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The Bantu and Khoisan peoples as a Subject of Antoni Rehman's Ethnographic Interest

Antoni Rehman (1840–1917) – a scholar affiliated with universities in Krakow and Lviv – is primarily known as a botanist, although the majority of his professional life was dedicated to the field of geography. As an experienced traveller, he stayed in South Africa conducting geobotanical and geographical research in the second half of the 1870s. Three years spent in a region witnessing active colonial expansion also provided him with an opportunity to become acquainted with the local indigenous populations of the Khoisan and Bantu groups in that area. This article is devoted to the history of Rehman's ethnographic research among the indigenous peoples of Basutoland, Colony of Natal, Cape Colony, South Africa Republic, and the Orange Free State. Rehman exposed and dispelled numerous stereotypes regarding the local tribes. He polemicized with commonly held opinions about them. He openly opposed their dehumanization and xenophobia, contributing to the popularisation of knowledge about the cultures of African indigenous populations.

Keywords: Antoni Rehman, South Africa, Bantu peoples, Khoisan, ethnography, 19th century

Słowa kluczowe: Antoni Rehman, Afryka Południowa, ludy Bantu, Khoisan, etnografia, XIX wiek

Introduction

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, the southwestern lands of the African continent were inhabited by the San and Khoekhoe tribes, later largely¹ displaced by Bantu peoples.

1 The Khoekhoe and San belong to the Khoisan ethnic group of people. In the Polish-language spelling used by the Africanist and sociologist Zygmunt Komorowski (1925–1992), Khoekhoe appear as Koin-Koin and Khoisan as Kojisan. See Z. Komorowski, *Kultury czarnej Afryki*, Wrocław 1994.

The Portuguese, searching for a sea route to India, were the first to arrive in South Africa. By the efforts of the Dutch East India Company, the first colonists settled at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The settlement they founded – which is modern-day Cape Town and the most populous city in South Africa – was essentially a multinational centre right from the beginning of its existence. In 1806, it was seized by the British Crown. Alongside the settlers of English, Danish, French, Dutch, German, Swedish and other European nationalities dwelling in it, slaves were also brought from various parts of Africa, including Madagascar, and the Malay Peninsula. The arrival of colonists had an adverse impact on the lives of indigenous peoples. It gave rise to numerous conflicts and wars with the Bantu population, particularly with the Zulus. Previously unknown diseases, mainly black smallpox, caused a significant decline in the Khoekhoe population.²

Antoni Rehman reached this place of intense colonial expansion – which, according to a sociologist Jan Lutyński (1921–1988), was a very convenient area to track the transformations of local societies and their traditional cultures³ – in the mid-1870s. Although the primary purpose of his journey was geobotanical and geographical studies, he also became interested in ethnographic issues. He learned about the traditions and customs of the Bantu and Khoisan peoples. In an earlier period, other Poles also tried to explore Africa – aptly called the ‘colonial continent’⁴ by a geographer Stanisław Pawłowski (1882–1940) – with natural history in their sights. Among them were: microbiologist Leon Cienkowski (1822–1887), novelist Count Jan Potocki (1761–1815), ornithologist Władysław Taczanowski (1819–1890), zoologist Antoni Waga (1799–1890), and physician Ignacy Żagiel (1826–1901).⁵ However, it was not until Rehman, who became one of the most eminent experts on Capensis – the smallest floristic state on Earth – in the international botanical community, that a Polish scholar became interested in the ethnography of South Africa, which is not always remembered in the literature on African studies in his mother tongue.⁶

- 2 I. Stańczak, *Republika Południowej Afryki*, [in:] *Geografia powszechna*, vol. 4, *Związek Socjalistycznych Republik Radzieckich, Azja, Afryka*, ed. by A. Zierhoffer, Warszawa 1967, p. 632–633; J. Balicki, *Historia Holandii od 1609 roku*, [in:] idem, M. Bogucka, *Historia Holandii*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, Łódź 1989, p. 244–247; B. Nowak, R. Piętek, *Historia Afryki na południe od Sahary w XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Świat w XVIII wieku*, ed. by P. Franaszek, Kraków, Warszawa 2006 (Wielka historia świata, vol. 8), p. 387–388; W.J. Wilczyński, *Regiony świata. Geografia i geopolityka*, Kraków 2021, p. 671–672, 675.
- 3 J. Lutyński, *Inteligencja afrykańska*, “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 1957, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 251. Rehman used the term ‘primitive peoples’, “which should be understood in contemporary terms as ‘aboriginal peoples’ or ‘indigenous peoples’. There is no single and universally accepted definition of such peoples. According to Agnieszka Szpak, the basic criterion that distinguishes them is self-identification. These peoples have strong bonds to the land and its natural resources. They retain, at least partially, separate languages, cultures, beliefs, knowledge systems, social, economic and political distinctiveness. They are determined to preserve and develop their identities as well as distinct social, economic, cultural and political institutions. In addition, a historical factor can be taken into account assuming that these peoples possess historical continuity with pre-invasive and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories. Cf. A. Szpak, *Ludy tubylcze i ich prawo do ziem jako warunek ich przetrwania*, “Gdańskie Studia Prawnicze” 2019, no. 2 (42), *Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana profesorowi Krzysztofowi Drzewickiemu*, p. 209–210.
- 4 S. Pawłowski, *Geografia krajów i mórz pozaeuropejskich. Podręcznik dla klas wyższych szkół średnich*, Lwów, Warszawa 1931, p. 198.
- 5 On Polish accounts of the wildlife of South Africa see A. Żukowski, *Przyroda południowoafrykańska w relacjach Polaków (XVI–XX wiek)*, “Humanistyka i Przyrodoznawstwo” 2018, p. 165–175.
- 6 His studies of the Khoisan and Bantu groups were not mentioned at all by the geographer Wacław Nałkowski (1851–1911). Cf. idem, *Geografia malownicza. Z wrażeń podróżników*, vol. 4, *Afryka*, Warszawa 1909, p. 74–94. Neither is Rehman mentioned at all in the monograph on the pioneers of Cracovian African studies. Cf. *Pionierzy krakowskiej afrykanistyki. Pamięci Profesora Romana Stopy (1895–1995) w 120. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. by R. Kłosowicz, Kraków 2017 [the same in English: *Pioneers of African Studies in Kraków. In memory of Professor Roman Stopa (1895–1995)*, ed. by R. Kłosowicz, transl. by M. Stępień, Kraków 2019].

The research objective of this article, which includes an introduction, six parts, a summary and a bibliography, is to trace and systematize the knowledge on Rehman's activity, which involves documenting the culture of African indigenous peoples – their customs, ways of life, language, rituals, and art – and popularising the results of these observations. The chronological scope of the work covers the 19th c. The attainment of the objective necessitated the study of sources with diverse provenance, primarily narrative ones. The primary source basis of the article consists of three of Rehman's works on African studies: two monographs⁷, one four-part scholarly article⁸ and two newspaper articles.⁹ An important point of reference is the scholar's notes and diaries, as well as iconographic sources documenting the years spent in Africa. Queries carried out at the State Archive of Lviv Oblast (Deržavnij arhiv L'vivs'koj oblasti) and the Jagiellonian University Archives in Krakow – where the documents produced by Rehman are kept – have, nevertheless, returned a negative result. So far, the subject of this work has been explored in a broader context only by a literary scholar, Paweł Zajas, who, however, pursued a different research goal.¹⁰ The author used the naturalist's memoirs to outline a general picture of the social life in South Africa at the time, comparing it with accounts from other Western European travellers and expanding on issues related to postcolonial theory. The first part of the article outlines Rehman's scientific biography. Part two describes his two journeys to South Africa with an explanation of their origins, the general itinerary and the scope of his research. The next three parts of the article present Rehman's comments regarding the San, Khoikhoi and Bantu peoples. The sixth part discusses how the Polish scientist popularized knowledge about the indigenous peoples of South Africa.

