity in the middle-ages and early modern period was a strong factor for making communities sharing common residence and everyday life practices more important than biologic kinship. While the Christian church had fostered the child-centred family since the middle-ages these norms were always counteracted by popular practices.<sup>43</sup>

The Christian church also provided a strong instrument of what has been called "spiritual" or "fictive" kinship in Europe with the

39. Historians and anthropologists of the family in western Europe have described this as the general trend, cfr. Jack Goody, *Die Entwicklung von Ehe und Familie in Europa*, Berlin, Dietrich Reimer, 1986 (original: *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Michael Mitterauer, *Mittelalter*, in *Geschichte der Familie*, edited by Andreas Gestrich, Jens-Uwe Krause and Michael Mitterauer, Stuttgart, Kröner, 2005, pp. 160-363.

40. Cfr. Andreas Gestrich, *Geschichte der Familie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, München, Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2010, p. 4.

41. Family History in Europe has established a number of different patterns. The "Western family" is differentiated mainly from the "Eastern family", which was more patriarchal (cfr. Gestrich, Krause and Mitterauer, *Geschichte der Familie*).

42. Cfr. Mitterauer, *Mittelalter*.

43. While the Church objected to wet-nursing, fostering and adoption it could only successfully ban adoption until the end of the 15th century, cfr. Mitterauer, *Mittelalter*, p. 334, Andreas Gestrich, *Neuzeit*, in *Geschichte der Familie*, edited by Andreas Gestrich, Jens-Uwe Krause and Michael Mitterauer, Stuttgart, Kröner, 2005, pp. 364-652, here pp. 572-573. Cfr. Goody, *Entwicklung*, p. 81.



institution of godparents.<sup>44</sup> The godparents were endowed with certain duties, especially with regard to the religious and moral development of their godchildren.<sup>45</sup>

In his seminal study on marriage and family in Europe, Jack Goody has suggested that prior to the reformation there were trends in Western Europe that supported the development of a child-centred family with women as decisive members and rights endowed according to gender and age. The Catholic Church influenced these developments by narrowing kinship relations within which legitimate marriages were allowed in the 11th century.<sup>46</sup> But it was only in the 19th century that this ideal became the reality for the majority due to demographic factors, such as lower infant mortality rates and more stable marriages. Connected with this development was the emotional affection that became part of a normative discourse on families in Europe at the time.<sup>47</sup>

Among Protestants like the Oesterles, the home became an important site of religious instruction outside the church, and the Christian family and its patriarchal hierarchy featured as a central value for theologians.<sup>48</sup> The Oesterles conformed to the ideal type of middle-class family life in many respects: Gottlob Oesterle was the bread-winner as a school teacher, and Karoline Oesterle was in charge of the domestic space. They celebrated confirmation and birthdays of the children, and gave gifts for Christmas.<sup>49</sup>

However, especially in rural areas, the older "house" model continued to exist. Historians have argued that Western European rural families structurally needed servants. These unmarried male and female servants (*Knechte* and *Mägde* respectively) passed part or all of their life working in the households and farms. Since some eventually did get married and started their own farms, there was an aspect of apprenticeship involved.<sup>50</sup> Being a servant was therefore not

44. Although not mentioned in the bible, it dates back to the middle ages in Europe, cfr. Mitterauer, *Mittelalter*, p. 332. For the relevance of this institution in Europe and a thorough discussion cfr. Goody, *Entwicklung*, pp. 211-221, for modern history in Europe Gestrich, *Neuzeit*, pp. 560-565.

45. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Tube Meetom were baptised in Aalen on the 25 March 1895, and Karoline and Gottlob Oesterle became their godparents (Dekanatamt Aalen, Taufregister).

46. Cfr. Goody, *Entwicklung*, pp. 169-171.

47. Cfr. James Marten, *Family Relationships*, in *A Cultural History of Family of Childhood in the Age of Empire*, edited by Colin Heywood, London et al., Bloomsbury, 2010, p. 21.

48. Cfr. Gestrich, *Neuzeit*, p. 372.

49. This information was gathered in the letters and photo albums of the FAR and by discussions with Rolf-Dieter Röger in 2014 and 2015.

50. Cfr. *ivi*, p. 420. In 1795 1% of the population in Germany were servants (*Gesinde*).

necessarily linked to being of inferior social status in the long run. This was a difference to the *bakom* of the Duala whose status rested with them all their life, even if they were successful as individuals.

After the abolition of serfdom in Western Germany, a class of landless and poor farmers evolved on the one hand and some medium-sized free farmers on the other. In times of extreme hardship, children of such poor farmers were given to other households as workers in exchange for food and clothing (*Verdingkinder*). In Württemberg such child workers, especially from Switzerland, lived and worked on farms well into the 20th century and were recruited on so-called child-markets. The way they were treated differed, but when they were mistreated they lacked supportive networks.<sup>51</sup> The practice of the *Verdingkinder* shared many characteristics of the *etumbe* from Duala, but differed in the respect that the *Verdingkinder* were only temporarily staying in the household of their employers and could therefore not rise into dominant positions in the society at adult age.

## 6. Family as contact zone

We have discussed some varieties of child circulation and notions of what family was in Duala and Germany in the late 19th century. The following section discusses how such models developed in the Atlantic contact zone, showing that the presence of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Tube Meetom in the home of the Oesterles was but a slight alteration of social practices well established before colonialism.

In pre-colonial times, young Duala boys from noble families worked with European traders in a system that has been called «apprenticeship».<sup>52</sup> Sending children to Europe for training was another feature of the «world of similarity»<sup>53</sup> that had evolved in the contact zone of the Atlantic since the 15th century. Children, especially boys from wealthy families, were sent to Europe for education. This practice had evolved into a kind of institution by the end of the 18th century

51. Cfr. Sabine Bitter et al. *Versorgt und vergessen. Ehemalige Verdingkinder erzählen*, Zürich, Rotpunktverlag, 2010. Still, they tried to maintain relations by being placed on farms close to each other. The *bakom*, too, built their own associations which were regarded by the wonja Duala as powerful and could serve to protect the *bakom* against abuses.