Antoni Rehman – naturalist, scholar and traveller

Rehman was a talented Polish botanist¹¹ – one of the first to be associated with the Krakow Geobotanical School¹² – and a geographer¹³ who worked scientifically in the second half of the 19th c. and at the beginning of the 20th c. Dominika Pękalska rightfully

- 7 A. Rehman, *Szkice z podróży do południowej Afryki odbytej w latach 1875–1877*, Warszawa 1881; idem, *Echa z południowej Afryki*, Lwów 1884.
- 8 Idem, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, "Ateneum. Pismo naukowe i literackie" 1878, vol. 1 (9), issue 1, p. 94–127, issue 3, p. 468–487; 1879, vol. 2 (14), issue 4, p. 25–46, issue 5, p. 274–301.
- 9 Idem [as A. Reman], *Ludy dzikie w zetknięciu z cywilizacją (Fragment osnuty na tle stosunków afrykańskich)*, "Kurier Warszawski" 17(29).11.1877, no. 264, p. 1–2, 18(30).11.1877, no. 265 p. 1, 19.11.(01.12.)1877, no. 266, p. 1, 20.11.(03.12.)1877, no. 267, p. 1–2, 21.11.(04.12.)1877, no. 268, p. 1–2; idem, *Keczeweyo i lud jego*, "Kurier Warszawski" 10(22).02.1879, no. 43, p. 1–2, 13(25).02.1879, no. 45, p. 1–2, 14(26).02.1879, no. 46, p. 1–2.
- 10 P. Zajas, *Postkolonialne echo's uit Zuid-Afrika in de etnografie van Antoni. Rehman (1840–1917)*, "Stilet: Tydskrif van die Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging" 2005, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 159–179. Cf. also idem, *Polskie postcolonial studies? Przypadek południowoafrykański*, "Napis" 2005, series 11, p. 208–220.
- 11 On Rehman's botanical activity, see Z. Mirek, A. Zemanek, *Antoni Rehman (Rehmann) (1840–1917) w 150-rocznicę urodzin*, "Wiadomości Botaniczne" 1990, no. 34 (3), p. 23–26; A. Zemanek, B. Zemanek, *Wkład Antoniego Rehmana (1840–1917) w rozwój polskiej geografii roślin*, "Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki" 1991, vol. 36, no. 2, p. 51–65.
- 12 P. Köhler, A. Stachurska-Swakoń, *Kraków Geobotanical School during 1859–2020: Main Achievements*, "Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae" 2022, vol. 91, p. 3.
- 13 P. Brzegowy, *Koncepcje geograficzne i działalność badawcza Antoniego Rehmana*, doctoral dissertation, University of the National Education Commission in Krakow, Kraków 2018.

classified him among those who left a lasting mark on the intellectual life of their era.¹⁴ He was born on 13 May 1840 in the Free City of Krakow¹⁵ as the son of a chimney sweep master, Józef Rehmann (1812–1882) and Anna *née* Piotrowska (1818–1887).¹⁶ He passed away in Lviv on 12 January 1917. He received his elementary¹⁷ education at home. In 1853, he began his studies at the classical Gymnasium of St. Anne in Krakow¹⁸ (secondary school). At the time when the Polish state was partitioned, this school, supervised by the National School Council,¹⁹ was one of the most important centers of national education. Even during his secondary school years, he showed an interest in the natural sciences – perhaps thanks to one of his teachers, Rev. Eugeniusz Janota (1823–1878), a Tatra enthusiast, and co-founder of the Polish tourist movement.²⁰ Rehman's circle of friends included two important Krakow naturalists of European renown. The first one of them was a traveller from Vilnius, Józef Warszawicz (1812–1866), who had visited many North and South American countries for botanical purposes. Since 1854, he had been employed by the botanical garden in Krakow, conducting research on crossbreeding tropical plants and their acclimatization.²¹ According to Alicja Zemanek, a botany historian, this famous traveller ignited young Rehman's 'romantic enthusiasm for exploring exotic wildlife'.²² The second figure who had influenced his career choice was the Austrian botanist and physician Franz Herbich (1791–1865), about whom Rehman wrote in one of his letters that: 'having lived for several years in friendship with the renowned, honourable Doctor Herbich, I was initiated into his acquaintance and correspondence with botanists'.²³ Herbich was a botanist who studied the flora of France and Italy, as well as that of the Tatra and Pieniny Mountains, the Eastern Carpathians, and the area surrounding Lviv.²⁴ After his death, his herbarium of Galician plants was entrusted to Rehman.²⁵

His education in the last class of the Gymnasium of St. Anne (secondary school) was completed with the Maturitäts-Prüfung (secondary school leaving examination), divided

- 14 D. Pękalska, *(Auto)portret intelektualny Antoniego Rehmana a formy komunikacji z czytelnikami w Kilku kartkach z Kaukazu*, "Napis" 2021, series 27, p. 231.
- 15 The Free City of Krakow was a constitutional republic created after the Congress of Vienna, existing in the years 1815–1846 under the control of Austria, Prussia, and Russia.
- 16 Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie (Jagiellonian University Archives in Krakow) [AUJ], file no. WF II 504 Teczka osobowa Antoniego Rehmana, Curriculum vitae [of Antoni Rehman] of 18.11.1867; Biblioteka Jagiellońska (Jagiellonian Library) [BJ], file no. 224649 V Re 117, obituary of Józef Rehman from 1882; BJ, ref. 224649 V Re 115, obituary of Anna Rehman, *née* Piotrowska from 1887.
- 17 Deržavnij arhiv L'vivs'koï oblasti (State Archive of Lviv Oblast) [DALO], f. 26, op. 1, spr. 1613, Rehman's obituary of 12.01.1917.
- 18 J. Leniek, *Książka pamiątkowa ku uczczeniu jubileuszu trzechsetnej rocznicy założenia Gimnazjum Św. Anny w Krakowie*, Kraków 1888, p. 251; Z. Kosiek, *Rehman (Rehmann) Antoni (1840–1917)*, PSB vol. 31, p. 2.
- 19 National School Council (*Landesschulrat*) was the authority overseeing general and secondary education in the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, as well as during the early years of the Second Polish Republic, from 1867 to 1921.
- 20 A. Jackowski, *Janota Eugeniusz Arnold (1823–1878)*, [in:] *Geografowie polscy. Słownik biograficzny*, vol. 1 A–J, ed. by A. Jackowski, K. Krzemiń, I. Soljan, Kraków 2018, p. 593–594.
- 21 P. Köhler, *The Life of Józef Warszawicz (1812–1866)*, "Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum" 2014, vol. 2, issue 1, p. 18–19, 22–29.
- 22 A. Zemanek, *Wkład Antoniego Rehmana*, p. 54.
- 23 Gerbarij L'vivs'kogo nacional'nogo universitetu imeni İvana Franka (Herbarium of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) [GLNU], Rehman's letter to an unknown addressee of 04.12.1867 [illegible year].
- 24 P. Köhler, *The Role of Franz Herbich (1791–1865) in the Organisation of Research on the Natural History of Galicia (Austro-Hungarian Empire)*, "Archives of Natural History" 2015, vol. 42, no. 2, p. 308–313.
- 25 J.A. Knapp, *Franciszek Herbich*, "Kosmos. Czasopismo Polskiego Tow. Przyrodników Im. Kopernika" 1900, vol. 24, p. 112.

into a written and oral part.²⁶ Having obtained a maturity certificate, in the autumn of 1860 Rehman enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow – the oldest Polish university and the only one alongside the Franciscan University in Lviv²⁷ to operate in the Austrian partition. He chose, among others, lectures in botany, chemistry, physics, geology, mathematics, zoology and the humanities, including the history of modern philosophy, Polish history and literature, as well as French language and literature. As a student, he became a member of the Zoological and Botanical Society in Vienna (*k. k. Zoologisch-Botanische Gesellschaft in Wien*).²⁸ In 1862, in the yearbook of this society, he published his first scientific work: *Die Gefäss-Kryptogamen von Westgalizien*,



Fig. 1. Antoni Rehman in a portrait from the early 1880s (source: *Dr. Antoni Rehman*, "Kłosa. Czasopismo Ilustrowane Tygodniowe" 1881, vol. 33, no. 852, p. 272)

devoted to liverworts and mosses of Western Galicia.²⁹ In the autumn of 1863, Rehman began his efforts to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of botany.³⁰ In the following months, he passed the final examinations of the so-called rigorosum and presented a doctoral dissertation on plant life prepared under the supervision of his lecturer, an esteemed Cracovian botanist Ignacy Rafał Czerwiakowski (1808–1882).³¹ On 13 January 1865, Rehman was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.³²

In 1865, two further scientific articles dedicated to floristics were published.³³ In the years 1864–1867, Rehman worked as an assistant at the Department of Botany of the Jagiellonian University. In 1866, he went to Munich to participate in the classes taught by Carl Wilhelm von Nägeli (1817–1891), a Swiss botanist, and specialize in plant anatomy.³⁴ After returning to Krakow, he completed an important study in the field of plant physiology

26 Cf. S. Tarnowski, *Szujskiego lata szkolne*, Kraków 1885, p. 69–70, 75–78.

27 Today Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

28 AUJ, file no. WFII 504.

29 A. Rehmann, *Die Gefäss-Kryptogamen von Westgalizien*, "Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen zoologisch-botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien" 1862, vol. 12, p. 841–848.

30 In the years 1850–1924, PhD was the only academic degree awarded by the Jagiellonian University.

31 For more information on Czerwiakowski see: A. Zemanek, *Ignacy Rafał Czerwiakowski (1808–1882)*, [in:] *Złota księga Wydziału Biologii i Nauk o Ziemi*, part 1, *Biografie uczonych*, ed. by A. Zemanek, Kraków 2000, p. 37–43.

32 Z. Kosiek, *Rehman (Rehmann)*, p. 2.

33 A. Rehmann, *Versuch einer Aufzählung der Laubmoose von Westgalizien*, "Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen zoologisch-botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien" 1865, vol. 15, p. 461–484; idem, *O roślinności Beskidów Zachodnich*, "Rocznik ces. król. Towarzystwa Naukowego Krakowskiego" 1864, vol. 33, p. 198–233.

34 Von Nägeli rejected natural selection as a mechanism of evolution. He was an opponent of Darwinism. He gained fame by conducting long-term research on the plant cell. In 1846, together with Hugo von Mohl, he distinguished the cell wall from the inner contents of the plant cell. B. Bahadur, K.V. Krishnamurthy, *Plant Biology. Past, Present and Future*, [in:] *Plant Biology and Biotechnology*, vol. 1, *Plant Diversity, Organization, Function and Improvement*, ed. by B. Bahadur, M. Venkat Rajam, L. Sahijram, K.V. Krishnamurthy, New Delhi 2015, p. 15–16; Z. Kosiek, *Rehman (Rehmann)*, p. 2.

on the formation of resin in conifers and other plants with Czerwiakowski's assistance.³⁵ On this basis, and after delivering a habilitation lecture in 1868, Rehman was awarded the title of docent (associate professor) of anatomy and plant microscopy and began lecturing at the Jagiellonian University as a private associate professor (Privatdozent). The authorities of the Faculty of Philosophy entrusted him with, among others, courses in general botany for candidates for teachers, classes in plant cell physiology, and botanical field trips. In 1878, he took part in an unsuccessful competition for the position of professor of botany and director of the Botanical Garden of the Jagiellonian University, which was won by Józef Rostafiński (1850–1928).³⁶

In the early 1880s, Rehman (Fig. 1) made a successful attempt to supplement his education using a scholarship he had been granted. In the spring of 1881, at the University of Bonn, he began attending lectures on astronomy, geography, and geology by Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905), Arnold von Lasaulx (1839–1886) and Christian August Vogler (1841–1925). He continued his studies at the University of Vienna, attending classes taught by Friedrich Simony (1812–1896), Julius von Hann (1839–1921), Karl Theodor Inam von Sternegg (1843–1908), Theodor Fuchs (1842–1925), and Eduard Suess (1831–1914). Among the figures listed, there were several outstanding specialists in the field of Earth sciences. Rehman was most influenced by a German geologist, Richthofen (an expert on China) and his 1883 lecture on the methods and objectives of geography.³⁷ During his stay in Vienna, the Polish scholar cooperated with the Vienna Geographical Society. Having received geographical and geological training in 1882, he won the competition for the director of the newly established Geographical Institute at the Franciscan University in Lviv. As a professor extraordinarius (associate professor), appointed by Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916), he took over the only geography chair in Galicia at that time, where he remained until his retirement in 1910.³⁸ During the Lviv period of his life, he focused mainly on geography. Rehman carried out long-term field research in the Carpathians and the Polish Lowlands. His attention was particularly focused on the Tatra Mountains. He was an honorary member of the Tatra Society. He worked as an academic lecturer, dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in the academic year 1887/1888, rector of the University of Lviv (1897/1898), and an opponent of the idea of making this institution bilingual.³⁹ For many years, as an associate professor, he conducted botanical courses at the Veterinary School combined with a horse shoeing school (later to become the Academy of Veterinary Medicine).⁴⁰ He travelled around Europe (including, among others, the Julian Alps, Carnic Alps, Karawanks, Switzerland, and Italy) as well as Egypt, and authored articles and scientific monographs. The scholar actively participated in the life of the Polish Copernicus Society of Naturalists, of which he was a member and, at one time, the president, as well as the

35 A. Rehman, *O utworach żywicznych roślin szyszkowych i wydzielinach roślinnych w ogólności*, "Rocznik Ces. Król. Towarzystwa Naukowego Krakowskiego" 1870, vol. 39, p. 147–197.

36 A. Zemanek, *Antoni Rehman (1840–1917). Botanik, geograf, podróżnik*, [in:] *Złota księga Wydziału Biologii*, part 1, p. 61.

37 F. von Richthofen, *Aufgaben und Methoden der Heutigen Geographie. Akademische Antrittsrede, gehalten in der Aula der Universität Leipzig am 27. April 1883*, Leipzig 1883.

38 Z. Kosiek, *Rehman (Rehmann)*, p. 3.

39 It refers to the transformation of the Franciscan University in Lviv into a university with Russian as a language of instruction or two languages of instruction – Polish and Russian.