52. Cfr. Austen, *Slavery*, p. 128.

53. Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Long-Distance Trade and Economic Development in Europe and Black Africa (Mid-Fifteenth to Nineteenth Century): Some Pointers for Further Comparative Studies*, in «African Economic History», 29 (2001), pp. 163-196, here p. 181.

and is best documented for the Western part of the West African Coast (present Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ivory Coast) and Britain. The families were involved in the slave trade and the children taken by the slave trading companies mainly to Liverpool, but also to Bristol and London.<sup>54</sup> Starting from the 18th century, powerful African traders from present eastern Nigeria also sent children for education to England.<sup>55</sup> The Duala followed these practices before 1830, when two sons of King Akwa were sent to Liverpool in the care of a British merchant, who instead of sending them to school – as had been agreed – used them as manual labourers for many years. Another son of King Akwa set off in 1832 to «see the white man's country» onboard a slaver with destination Cuba. Gagangha Emanuel Acqua travelled with 300 dollars that were to finance his journey.<sup>56</sup>

Formal schooling arrived in Duala with the establishment of the Baptist mission in 1845. The missionaries came as families, they were from England and Jamaica. The mission stations established their own communities consisting of both Christian converts and children integrated into the household of the missionary family.<sup>57</sup> The converts were initially mainly of lower status. The children, according to the missionaries, «orphans, deserted infants and children seeking a home».<sup>58</sup> David Meetom was a former pupil and teacher of the Baptist mission school. He belonged to the Akwa and bore a prominent position there. In 1884 German imperial commissioner Max Buchner called him the «advocate» and «secretary» of all the Duala, he was later to assume the position of «government interpreter» within the German colonial administration.<sup>59</sup>

As the Baptist mission started establishing stations on the Cameroon mainland after 1845, the different sections of the Duala were quite keen on having their own mission station. The missionaries were seen as potential allies against merchants and generally as a status

54. Peter Fryer speaks of 50 African schoolchildren in the Liverpool area in 1780. Cfr. Peter Fryer, *Staying Power. The History of Black People in Britain*, London, Pluto Press, 1984, p. 60.

55. For example from Bonny and Old Calabar with which the Duala were in direct contact. Cfr. David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe 1450-1850*, New York-Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 120.

56. Letter sent by John Burt to Wilson Armistead, 5, February 1848, in Wilson Armistead, *A Tribute for the Negro*, New York, Cosimo, 2005 [1848], pp. 388-397.

57. John Clarke, *African Journal* 1840-1841: Vol 1, entry 2/1/1841, BMS A2/2/1, p. 134.

58. Cfr. Emily Saker, *Alfred Saker – Pioneer of the Cameroons*, London, Carey Press, 1929, pp. 128-129, 177.

59. Buchner, *Aurora colonialis*, p. 94.



symbol.<sup>60</sup> As Robbie Aitken and Eve Rosenhaft have confirmed in their research about Cameroonians in Germany after 1884, it had become a pattern that the children sent to Germany for education had already attended the missionary or government school in Cameroon and then continued in Europe. The first such case was August Manga Ndumbe (Manga Bell), who attended school in Bristol from 1867 to 1869 and was baptised there.<sup>61</sup> August Manga was the son of "King Bell" (Ndumbe Lobe) who was to sign the treaty with the Germans in 1884. August Manga Bell had become a prominent man and diplomat, who was always judged most favourably by the Europeans. Despite being baptised, August Manga Bell continued following Duala customs and created a large polygamous household. Rudolf Duala Manga was his son with Tomedi.<sup>62</sup>

In Africa, the Christian model of family was perceived as strengthening or even creating the nuclear family and making common descent and common residence in one household the norm. This, however, was a specific family model that had only started evolving in Europe in the 19th century. A shift took place in Douala especially for the elite families around 1900, when monogamous Christian marriages started being formed. The marriage of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell and Emily Engome Dayas conformed to this new ideal,<sup>63</sup> as do marriages today in Douala generally. Still the above described *mboa* is still important with regard to property rights and inheritance, for example.<sup>64</sup>

When the Duala signed the treaty with the Germans in 1884 they continued to send their children abroad yet, they shifted their focus from Britain to Germany. In this perspective it is no surprise that merely a few months after the signing of the treaty, two prominent Duala signatories asked the German governor to have their sons educated in Germany. The two were David Meetom (Mwange Ngondo) and "King Bell" (Ndumbe Lobe). The German Governor von Soden supported

60. Austen, Derrick, *Middlemen*, p. 68.

61. Although Manga Bell had been accompanied to Bristol by a Baptist missionary, probably Alfred Saker, he was sponsored by the merchant firm R&W and baptised as an Anglican (Austen, Derrick, *Middlemen*, p. 204, FN 73). Manga Bell himself claimed that he attended school in England for five years (Manga Bell to Oesterle, 13-4-1896, FAR).

62. His numerous descendants feature prominently in Kala Lobe, *Douala*, pp. 31-32, who recounts personal conversations he had with three of Ndumbe Lobe's widows.