40 Currently the Lviv National Stepan Gzhyskyi University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology.

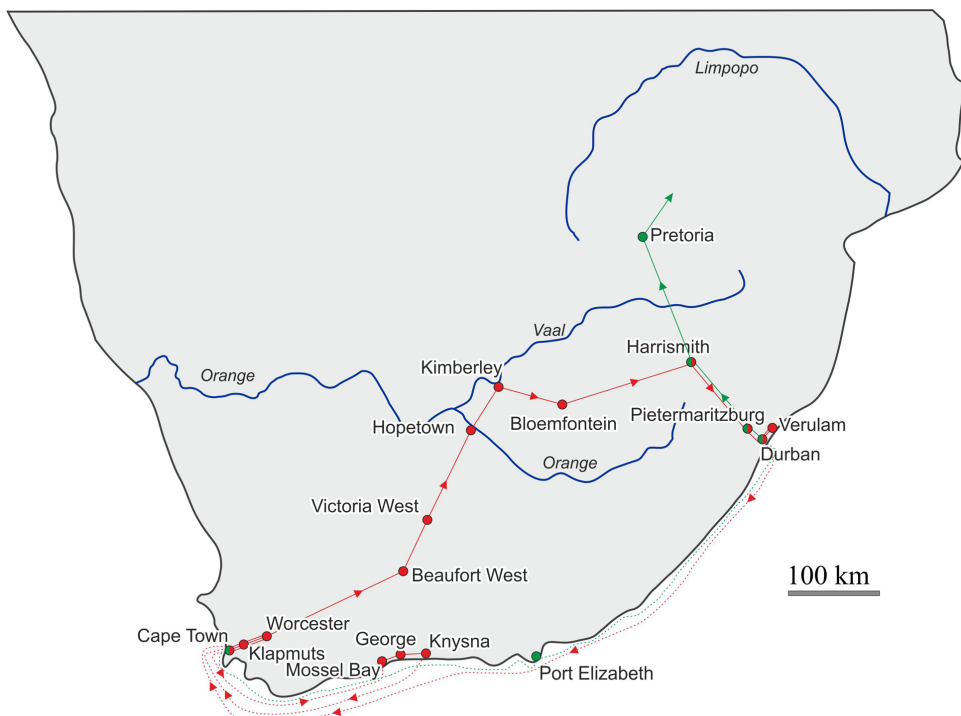


Fig. 2. General course of Antoni Rehmań's journey to South Africa. Legend: red line – the first journey in the years 1875–1877; green line – the second journey in the years 1879–1880 (devised by the authors; color illustration available in the on-line version of the article)

Society of Ethnology.⁴¹ In the years 1889–1891, together with a geologist Emil Dunikowski (1855–1924), he co-edited the scientific yearbook "Kosmos". As a supporter of allowing women to pursue university studies, he cooperated with the Society of Academic Courses for Women. He also became one of the university's donors, handing over his herbarium of European plants in 1898, which is now owned by Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Out of the group of his Lviv students, Eugeniusz Romer (1871–1954) and Stepan Rudnicki (Rudnyćkyj) (1877–1937) made great careers in the field of geography.⁴² During his Lviv period, Rehmań wrote two books dealing with the lands of the former Kingdom of Poland, which are his most extensive and most important geographical works.⁴³ Władysław Szafer (1886–1970), noted that Rehmań, caught between his passions for botany and geography, was reportedly unhappy because of this conflict.⁴⁴

41 Later Polish Ethnological Society.

42 K.A. Harasimiuk, *Dzieje Instytutu Geograficznego w Uniwersytecie Lwowskim w latach 1883–1939*, Kraków 2012, p. 47–66, 71–73; P. Brzegowy, *Lwowski okres z życia Antoniego Rehmańa*, [in:] *Lwów w historii i kulturze polskiej*, ed. by E. Hrycaj-Mańnicz, B. Płonka-Syroka, S. Dorocki, P. Brzegowy, Lwów, Warszawa 2021, p. 46–83.

43 A. Rehmań, *Ziemia dawniej Polski i sąsiednich krajów sławiańskich opisane pod względem fizyczno-geograficznym. Część pierwsza: Karpaty*, Lwów 1895; idem, *Niżowa Polska opisana pod względem fizyczno-geograficznym*, Lwów 1904.

44 W. Szafer, *Wspomnienia przyrodnika. Moi profesorowie – moi koledzy – moi uczniowie*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1973, p. 95. See also P. Brzegowy, *Antoni Rehmań – botanik z Krakowa, geograf ze Lwowa*, "Cracovia Leopoldis" 2017, no. 4 (89), p. 21–23.

Voyages to South Africa

Rehman went to South Africa (i.e., the Cape Colony,⁴⁵ Basotho,⁴⁶ the Orange Free State,⁴⁷ the Colony of Natal⁴⁸ and the Republic of South Africa⁴⁹) twice, for scientific purposes: in 1875–1877 and 1879–1880 (Fig. 2). In total, he spent more than three years there. However, he was not able to see all the sites which he had intended to visit. He did not reach Lake Ngami,⁵⁰ nor the Limpopo River.⁵¹ The plan to visit Mauritius and Madagascar did not come to pass. Despite this, Arkadiusz Żukowski, a political scientist, recognized him as ‘the first Pole who carried out a truly scientific research trip in Africa.’⁵² The character of these expeditions was assessed identically by a geographer Krystyna Harasimiuk.⁵³

The trips resulted in two books in the genre of travel literature (Fig. 3–4), in which the author described his adventures and impressions, with casual references to the scientific research carried out. In 1953, a shortened version of the aforementioned publications came out, which reminded the new generation of Polish readers of the figure of this important and largely forgotten naturalist. In 1988, the African episode of his life was once again revisited in a comic book addressed to young people,⁵⁴ in which fictional elements were woven into real situations.⁵⁵

According to Rehman, South Africa was a favorable location for botanical, geographical, and geological research, as well as for ethnographic studies concerning the tribes inhabiting the region.⁵⁶ The departure point for his expeditions was always London. The first trip was initiated in April 1875. He travelled to the Cape Colony aboard the steamship *Windsor Castle*. Following the course of the Thames past the town of Gravesend, the ship entered the English Channel, pausing briefly at Dartmouth. At the end of April, the steamship made a short stop off the coast of Madeira. In the first days of May, the *Windsor Castle* crossed the equator, and by the end of the month, it reached the destination of its journey, i.e., the Cape of Good Hope. On 8 March 1877, Rehman, aboard the *Dun Robin Castle*, began his three-week journey back to Plymouth. He spent two months in Kew, where he was busy identifying collected plants, among which many species unknown to science were found, and then headed for Krakow.⁵⁷ Setting off for South Africa for the second time aboard the steamship *Dublin Castle* in April 1879, he made some observations about Londoners.⁵⁸ He completed the second expedition in

45 British crown colony existing from 1795 to 1802 and 1806 to 1910.

46 Currently Lesotho.

47 Boer republic in the years 1854–1902.

48 British colony existing in the years 1843–1910.

49 Commonly known as the Transvaal. Boer republic between the years 1852–1902.

50 Ngami – an endorheic lake in present-day Botswana.

51 Limpopo – a river in southeast Africa flowing out of the Witwatersrand and draining into Maputo Bay.

52 A. Żukowski, *Polacy w kraju Springboka do r. 1910*, “Przegląd Polonijny” 1990, vol. 16, issue 4, p. 116.

53 K. Harasimiuk, *Odkrywczy Afryki Południowej*, [in:] *Środowisko przyrodnicze i społeczno-kulturowe strefy suchej i półsuchej (wybrane przykłady z Afryki Południowej)*, ed. by M. Dłużewski, I. Tsermegas, Warszawa 2016, p. 402.