63. Cfr. *ibidem.*, p. 359.

64. Kristin Mann has demonstrated the tensions arising from such a shift for the Lagos between 1880 and 1915, cfr. Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well. Marriage, Status and Social Change Among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

their desire, especially in view of the prominent position that the boys were to assume in Cameroon in their adult ages.<sup>65</sup> In fact children from the leading families in Duala started travelling to Germany in order to receive an education from 1887, when four boys started an apprenticeship in Altona. Most prominent among them was Alfred Bell who returned to Duala in 1890.<sup>66</sup> The son of "King Akwa" Mpundu Akwa had attended school in Paderborn and later Rheindahlen from 1888 to 1891.<sup>67</sup> The son of Epeye Ekwalla (headman of the Deido family) came to Germany in 1890 and attended school in Mühlheim/Ruhr. Both lived with host families of teachers. Epeye died a mere year after his arrival, and his host family (and its descendants) continued caring for his grave.<sup>68</sup> In most cases, a three-year stay in Germany was envisaged, which was funded by the fathers in Duala. In the case of Mpundu Akwa, the money seems to have been given in full prior to the three years to the construction engineer Schran who accompanied Mpundu Akwa from Cameroon to Paderborn, where his wife lived. Mpundu Akwa attended boarding school, but Schran, who worked in Akwa, acted as Mpundu's guardian. When he was transferred from Paderborn to the small town Rheindahlen where he lived with the teacher, it was Mrs. Schran who provided the tuition.<sup>69</sup> Schran himself mostly stayed in Cameroon, and when the authorities asked the teacher with whom Mpundu was boarding in 1890 to send the boy back to Cameroon before the agreed three years were over, Schran's brother, resident in Paderborn, objected: Since Mpundu Akwa was under guardianship (*Vormundschaft*) of his brother, he could not be deported to Cameroon without his consent.<sup>70</sup>

In all cases mentioned so far, communication between the children in Europe and the parents in Cameroon were maintained, mainly by

65. Cfr. Bundesarchiv (BArch) R1001/4297.

66. Cfr. Aitken, Rosenhaft, *Black Germany*, pp. 24-30.

67. Mpundu Akwa was 14 years old when he came to Germany. He attended a Catholic boy's boarding school in Paderborn. He was accompanied by the construction engineer Schran, a former employee of Woermann, whose family lived in Paderborn. Two other boys had arrived to Paderborn under the auspices of Schran in order to learn a trade. Yet, when Schran failed to find a position for them, they translocated to Bavaria. (*Regierungsschulrat Vandenesch to Regierungspräsident von Pilgrim*, 8.8.1889, in BArch R1001/5571, pp. 26-29.

68. Cfr. Stefanie Michels, *Mülheim an der Ruhr: Der kleine schwarze Prinz. Das Grab von Moses Equalla Deido*, in *Kolonialismus hierzulande. Eine Spurensuche in Deutschland*, edited by Ulrich van der Heyden and Joachim Zeller, Erfurt, Sutton, 2007, pp. 417-421.

69. *Schulte to Gossler*, 25.1.1890, BArch R1001/5571, pp. 47-50.

70. *Ullner to Gossler*, 10.2.1890, BArch R1001/5571, pp. 61-62. The colonial division of the Foreign Office denied that Schran's consent was needed (*ibidem.*).



letters. An attempt by the authorities to bar Alfred Bell from writing and receiving letters failed. Therefore the will of the fathers played a part in decisions regarding the treatment of their sons. At the heart of the relation lay remuneration.

Placed in this perspective, the stay of Rudolf Duala Manga and Tube Meetom with the Oesterles in Aalen was by no means exceptional. When they arrived in Aalen in 1891, a number of Duala educated in Germany had already returned to Duala and Rudolf's father himself had studied in Europe. As we have also seen, it was not unusual for Duala children to travel in groups. What is exceptional about their example is the long duration of their stay and the fact that in Tube Meetom's case the German colonial authorities actively promoted and financed his stay.

## 7. Oesterle and Tube: «regards my house and family as his home»

Before departing for Germany, Tube Meetom had attended the government school that was founded in Duala, Bell-Town, in 1887. His teacher Friedrich Flad, counted him as one of his most talented pupils. The colonial authorities in Cameroon actively promoted Tube Meetom's education in Germany and campaigned for the German authorities to sponsor it. David Meetom, employed by the German colonial administration, simply did not have command over the financial resources necessary.<sup>71</sup> The Foreign Office agreed to share the costs for Tube Meetom's education in Germany with his father.<sup>72</sup> David Meetom had asked the customs inspector Pahl to find a suitable family for his son. Pahl was from Aalen in Württemberg and contacted a person whom he knew: the teacher Gottlob Oesterle, who consented to the conditions.<sup>73</sup> Tube Meetom, aged 9 and Rudolf Duala Manga, aged 16 reached the house of the Oesterles in June 1891.

Oesterle was – as the other custodians of Cameroonian children – obliged to send reports about his guardians to the colonial division in the Foreign Office about twice a year.<sup>74</sup> From the beginning Oesterle was

71. *Leist to Foreign Office*, 18.4.1891, BArch R1001/5571, p. 106; Dik'a Mpundu paid 1000 Mark for his son's tuition over a period of three years. The same sum was demanded by Oesterle in return for accommodation, clothing, feeding and tuition.

72. They waited for the final consent until they received the first report by Oesterle which was favourable (*Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 1.11.1891, BArch R1001/5571, p. 114).

73. *Agreement by Pahl, Meetom, Leist, Cameroon*, 17.4.1891, BArch R1001/5571, p. 109-111.

74. The Colonial Division of the Foreign Office later claimed that these reports were not obligatory, since the arrangement was private between Oesterle and Rudolf's father and that

highly in favour of David Meetom's plan to have Tube study medicine. Oesterle praised Tube's intelligence which compared favourably with that of his classmates in Aalen. His stance towards Rudolf was a bit different. As the grandson of the acting "King Bell" Oesterle assumed that he would eventually be his successor. Oesterle thus vowed to teach Rudolf modesty, by introducing him to craftwork and to foster respect for what he perceived as German character and industriousness.<sup>75</sup> Both boys were praised by Oesterle and their teachers for their zeal and endurance throughout their stay.

Rudolf and Tube attended elementary school (Volksschule) and were taught by Oesterle both at home and in school. In 1892 Tube was the second best pupil in his class. Rudolf Duala Manga was one class above Tube and attended drawing and English lessons at the Realschule. Both were judged favourably by their teachers. Oesterle, however, started expressing strong reservations against Rudolf Duala Manga's suitability for university studies, while Rudolf Duala Manga Bell himself was keen to pursue this goal. Both boys entered the Grammar School (Lateinschule) in preparation for university studies in 1893 and passed without any problems up to the third class.<sup>76</sup> In 1894 after three years had passed without any major calamities, a decisive turning point was reached for Tube Meetom. Governor Leist was replaced in Cameroon by Governor von Zimmerer. David Meetom had obviously used his strong position with Leist to the detriment of the Duala population who took the chance to complain to the new Governor. Consequently, Zimmerer concluded that David Meetom was to be released from government services immediately. He was later imprisoned and shot while fleeing under dubious circumstances. When David Meetom lost his salary, Tube's education in Germany was at risk. Governor Zimmerer suggested he be trained as a military hospital nurse (*Lazarettgehilfe*) arguing that studying medicine would be both too expensive and «undesirable».<sup>77</sup>

In this situation Oesterle sided with Tube Meetom pleading the authorities to sponsor a further three years of education at the grammar school. In spite of his admiration for the military, Oesterle argued that

only reports about Tube Meetom were a requirement by the authorities, since his stay was partly financed by them, cfr. *Foreign Office to Bürklen*, 26.2.1896, BArch R1001/5573, p. 102.

75. *Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 1.11.1891, BArch R1001/5571, p. 114.

76. *Schulzeugnis für Tube Meetom aus Kamerun*, BArch R1001/5572, p. 21 and *Schulzeugnis für Manga Bell aus Kamerun*, BArch R1001/5572, p. 20.

77. *Zimmerer to Caprivi*, 11.3.1894, BArch R1001/5572, p. 105.



Tube was too frail and sensitive to live in the barracks at his age and forwarded Tube's wish to be trained as cook.<sup>78</sup> The colonial authorities agreed and left it to Oesterle to find a suitable position. What had been evident in all the reports Oesterle sent to the authorities was that he had a liking for both boys but had made Tube something like his personal project. When this failed and Tube's sudden departure from his house became imminent, it was not easy for Oesterle to let him go. He asked the authorities to let Tube stay in his house until his 14th birthday and Oesterle would raise the cost from his own pocket.<sup>79</sup> Tube Meetom retained the stipend of 500 Mark by the colonial authorities which allowed him to start his apprenticeship as cook at officer's mess of the 13th artillery division in Ulm. He was placed under the custody of Officer Schmal, lived with the family of inspector Caspart but remained under the surveillance of Oesterle, who still received and distributed the money from the government and reported to them. After about one year into his apprenticeship, the costs continued rising. Oesterle had to ask the government for an additional contribution twice. The authorities then decided to terminate Tube Meetom's support and send him back to Cameroon. When the regiment agreed to cover Tube Meetom's costs, the Foreign Office consented to continue his stay for one year.<sup>80</sup>

Oesterle attributed feelings of familial connection to Tube Meetom. Possibly those mirrored his own feelings:

Although I am now relieved of many a worry for my former boarder I will not stop following his future fate with compassion, even more so because the orphan regards my house and my family as his home.<sup>81</sup>

Tube's subsequent fate remained quite unfortunate. He continued living with the family Caspart in Ulm and after the agreed year was up and the regiment no longer cared for his needs, it was Louise Caspart, who took care of his expenses. She ran a pension in Ulm and mainly lodged people from the military. Tube Meetom served in the officer's mess in the evenings and helped her in her hotel during the day. When she wanted to move from Ulm to Baden-Baden in 1897 the regiment

78. Oesterle to Foreign Office, 4.7.1894, BArch R1001/5572, p. 138.

79. Oesterle to Colonial Division of Foreign Office, 2.8.1894, BArch R1001/5572, p. 142.

The Foreign Office agreed and took care of the costs. Oesterle later asked for a compensation of 320 Mark for feeding and clothes plus a further 90 Mark that due to David Meetom's imprisonment and death were not paid by him. Oesterle received only part of the money by the government: 200 Mark (Oesterle to Foreign Office, 27.3.1895, BArch R1001/5573, p. 6, 17.

80. Telegram of Feldartillerieregiment Koenig Karl, 5.2.1896, BArch R1001/5573, p. 91.

81. Oesterle to Foreign Office, 2.4.1896, BArch R1001/5573, p. 108.

recommended to the government that Tube Meetom be sent back. They were of the opinion the surveillance of Officer Schmal was needed.

Without wasting time, Tube Meetom was transferred via Hamburg to Duala. All along, Tube had maintained relations with the Oesterle family through visits and the exchange of letters and postcards. Yet, his fast and unexpected deportation also meant the disruption of his relationship to the Oesterles. The importance of these affective connections is expressed by the fact that he sent postcards and farewell letters to them from every station of his journey. On the 9th of March he sent one letter to the entire family Oesterle from Hamburg, and one postcard to Helene and one to Klara.<sup>82</sup> In the letter to the family he used the formal address: «Geehrter Herr Oesterle mit w.[erter, SM] Familie» and described how he left Ulm and what farewell presents he was given by the officer for whom he had worked. He closed the letter by bidding farewell to Gottlob Oesterle, his family and all the acquaintances in Aalen and the surrounding areas, assuring Oesterle of his gratitude while expressing uneasiness about his journey to Cameroon.<sup>83</sup> The two postcards to Helene and Klara sent on the same day comport a more intimate tone which evokes the more horizontal relationships of family established between siblings.

Liebe Helene! Ein freundliches Lebewohl sendet Dir Dein Bruder Tube Meetom.<sup>84</sup>

Liebe Klara! Im Hotel zum Süddeutschen Hof sitzend, sendet Dir ein freundliches Lebewohl Dein Bruder Tube Meetom.<sup>85</sup>

He referred to himself as their brother – a relationship which had developed over the years, in his first letters to the girls, he signed «Euer Freund Tube Meetom».<sup>86</sup> Rudolf referred to Klara as «sister» in a letter from Ulm about 1896, but he never signed as brother.<sup>87</sup>

The gravity of the departure of Tube Meetom from Germany is further attested to by the fact that he continued writing letters to them when on the steamship, one he hurriedly posted from Cuxhaven after

82. In the family archive Röger/Platino there exists not a single letter or postcard to and from Elise. Unlike Klara and Helene, Elise founded her own family and household. Possibly, she kept her correspondence at her own house.