54 A 1,750-km-long river in South-East Africa draining into Delagoa Bay.

55 S. Weinfeld, *Sam w afrykańskim pustkowiu. O Antonim Rehmanie*, Warszawa 1988.

56 A. Reman, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 264, p. 1.

57 W. Olszewicz, *Antoni Rehman 1840–1917 (Szkic biograficzno-bibliograficzny)*, “Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki Polskiej” ser. C, 1972, vol. 16, p. 59.

58 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 2–9.

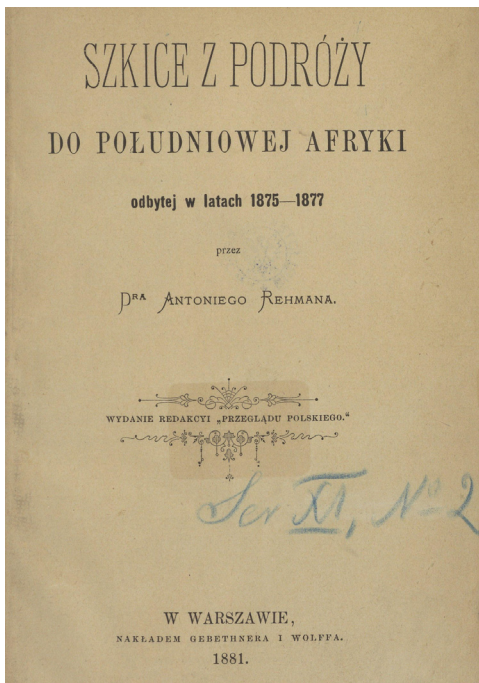


Fig. 3. The title page of Antoni Rehman's *Szkice z podróży do południowej Afryki odbytej w latach 1875–1877* ("Sketches from the trip to South Africa made in the years 1875–1877") (source: a copy from the collections of the National Library in Warsaw, call number 72.011)

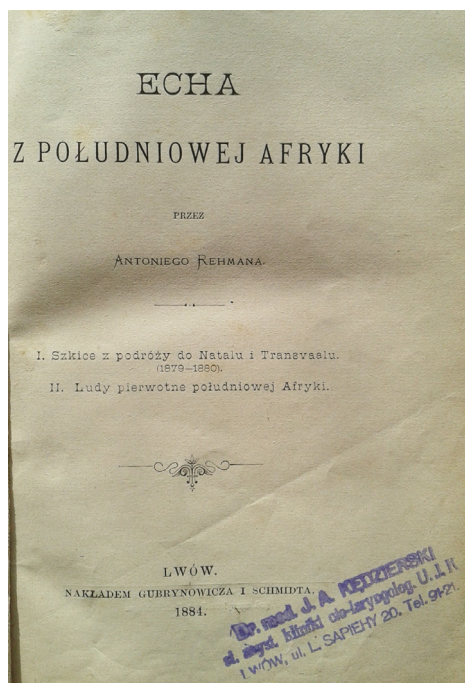


Fig. 4. The title page of Antoni Rehman's *Echa z południowej Afryki* ("Echoes from southern Africa") (source: a copy owned by Paweł Brzegowy)

Pretoria, the capital of the South African Republic, from where he reached England via the Cape of Good Hope and the Atlantic and arrived in Krakow on 10 July 1880.⁵⁹

Over a span of three years, he travelled almost 7,000 km. He conducted research in the field of floristics and made hydrographic, orographic and climatic observations.⁶⁰ Two important scientific dissertations were the fruit of long years of natural research. The first of them, published in 1880 – still considered a particularly valuable phytogeographical work many years after its publication⁶¹ – was devoted to the geobotanical relations of South Africa, dividing its area into seven regions: the land of winter rains, the Karoo desert, the Kalahari desert, the Roggeveld plateau,⁶² the Orange Free State plateau, the monsoon region and the land of South African primeval forests.⁶³ In the second study,

59 *Kronika geograficzna*, "Wędrowiec" 10(22).07.1880, vol. 8 (36), no. 186 (916), p. 62.

60 T. Hmil', L. Tašenkevič, *Vklad profesora Antoni Remana u fitogeografični ta floristični doslidžennâ u Pivdennij Africi*, „Visnik L'vivs'kogo universitetu. Seria Biologična" 2014, issue 65, p. 107–111.

61 Por. S. Pawłowski, E. Romer, *Geografia i podróżnictwo*, [in:] *Polska w kulturze powszechnej. Cz. II. Szczegółowa*, ed. by F. Koneczny, Kraków 1918, p. 169–170.

62 In fact, the basin was mostly occupied by savannah flora (thornveld) and semi-desert as well as desert in the southwestern part. Cf. I. Stańczak, *Republika Południowej Afryki*, p. 637; W.J. Wilczyński, *Regiony świata*, p. 668.

63 Primeval forest is an old-growth forest that has not been altered by humankind. Cf. A. Rehman, *Geo-botaniczne stosunki południowej Afryki*, „Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie. Wydział Matematyczno-Przyrodniczy" 1880, vol. 5, pp. 28–96.



Fig. 5. A fragment of Rehman's moss herbarium from southern Africa (source: Herbarium of the Biology Faculty of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv; photo by Paweł Brzegowy, 2023)

which was divided into four parts and written in German, he dealt with physical geography.⁶⁴ *Echoes from Southern Africa* also holds scientific value. The author filled the second part of the book with ethnographic and historical issues. As a result of two trips, the Polish botanist brought with him approx. 9,000 herbarium specimens.⁶⁵ A valuable collection of mosses, including many new species, is the property of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Fig. 5).⁶⁶

The San peoples

The observations recorded by Rehman show that among the indigenous peoples of South Africa,⁶⁷ the San, referred to as Bushmen at that time, were the least socially and economically developed.⁶⁸ This Black people, which might have also been present in Europe during the Neolithic period, is considered, based on current knowledge, as one of the oldest on Earth. In the 19th c., their habitat underwent a drastic reduction due to their earlier displacement by Bantu peoples and Dutch settlers known as Boers (Afrikaners),⁶⁹ seizing their lands for farming. Today, they live in some regions of Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.⁷⁰ The origin of the word 'San' is not fully explained. According to the historian Richard Elphick, it means 'a stranger' or 'a bandit' in the Nama language.⁷¹ In a Polish missionary magazine from the end of

64 Idem [as Anton Rehmann], *Das Transvaal-Gebiet des südlichen Afrika in physikalisch-geographischer Beziehung*, "Mittheilungen der Kais. Königl. Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien" 1883, vol. 26, p. 257–266, 321–362, 369–408, 417–443.

65 M. Gunn, L.E. Codd, *Botanical Exploration of Southern Africa*, Cape Town 1981, p. 292; *Rehmann (Rehman), Anton(i) (1840–1917)*, [in:] *Botanical Explorations of Southern Africa – Edition 2*, ed. by H.F. Glen, G. Germishuizen, Pretoria 2010, p. 355–357.