83. *Tube Meetom to Familie Oesterle*, 9-3-1897, FAR.

84. *Tube Meetom to Helene Oesterle*, 9-3-1897, FAR.

85. *Tube Meetom to Klara Oesterle*, 9-3-1897, FAR.

86. *Tube Meetom to Klara and Emma*, undated (probably Dec. 1891), FAR. Emma was a cousin of Klara whom she visited in nearby Kupferzell.

87. «Liebe Schwester!», *Rudolf Duala Manga Bell to Klara Oesterle*, undated, FAR.



two days on board, the last point in his journey from where the letter would quickly reach Württemberg.<sup>88</sup> The lengthy letter he sent to the family Oesterle from Cameroon in May 1897 was printed in a local newspaper in March 1898.<sup>89</sup> We may assume that Oesterle had given the letter to the newspaper, the reasons for his decision remaining open to speculation. The fact that the letter was published in the newspaper points to the fact that the stay of the boys in Württemberg was not merely a private affair but one which involved public interest in various manifestations. The point of the letter and its publication was that Tube Meetom's fate had developed positively in Cameroon after his deportation – obviously a cause of public concern:

All those readers of this paper who have known the small Cameroonian Tube Meetom and have cared for his past experiences, his provisions and the like, might get some information by a letter of Tube that he sent here to his former educator.<sup>90</sup>

This is the last letter of Tube Meetom found in the Röger/Platino family archive. Yet the Oesterles were still informed about his subsequent ill fate through Rudolf Duala Manga.<sup>91</sup> He was monitored in Cameroon by the Governor von Puttkamer himself who immediately had him transferred from Duala to Buea.

The Duala had never contented themselves in a position that German colonial authorities, like von Puttkamer, envisaged and Tube Meetom's return from Germany deepened this in the eyes of von Puttkamer. In the Duala perspective, Tube Meetom's return after a long «apprenticeship» in Germany provided them with more resourceful persons able to pursue their own interests as they had always done.<sup>92</sup> He was to retrain as «Kanzlist» in Buea – a location distant from Duala. In 1898 Tube Meetom left government service in Cameroon on grounds he had stolen.<sup>93</sup> He later left the colony and, according to Rudolf Duala Manga, was sent as prisoner (*Sträfling*) to the French Congo where he lived in 1902 since quite some time («seit längerer Zeit»)<sup>94</sup>. In fact, in both cases, the colonial government was

88. *Tube Meetom to Oesterle*, 11-3-1897, FAR.

89. *Kocher Zeitung*, 8-3-1898, FAR.

90. *Ibidem*.

91. The two kept in contact and in the letter printed in the local newspaper Tube Meetom recounts that Rudolf who had reached Cameroon before him was the first person he asked about.

92. Cfr. BArch R1001/5574, p. 29, 147.

93. Cfr. BArch R1001/5575, p. 15

94. *Rudolf Duala Manga Bell to Oesterle*, 5-3-1902, FAR.

able to restrict the boys being successful. Both are the best examples for agency in the colonial situation – its successes and limits with an outcome by no means clear to any of the actors involved.

### 8. Oesterle und Rudolf Duala Manga: unsettled cheques

The relationship between Oesterle and Rudolf Duala Manga seems to have been more ambiguous than the one to the much younger Tube Meetom from the beginning. While Oesterle continually reported well about Rudolf Duala Manga, especially stressing his zeal, morals and industriousness, there are some hints for tensions. He held him to be too «merchantlike» and too haughty. It is difficult to assess how Oesterle had formed this opinion. However, what shines through his judgement is a certain kind of class consciousness. The Oesterles did not belong to the upper-classes but rather to the provincial lower middle class with a strong desire for upward mobility. This contrasted especially with Rudolf Duala Manga's background and self-awareness as a member of the Duala elite. The daughters of Oesterle attended school for eight years and from the age of 16 started at a needlework school (Näh- und Häkelschule) where they worked for the commission of higher class customers.<sup>95</sup> Rudolf Duala Manga Bell was well aware of this class difference and pitied Klara when she was working in the needlework school and offered to later alleviate her fate by ordering many of the white shirts that he was to need from her.<sup>96</sup>

After the drastic events surrounding Tube's fate, the situation with Rudolf Duala Manga passed into the opposite direction. It culminated in Oesterle asking Rudolf Duala Manga to find a different house to stay. Oesterle frequently exchanged letters with August Manga Bell, Rudolf's father.<sup>97</sup> The main part of the letters was concerned with financial transactions and orders of Manga Bell. Still also a note of fatherly concern was expressed by Manga Bell who transferred his rights of surveillance unto Gottlob Oesterle. His first letter reads:<sup>98</sup>

95. Cfr. *Klara to Franziska Manga Bell*, January 1892, FAR.

96. *Rudolf Duala Manga to Klara*, 1896 (when he was in Ulm), FAR.

97. Eleven letters are still kept in the Röger/Platino family archive, from 1891 (1), 1892 (3), 1893 (2), 1895 (1) and 1896 (4).

98. In Cameroon Pidgin English was and is a lingua franca. It is a language with a complex history, grammar being mainly from African languages while the vocabulary is mainly English. In Manga Bell's letters he writes in Standard English, while some of his expressions derive from Pidgin English.

Herrn Oesterle,

Dear Sir,

Glad to tell you that I am informed by Mr. Pahl that the young man Rudolf M. Bell has been given under your care with an [sic!] hope that he shall be brought up or educated by your instruction, as a scholar which gives a great deal of happiness in heart + now write to acknowledge that I entirely trusted him in your charge + shall be more glad to hear that he is getting on well by the grace of our Lord.

But I beg most faithfully that you shall advice him strongly against the strong drink never never allow him taste a glass of anything except a glass of Lemonade.

Too sorry shall it be if you donot carried [sic] on my wish.