66 See T.S. Hmil', Z.ĭ Mamčur, S.Ā. Kondratūk, *Kolekciā mohiv A. Remana z pĭvdennoi Afriki v gerbarii L'vivs'kogo nacional'nogo universitetu imeni Ivana Franka (LW). Antoni Rehman's collection of mosses from south Africa in the Herbarium of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (LW)*, L'viv/Lviv 2013; S. Zieliński, *Wybitne czyny Polaków na obczyźnie*, Wilno 1935, p. 34.

67 South Africa (like almost all African countries) has not yet ratified the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (C169) of 27.06.1989, and therefore the status of the Khoisan as native peoples is problematic in this country. Cf. L. Jansen, *South Africa*, [in:] *The Indigenous World 2020*, ed. by D. Mamo, [s.l.] 2020, p. 160–166.

68 Although the term 'Bushmen' is still in common use – this also applies to Polish academic literature – it is also perceived (mainly in South Africa) as pejorative. In this article, the noun 'Bushman' and its adjectival form are used only in the historical sense. See A. Mountain, *The First People of the Cape. A Look at Their History and the Impact of Colonialism on the Cape's Indigenous People*, Claremont 2003, p. 23. It is worth emphasizing that the word 'San', meaning 'a gatherer', may also have negative associations. See F. Fernández-Armesto, *Cywilizacje. Kultura, ambicje i przekształcanie natury*, trans. by M. Grabska-Ryńska, Warszawa 2008, p. 67.

69 On the history of the Boers, see J. Balicki, *Historia Burów. Geneza państwa apartheidu*, Wrocław 1980; J. Balicka, J. Balicki, *Historia Burów. Geneza państwa apartheidu*, [s.l.] 2022.

70 Z. Sokolewicz, *Mitologia Czarnej Afryki*, Warszawa 1986, p. 40; B. Kingsbury, *Indigenous Peoples, Rights, and the Environment*, [in:] *Environmental Protection and Human Rights*, ed. by D.K. Anton, D.L. Shelton, New York 2011, p. 640; L.J. Parker, *The San of Africa*, Minneapolis 2002 (First Peoples Series), p. 4.

71 R. Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa*, Johannesburg 1975, p. 24, 27.

the 19th c. published in Krakow, the San people, i.e., 'forest people', were presented as savages sustaining themselves through hunting, fishing, and plunder,⁷² which subscribes to the contemporaneous myth of 'brutal savages'. This brief and unflattering description stemmed from on-site research and observations made by various clergymen, scholars, and travellers. G.B. Thompson, providing a general description of indigenous peoples, noted that they displayed a greater propensity for the vices rather than the virtues of Europeans.⁷³ In *Reminiscences of the Last Kafir War*,⁷⁴ the San were presented as 'deformed and hideous'.⁷⁵ One of the most important Polish encyclopedias of the 19th c., published by Samuel Orgelbrand (1810–1868), described them as having a 'monkey-type face'.⁷⁶ Rehman argued that this negative image was largely the result of an injurious opinion expressed by English missionaries who claimed that they were an intermediate form between animals and humans.⁷⁷ Nałkowski shared this judgment, stating that in comparison with other peoples they had risen the least above the level of animals.⁷⁸ The negative perception of this people also stems from the dishonorable contribution of some of the colonizers of South Africa – the Dutch – for whom the noun 'Bushman' (*Bojesman*) meant 'a human being from the bush'.⁷⁹ The image of the San was somewhat softened (based on their own observations) by the German physician Hinrich Lichtenstein (1780–1857), who considered them a separate nation,⁸⁰ and the Scottish missionary David Livingstone (1813–1873), who wrote that they were attached to their family and valued freedom.⁸¹ Rehman, on the other hand, openly opposed the dehumanization of the Bushmen. Being interested in physical anthropology and populational anthropology, he noted a significant resemblance between them and the Tiki-tiki (Akka) tribe living near the sources of the Nile,⁸² the Obongo (Abongo) pygmy tribe from the Ogowe River (Ogooué),⁸³ and the dwarf Doko people, described by the explorer of East Africa Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–1881).⁸⁴ The Polish scholar questioned the opinion that the Khoekhoe originated from the San.⁸⁵ Despite some common physical features – for instance, steatopygia⁸⁶ in women (Fig. 6) – these peoples differed in languages and lifestyle. However, he did not

72 Porte, *Wspomnienia misyjne z Basutolandu*, „Missye Katolickie” 1897, no. 9, p. 239.

73 G.B. Thompson, *South Africa*, “The Missionary Magazine” 1898, vol. 10, no. 6, p. 202.

74 It was a shortened version of the book: H. Somerset, J.D. Fenton, *Adventures of Mrs. Colonel Somerset in Caffraria, during the War*, London 1859.

75 *Pamiętnik z ostatniej wojny kaferskiej, osnuty na tle przygód pewnej Angielki*, “Rozmaitości” 9.11.1859, no. 45, p. 359.

76 *S. Orgelbranda Encyklopedia powszechna z ilustracjami i mapami*, vol. 1, *od litery A do Azur*, Warszawa 1898, s.v. Afryka.

77 A. Reman, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 264, p. 1. He also came to similar conclusions as GJ van Niekerk, *The Case of the Hottentot Venus: an Exercise in Legal History*, “Fundamina. A Journal of Legal History” 2007, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 148.

78 W. Nałkowski, *Geografia malownicza*, p. 74.

79 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 144–145, 169; P. Zajas, *Polskie postcolonial studies?*, p. 215. The Dutch also called the San 'Saoqua' or 'Sanqua'. See A. Barnard, *Anthropology and the Bushman*, Oxford, New York 2007, p. 12.

80 A. Barnard, *Anthropology*, p. 15.

81 *Ibidem*, p. 30.

82 The Swiss missionary Héli Chatelain (1859–1908) drew attention to the probable relationship between the San and the Pygmies. See *idem*, *African Races*, “The Journal of American Folklore” 1894, vol. 7, no. 27, p. 300.

83 A river of about 1,200 km long, whose source is located near Kengue in the Congo, flowing into the Atlantic Ocean.

84 A. Rehman, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, vol. 1 (9), issue 1, p. 126.

85 *Idem*, *Echa*, p. 143.

86 Excessive fat deposition on the buttocks, mainly in women, which may hinder mobility, lead to lordosis of the lumbar spine and disturb the statics of the body. Cf. R.A. Ersek, H.N. Bell 4th, A.V. Salisbury, *Serial and Superficial Suction for Steatopygia (Hottentot Bustle)*, “Aesthetic Plastic Surgery” 1994, vol. 18 (3), p. 279.