Hoping you all are well

I remain

Yours truly

Manga Bell.<sup>99</sup>

The self-confident tone which meanders between trust and order would indeed be followed by the clashing of Manga Bell (the now distant father) and Oesterle (the man on the spot). The relationship between Manga Bell and Oesterle was however neither entirely private nor bilateral. The colonial authorities served both as intermediaries and as a third party with own interests. In his reports to the colonial authorities Oesterle had made the point that Rudolf was not getting on quite as well in school as Tube, who was in fact excelling in school. These reports were discussed by the colonial authorities in Duala with Manga Bell, who, in turn, directly asked Oesterle to make more efforts to boost Rudolf Duala Manga's performance in school.<sup>100</sup>

From 1892 onwards Oesterle cautioned Manga Bell not to pursue the aim to have Rudolf Duala Manga study at the University. While Manga Bell took Oesterle's advice seriously he still insisted on Rudolf Duala Bell's attending Grammar school (Lateinschule). And he made it very clear that the decision with regard to his son's schooling was solely his, Manga Bell's:

Yours [your letter, SM] of the 18/12/92 I receive which content I note in regard your advice of my Son I am greatly oblige, but I think it is better for we [us SM] to live [leave SM] it at present and see how the boy will go on with the Latin first + if you find that he do [sic!] not get on at all then let me know again. So I may know which step to take next.<sup>101</sup>

The relationship between Oesterle, Manga Bell and his son came to a negative climax in 1895 and 1896. While it is not possible to

99. Manga Bell to Oesterle, 5-3-1891, FAR.

100. Manga Bell to Oesterle, 25-5-1892, FAR.

101. Manga Bell to Oesterle, 20-2-1893, FAR.



reconstruct the actual social interactions, a number of factors became crucial. Oesterle sent reports to the colonial authorities that were marked by his bitterness. He stated that between March 1895 and February 1896 he had received neither letters nor money from Rudolf Duala Manga's father. Oesterle took the silence as «mistrust» and a pretext for resting his case.<sup>102</sup> In the family archive a letter of Manga Bell from March 1895 exists. It is a reaction to a letter of Oesterle in which he again urged Manga Bell to withdraw Rudolf from the Latin School although Rudolf Manga Bell had been promoted.<sup>103</sup> Manga Bell's letter postponed a decision.<sup>104</sup> In January 1896 he wrote another letter to Oesterle excusing himself for the long silence which he explained by the fact that he had wanted to speak to Theodor Christaller, the former teacher of Rudolf at the government school in Duala. Upon his persistent absence, he further postponed the matter but made concrete arrangements for the payment of his tuition fee.<sup>105</sup>

In February 1896 a capital cheque arrived. It was credited on an English company and was cashed by Rudolf Duala Manga and Oesterle at a bank in Stuttgart. When the cheque was later withdrawn, Rudolf Duala Manga had already spent 140 Mark and Oesterle added his personal debt at 2140 Mark, he later added 110 Mark interest.<sup>106</sup> When Oesterle added the interest he expressed a sort of bitterness in very general terms that may have been directed at Rudolf Duala Manga: from a Black person thankfulness was not be expected, therefore he unscrupulously asked for payment of interest.<sup>107</sup>

Rudolf Duala Manga himself had taken the initiative at the clash with Oesterle which was obviously substantial. Being a young adult of 21 years and no longer a minor, he set off to find an alternative to the house of the family Oesterle. While he was able to find a teacher who would have been willing to accept him in his house and school, it was the enquiries the teacher made to the colonial authorities and the reports by Oesterle that frustrated Rudolf's plan. Finally Rudolf

102. *Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 20-4-1896, BArch R1001/5573, p.109.

103. *Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 14-10-1895, BArch R1001/5573, p. 58.

104. *Manga Bell to Oesterle*, 14-3-1895, FAR.

105. *Manga Bell to Oesterle*, 29-1-1896, FAR.

106. *Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 20-4-1896, BArch R1001/5573, p. 113; 21.9.

107. «Angesichts der Thatsache, daß von Manga Bell vor dem nächsten Frühjahr eine Zahlung nicht erfolgt, angesichts der weiteren Thatsache, daß ich seit August 1894 aus Kamerun keine Geldsendung mehr empfangen habe, und daß ferner bei einem Schwarzen auß Dankbarkeit überhaupt nicht zu rechnen ist, nehme ich gar keinen Anstand, Verzugszinsen in Anrechnung zu bringen» 1896, *Oesterle to Foreign Office*, 20-4-1896, BArch R1001/5573, p. 167.



resorted to Tube Meetom's lodging place in Ulm where he managed to attend grammar school.<sup>108</sup>

When Rudolf Duala Manga left the house of the Oesterle's between February and March 1896, he informed his father in Cameroon about his move. Upon this Manga Bell sent a letter to Oesterle clearly expressing his annoyance about the way Oesterle handled the turbulences. As already in his first letter of 1891, Manga Bell stressed that all matters and decisions concerning his son were to be discussed directly between him and Oesterle, but not with his son or the colonial authorities: «I would have thought after your complain [sic!] you would wait + get a reply before saying anything to my son, as you only look on me and not the son».<sup>109</sup>

What we can gather from the emotions that shine through the letters and actions of the people involved might have a coming-of-age story at its heart. However, later Rudolf Manga Bell made his peace with Oesterle and the family. In 1897 he sent a postcard to the «Familie Oesterle» and expressed feeling ashamed about the things that happened in Aalen.<sup>110</sup> He continued exchanging letters, postcards and greetings cards with them until 1910 and even promised to visit them.