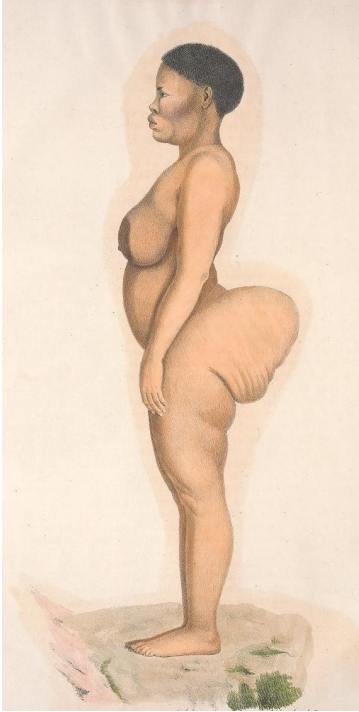


Fig. 6. A San woman in profile (source: [E.] Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, F. Cuvier, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères, avec des figures originales, coloriées, dessinées d'après des animaux vivants*, vol. 1, Paris 1824, unpaginated)

discard the possibility that they had belonged to one family in the past.⁸⁷

The living conditions of the San tribes were very primitive. Out of safety concerns, they adapted caves and rock crevices, often in hard-to-reach locations, as their dwellings. In an area devoid of natural hiding places, they hung mats made of reeds from pegs, under which they protected themselves from adverse weather conditions.⁸⁸ They considered wild bee honey to be the most desirable food product.⁸⁹ They hunted with javelins, arrows⁹⁰ and bows or prepared barbed fences, and mainly fed on the roasted meat of springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) and other species of antelopes and ostriches, whose eggshells they used for water storage. Alternatively, they satisfied their appetite with reptiles and insects: locusts and termites, and if need be, they consumed carrion. While hunting, they used poisons obtained from plants and animals. Given the scarcity of wild edible plants in southern Africa, they harvested the fruit of the *Brabejum stellatifolium* shrub and the fruit of the tree from the *Strychnos* genus.⁹¹ They took the availability of food as a measure of happiness. When they were full, they danced and jumped, expressing their satisfaction, believing that in this way they would accelerate the digestion of food and empty their stomachs. Trying to remedy hunger, they tied

themselves with leather straps, adjusting their length.⁹² They understood freedom in several ways. First of all, they perceived it as the freedom to stay in a given place and hunt, as leaving inhabited caves at any time and moving to other caves, or as a state of contentment caused by satisfying hunger. The space for living and the availability of food made them free people, and Bushmen's freedom was characterized by Rehman, similarly to other indigenous peoples, as 'the desire to use without constraints what the mind [...] has become accustomed to since childhood.'⁹³

87 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 196. Attention was drawn to the biological and cultural relationship between the San and Khoekhoe by, among others, a biologist Janusz Piontek. See J. Piontek, *Zróżnicowanie człowieka współczesnego*, [in:] *Antropologia fizyczna*, ed. by A. Malinowski, Warszawa, Poznań 1980, p. 279, 281.

88 A. Reman, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 264, p. 1; idem, *Echa*, p. 151.

89 Idem, *Echa*, p. 157.

90 On the subject of the San's arrows, see B. Bosc-Zanardo, F. Bon, F.-X. Fauvelle-Aymar, *Bushmen Arrows and Their Recent History: Crossed Outlooks of Historical, Ethnological and Archaeological Sources*, "Palethnologie" 2009, no. 1, DOI 10.4000/palethnologie.10011.

91 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 152–156, 159; idem, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 264, p. 1. This is also mentioned by a Swedish traveller Gustav de Vylder (1827–1908). See G. de Vylder, *The Journal of Gustav de Vylder, Naturalist in South-Western Africa 1873–1875*, trans. by I. Rudner, J. Rudner, Cape Town 1998, p. 46.

92 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 158.

93 Idem, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, vol. 1 (9), issue 1, p. 124.

The Polish traveller learned only a few details of the San's family life. For example, there was a custom that a man wishing to marry a woman left part of the game hunted to her parents as a token of gratitude. Polygamy was not common, but such cases were known. The tradition of burying the deceased mother with her infant, abandoning the elderly and infirm, and killing disabled newborns was practised.⁹⁴ Cruelty was therefore embedded in the culture of their everyday life. Infanticide among the San was also confirmed by later research.⁹⁵

The Polish botanist was particularly fascinated by the San language, referred to as a 'click language'.⁹⁶ The click sounds found in almost every word made their speech highly challenging to master.⁹⁷ Referring to the research carried out by the German linguist Wilhelm Bleek (1827–1875), who was acquainted with the Cape of Good Hope,⁹⁸ he reiterated that they only counted to three, but used over 10,000 words.⁹⁹

Rehman, addressing the findings of the self-taught anthropologist Joseph Millerd Orpen (1828–1923), also questioned another claim of Protestant missionaries, whereby these people did not practice any religion.¹⁰⁰ He observed fetishism, worshipping representations of dead and animated nature: celestial bodies,¹⁰¹ stones and animals. Addressing the problem of San mythology, he noted that the most important position was occupied by a mantis called Ckaggen. Its wife was represented as a cape hyrax (*Procavia capensis*), and their foster daughter was a cape porcupine (*Hystrix africaeaustralis*), married to an unidentified animal referred to as *ckwamma*.¹⁰² Believing in the afterlife, unlike many other Black peoples, they rejected the presence of ghosts and wraiths.¹⁰³ They respected sorcerers who practised witchcraft, predicted the future, brought rain, and

94 Ibidem, p. 161, 164.

95 According to the findings of the American ethnologist Marjorie Shostak (1945–1996), who conducted research among the !Kung tribe belonging to the San nation, infanticide shortly after birth is rare. The !Kung are characterized by a low fertility rate. See M. Konner, M. Shostak, *Timing and Management of Birth among the !Kung: Biocultural Interaction in Reproductive Adaptation*, "Cultural Anthropology" 1987, vol. 2, issue 1, p. 11–28.

96 Its characteristic feature is click consonants called clicks. These consonants occur, among others, in some Bantu languages or languages of the Khoisan family. Cf. A.F. Majewicz, *Języki świata i ich klasyfikowanie*, Warszawa 1989, p. 170, 193.

97 One of the most outstanding researchers of Khoisan languages in the world was the linguist and Africanist from Krakow, Roman Stopa (1895–1995). More on this topic: *Pionierzy*, ed. by R. Kłosowicz; idem *Pioneers*.

98 For many years, Bleek conducted research on the comparative grammar of the languages of the peoples of South Africa. He collected valuable anthropological and ethnographic information and authored a series of reports on the language, literature, and folklore of the San peoples. Rehman wrote appreciatively about the results of his research, having learned many details about the life of this group thanks to him. A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 166; S.L.P. [Stanley Lane-Poole], *Bleek, Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel (1827–1875)*, [in:] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 5, *Bicheno–Bottisham*, ed. by L. Stephen, New York, London 1886, p. 209–210; A. Barnard, *Anthropology*, p. 24–25.

99 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 165–168.

100 Cf. J.M. Orpen, *A Glimpse into the Mythology of the Maluti Bushmen*, "The Cape Monthly Magazine" 1874, vol. 9, p. 1–13.

101 The San of the Kalahari believe that the stars were once people or animals. Cf. A. Cotterell, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia mitów i legend świata*, trans. by J. Korpanty, Warszawa 1996, p. 46.

102 More about San mythology: A. Rehman, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, vol. 1 (9), issue 1, p. 113–115; idem, *Echa*, p. 170–173.

103 Complementing Rehman's account, it can be added that the San show the fear of the dead. The stones placed on the graves are intended to weigh them down, and the places of burial evoking fear are completely desolate sites. Cf. *San (Volk)*, *Die Evolution des Menschen*, evolution-mensch.de/Anthropologie/San_(Volk)#cite_ref-37 [accessed 7.11.2024]. According to anthropologist Lorna Marshall (1898–2002), the !Kung tribe of the San nation believed in the existence of Ilgauwasi, i.e., spirits of deceased ancestors residing in heaven and possessing the ability to visit the living. More on the religious beliefs of the !Kung: L. Marshall, *!Kung Bushman Religious Beliefs*, "Africa. Journal of the International African Institute" 1962, vol. 32, no. 3, p. 221–252.