Although Rudolf Duala Manga's father was going through some financial distress at that time, he paid the 110 Mark to the government exchequer in Duala which forwarded it to Oesterle. Manga Bell himself explained the financial transaction to Oesterle in two letters and asked Oesterle to forward part of the money to his son in order to pay the debts he accrued in Ulm. Finally, Manga Bell also asked Rudolf Duala Manga Bell, then 22 years old, to return to Cameroon, which he did in 1897.<sup>111</sup>

2140 Mark were assumed by his grandfather via the colonial government in Duala. Private debts that Rudolf Duala Manga was forced to make while living in Germany without financial support from his family were settled by his father via Pahl. Then Governor von Puttkamer saw personally into the matter and took pains to elaborate that a photographer from whom Rudolf Duala Manga Bell had ordered photographs would only be paid by the Bell family upon receipt of the

108. Cfr. Bürklen to Foreign Office, 15-2-1896, BAArch R1001/5573, p. 99 and answer of 26-2-1896, *ibidem.*, p. 102.

109. Manga Bell to Oesterle, 13-4-1896, first letter, FAR.

110. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell to Familie Oesterle, 10-08-1897, FAR.

111. Manga Bell to Oesterle, 13-4-1896, second letter and Manga Bell to Oesterle, 26-6-1896, FAR.

photographs.<sup>112</sup> Although the debts were settled within one year, Rudolf Duala Manga had been forced to leave Germany, where he could not sustain himself without the support of his family in Duala. He had managed, however, to attend the Gymnasium in Ulm and there is some indication that he sat in on University lectures in Tübingen.<sup>113</sup>

## 9. Making a family – making a home

Oesterle referred to Rudolf Duala Manga and Tube Meetom as his boarders (*Pensionäre*) and *Zöglinge*,<sup>114</sup> and these ambiguous terms point to some of the intricacies involved in their relation.<sup>115</sup> What we have traced in the sources was mainly the stance that Oesterle took vis-à-vis the official government authorities. This suggests that, especially until 1894, the family managed to live an undisturbed life, with only some minor irritations mainly stemming from Rudolf Duala Manga's advanced age which did not match the exposure to formal schooling and a tension between Rudolf Duala Manga's high status in his place of origin and Oesterle's desire to teach him modesty instead. Family and local tradition also purport a sense of racialised perceptions. In a carnival photograph we can see Rudolf Duala Manga mimicking a minstrel, which clearly indicates that either he himself or his surroundings placed him into the wider perception of a racialised world.<sup>116</sup> Family tradition has it that the children would poke fun at each other's noses in a joking and equal manner.<sup>117</sup>

In 1896 both boys had left the home of the Oesterles – the documentation suggests that Gottlob Oesterle had indeed developed the

112. Puttkamer to Foreign Office, 8-9-1896, BArch R1001/5574, p. 24.

113. For the latter: Aitken, Rosenhaft, *Black Germany*, p. 32.

114. The term does not easily translate into English. *Zöglinge* are literally those to be educated. It is mainly used in institutional contexts.

115. In Mpundu Akwas's case we read of the German male as the *Vormund* (guardian).

116. The photograph is part of a collection of the carnival society Bürgergesellschaft which was handed to the municipal archive of Aalen in the 1950s. It is not dated and not accompanied by further information. It shows the male members of the society in their uniforms. The photograph is thus composed to stress their status as the most important carnival society, which accepted only the members of the local elite as members. The presence of the minstrel grimacing and laying on the ground seems to serve as further elevation of their status. I thank Robert Schaurig, former archivist in the Stadtarchiv Aalen for the information and a reproduction of the photograph. It has been published in Hermann Stützel, *Alt-Aalener Spaziergänge*, Aalen, Theiss, 1963.

117. In the local dialect they would say: "Du mit deim Stumpe" and the other party would reply: "Du mit Deim Zinke" which compares the flat with the long nose in an equally non-flattering way (anecdote recounted by Rolf-Dieter Röger in 2014).

role and possibly the sentiment of a father with regard to responsibility and affection towards Tube Meetom while he was bitter about Rudolf Duala Manga's alleged missing gratitude for what he had done. Oesterle's vengeance were the 110 Mark interest he asked and received. Family tradition within the descendants of the family Oesterle points into a different direction though, and a more complex picture emerges. Letters were exchanged by the eldest Oesterle-daughter Klara and Rudolf Duala Manga's sister Franziska on a number of occasions.<sup>118</sup> Klara also followed the political campaigns that Rudolf Duala Manga's family undertook in the 1920s in France after his execution in 1914. Rudolf Duala Manga also kept in touch with the Oesterles after 1896, he sent letters and postcards and even invited the family to Duala to the baptism of his son Eithel born in 1906. Klara, who worked as a hat maker was asked by Rudolf to send a hat for his wife and daughter.<sup>119</sup> Apart from the people Rudolf Duala Manga lived with, he also maintained relations with his former friends from school. They too were convinced that his execution was unjust: «Wir hatten Rudolf als sehr guten anständigen Menschen kennengelernt, dem ein Verrat nicht zuzutrauen war».<sup>120</sup>

## 10. Conclusion

At the time when our photograph was taken the conception of family was undergoing major changes in Germany and Duala. I read the presence of Rudolf Duala Manga and Tube Meetom in this petty bourgeois European 19th century family photograph as the extension of the Atlantic contact zone that Duala had been a part of since the 17th century.<sup>121</sup>

The practice of sending children abroad had been established among the Duala well before the German colonial era started in 1884. They carried this practice forth after 1884 and as the correspondence of Manga Bell to Oesterle has shown perceived the matter as a mixture between trust and transaction in which two "fathers" – to use this term

118. The two never met personally but the letters and gifts connected the wider family of Rudolf to the Oesterles. In a letter Klara also asked about Tube Meetom's siblings but there is no evidence that any direct contact existed.

119. Telephone interview with Rolf-Dieter Röger, 22-9-2014.

120. Stützel, *Alt-Aalener Spaziergänge*, no page.

121. On photography and class formation cfr. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Cult of Unity and Cultivated Differences*, in *Photography. A Middle-brow Art*, edited by Pierre Bourdieu et al., Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, pp. 13-98 and Camp, *Image Matters*, p. 50.



figuratively – entered a special and intimate relationship in which the “real” father, in this case Manga Bell, maintained his final say. This view clashed with Oesterle’s due to a mixture of conflicts concerning class (Rudolf being superior) and age (Rudolf being junior but an adolescent). Because of his better access to German authorities Oesterle was able to present these conflicts in yet another available category of difference, namely race upon which the ideal colonial asymmetric order had come to rest.

In the case of the housefather Gottlob Oesterle we have seen how a personal disappointment was translated into a generalized denigration expressed in racialised discriminatory language. Oesterle’s contempt for Rudolf Duala Manga’s self-assertion as a member of the most important family from Duala might also have stemmed from his own moderate position in German society.

Gottlob Oesterle was obliged to report to the German authorities. As *Hausvater* he thus brought state control into his private surrounding. At least Rudolf Duala Manga was well aware that Oesterle passed on information to the authorities. Tube Meetom was also finally sent back on the argument that he could not remain in Germany without male surveillance. It was not deemed appropriate that a woman (Louise Caspart) take responsibility for a child from the colonies, even though she did not ask for compensation.

Lack of control was perceived by the authorities as a threat and therefore they quickly acted and sent Tube Meetom back to Cameroon, where he continued to be closely monitored by the colonial authorities. The Governor himself found Tube to be a potential threat, especially among his family and friends in Duala, where petitions had been sent to the Governor complaining about the treaty not being respected and the general treatment of the Duala being condescending. In fact, Rudolf Duala Manga, his father and two of his brothers as well as the mentioned German educated Mpundu Akwa and members of the Akwa family travelled to Germany in 1902 to personally file complaints against the German colonial administration in Berlin.

Oesterle’s role in Rudolf Duala Manga’s final departure from Germany is more ambiguous. When he asked him to leave his house, they had some quarrels behind them, but at the heart of the problem lay the cheque that failed. Oesterle connected the temporary failure of the cheque to Rudolf’s schooling and took decisions against the wishes of Rudolf’s father who had previously displayed an active presence in the family Oesterle by way of his letters, the exchange of presents

and photographs. The familial relationship between Bell in Duala and Oesterle in Württemberg was further expanded by the correspondence between their daughters.

While in 1885 the German Governor was in favour of having children from important families in Duala be educated in Germany, this attitude changed, mainly due to the fact that the German authorities were not able to control the young people the way they had expected and both Tube Meetom's and Rudolf Duala Manga Bell's life stories already seem to advance the independence movements starting in the 1930s in many European colonies in Africa.

The German authorities explicitly stated in 1896 that they found it undesirable to train a Black medical doctor (Tube Meetom) in Germany while Oesterle was in favour of the idea. While neither of the two attended University, Rudolf Duala Manga's son Alexander did. He came to Germany in 1902 with the Bell-delegation as a four-year-old. He eventually registered at the University of Kiel, where he was trained as a medical doctor. In his letters to the family Oesterle, Rudolf proudly mentioned his son being educated in Berlin.<sup>122</sup> Since he now relied entirely on missionary and personal networks, he was not observed by the German authorities and they were – at least until 1919 – not able to exert control over his moves and decisions.<sup>123</sup>

From the perspective of the Duala sending children abroad and having them stay for a limited duration of time in another household was a well-established practice for centuries. The children the Duala took into their own houses could either be integrated on equal footing with the biological children (children of previously married women, pawns) or remain separate up to a point (*etumbe, muyabedi*), however these barriers were not unsurpassable and could be surmounted for example by the institution of marriage. This knowledge about creating homes in which a sense of both difference and belonging operated and were acted out in serious conflicts at times might help us understand how the Duala made sense of racial discrimination against them – from all documentation available to us, they tackled it pragmatically and with endurance, never submitting. The personal relations and a multiplicity of experiences might have helped them in maintaining their political project.

122. *Rudolf Duala Manga Bell to Helene Oesterle*, 6-4-1906, FAR.

123. Cfr. Aitken, Rosenhaft, *Black Germany*, p. 45; Richard Joseph, *The Royal Pretender: Prince Douala Manga Bell in Paris, 1919-1922*, in «Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines», 14 (1974), pp. 339-358.

Within the context of the Oesterle's, the two Cameroonian foster children connected them to events of global importance. Not only local newspapers, honorary Carnival societies but also the authorities in Berlin and Duala were keen to get information from Gottlob Oesterle. The fact that he deliberately passed letters of Tube Meetom on to the newspapers shows that he did not dislike such publicity. This is the public side to the arrangement, there is however also a private side.

Affective bonds developed between the people on the photograph on different levels and these emotions are reflected in the way members of the family connect at present. The photograph itself was part of making a family and at the same time making a home for two boys from Cameroon.<sup>124</sup> This homemaking was, however, always carried against the strong presence of the boys' original families in Duala. Rudolf Duala Manga Bell's family being much more present than Tube Meetom's which might further undermine why the affective bonds between Tube Meetom and the Oesterles seems to have been stronger. The photograph as image/object itself may prove this point. It was sent to Rudolf Duala Manga Bell's family and quite possibly also to Tube Meetom's family immediately upon its production. There is even evidence that it was ordered and paid for by Manga Bell and David Meetom.<sup>125</sup>

Manga Bell and Franziska Manga Bell both mentioned the receipt of the photograph and promised to send their own photographs.<sup>126</sup> Manga Bell calls photographs «likeness» and Franziska Manga Bell tells Klara that she has seen her on the photograph.<sup>127</sup> The image thus connected families as a «haptic image»<sup>128</sup> – physically, indexically and emotionally. «Race» was a contested issue but not the governing logic neither of the photograph nor of the homemaking of the two elite boys from Duala, Cameroon, in a small town lower middle-class family in Württemberg, Germany – at least not for the historic subject themselves.

124. Cfr. Campt, *Image Matters*, p. 52.

125. Cfr. *Manga Bell to Oesterle*, 8-7-1892, FAR.

126. No such photographs survive in the FAR. Helene's and Klara's family albums contain only one picture of Rudolf Duala Manga Bell.

127. *Franziska Manga Bell to Klara Oesterle*, 30-08-1892 and *Manga Bell to Oesterle*, 8-7-1892, FAR.

128. Cfr. Campt, *Image Matters*, p. 43.