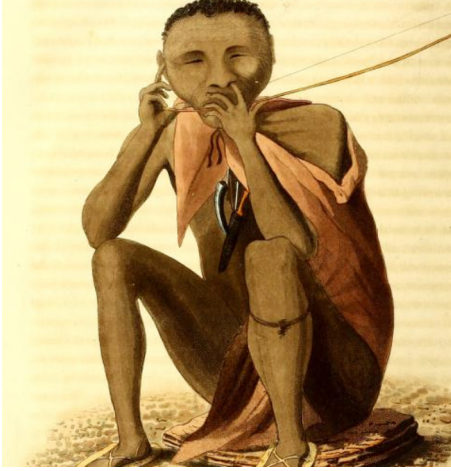


Fig. 7. A San person playing on a musical bow (source: W.J. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, vol. 1, London 1822, Fig. 9)

healed by cutting off a fragment of a finger. They used Shocoa ointment prepared from plants of the Rutaceae family (*Rutaceae* Juss.) as a remedy for numerous ailments. They also believed in resurrection, which only ostriches and the Moon were to experience.¹⁰⁴ As a result of the belief in the truth of various superstitions – that animals herald death, or that children laughing at the Moon provoked its anger – they became their slaves.¹⁰⁵ Rehman's account lacks information about the belief in the existence of an omnipresent creator god !Xu. Although in the 1870s the San from the Maloti Mountains still considered Ckaggen to be the creator of the world, calling him their father, and therefore still practised

animal fetishism, it was the members of this people who, for the most part, worshipped only celestial bodies at that time. This is evidence of the inconstancy of their beliefs and rituals, a trait characteristic of many animistic religions. Another manifestation of the San culture was music. A primitive instrument resembling a violin was used, a so-called musical bow with a tight string, likely made from an animal intestine (Fig. 7).¹⁰⁶

Although the San showed at least partial social, linguistic and cultural distinctiveness from other African peoples, they gave the impression of being excluded from social progress. Searching for the reasons for this situation, Rehman referred to the findings of the German naturalist and traveller Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) – who claimed that human mental development largely depended on the surrounding nature – and the British cultural historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862) – who proved that, apart from nature, the most important determinant of development was the availability of food. In the opinion of the Polish botanist, the natural environment predetermined the way of human life in the first place, with reason shaping it further.¹⁰⁷ According to the historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, the San were so reluctant to transform the environment that they resolved to adapt to it at all costs.¹⁰⁸ The art they created reflected nature, and the foundation of their mythology was fetishism. The rock paintings attributed to them in caves near Murewa¹⁰⁹ in Zimbabwe or in the Drakensberg Mountains date back approximately a thousand years.¹¹⁰ Considering the style and artistic technique, it was once believed

104 A. Rehman, *Echa*, pp. 174–175.

105 Ibidem, p. 176.

106 Ibidem, p. 180.

107 Ibidem, p. 181–182.

108 F. Fernández-Armesto, *Cywilizacje*, p. 66.

109 Murewa – a town located 75 km from the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare.

110 The rock paintings of the San peoples are abundant in the Maloti-Drakensberg Park and the Koebee Valley in South Africa. See *From Angola to Zimbabwe. Remarkable Heritage of Southern Africa*, Midrand 2022, p. 43; J. Hollmann, *Preliminary Report on the Koebee Rock Paintings, Western Cape Province, South Africa*, "The South African Archaeological Bulletin" 1993, vol. 48, no. 157, p. 16–25.

that all such pictorial works in South Africa were their work.¹¹¹ When inspecting some of them, Rehman noticed that the paint prepared from various types of soil and animal fat was applied with little sticks. Animals, particularly antelopes, were most often depicted. Although the art of the San, like their language, was perceived by many as not worth exploring and preserving for future generations,¹¹² staying near Worcester on the Hex River, he copied the drawings which he had come across in a rock crevice.¹¹³ Their fate remains unknown. His Africanist works do not contain illustrative material.

Despite attempts to shift from hunting to agriculture, which they were unable to develop due to barren soils, the San were compelled to continue hunting and occasionally stealing livestock from the Khoekhoe, which led to their reputation as thieves. They were treated with extreme brutality by the Dutch colonists.¹¹⁴ The text of the Polish traveller – outraged by the scale of the genocide – mentions expeditions called ‘commando’, organized for defensive purposes. In fact, the aim was often to kill as many natives as possible. According to the account of one participant, during one of the thirty-two such ‘hunts’ in which he took part, two hundred San people were killed.¹¹⁵

While describing the San, Rehman – despite not omitting facts that hurt their general image – tried to present them mainly in a favorable light, emphasizing their cultural activity. Also, in later anthropological literature, we will find several examples of presenting this people with an emphasis on the positive. This is evidenced by the works of American scholars, such as Victor Barnouw and Marvin Harris, which, in Mathias Georg Guenther’s opinion, distort and embellish the general image of the San by adding fictitious elements.

Khoekhoe

The Khoekhoe ethnic group (also known as Hottentots or Amalu) has inhabited Southern Africa for approximately 30,000 years. Its members, leading a nomadic lifestyle, departed from the eastern part of the continent, reaching the north-east and south, where they displaced the San. In contrast to them, the Khoekhoe were distinguished by greater height, the median of which was estimated by the German anthropologist Gustav Fritsch (1837–1927) to be 160.4 cm.¹¹⁶ According to Rehman, they were also characterized by a better physique. Their faces often showed indifference and confusion. While describing the Khoekhoe’s physiognomy, the Polish traveller omitted the issue of steatopygia among

111 K. Moszyński, *Malowidła naskalne prymitywów Afryki Południowej ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem techniki ich wykonania*, “Światowit. Rocznik poświęcony archeologii przeddziewięcioletniej i badaniom pierwotnej kultury polskiej i słowiańskiej” 1960, vol. 23, p. 127–128.

112 M.G. Guenther, *From “Brutal Savages” to “Harmless People”*. *Notes on the Changing Western Image of the Bushmen*, “Paideuma” 1980, vol. 26, p. 129.

113 A. Rehman, *Echa*, pp. 177–180.

114 According to Rehman, the Boers were oppressed by the English. After leaving the Cape Colony, they established their own republics, where they could not feel safe either. The threat from England made them distrustful, suspicious and inhospitable to strangers. See A. Rehman, *Boerowie jako strona wojująca (przez naocznego świadka)*, “Kurier Warszawski” 18.02.(02.03).1881, no. 49, p. 1.

115 Idem, *Echa*, p. 187, 215; idem, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, vol. 1 (9), issue 1, p. 123, idem, *Podróże*, p. 39–40. On the subject of commando, see also A. Mountain, *The First People*, p. 30–31.

116 The Khoekhoe became shorter in stature as a result of mixed marriages with the San. F. von Lushan, *On the Racial Affinities of the Hottentots*, “South African Journal of Science” 1905, vol. 3, issue 1, p. 117.

women, not mentioning the case of Saartjie Baartman at all.¹¹⁷ It was common practice for the Khoekhoe to wear clothes and sandals,¹¹⁸ including items purchased from Europeans. An obligatory element of female attire was a headscarf. Men often wore a long coat, although, as illustrated in a book by the French naturalist and traveller François Levaillant (1753–1824),¹¹⁹ who in the first half of the 1780s was in South Africa, it was also worn by women (Fig. 8). Various ornaments and jewellery made from copper sheet, brass, wire, nails and buttons acquired from colonists enjoyed great popularity and were considered extremely valuable. Some young men whom he once encountered wore hats decorated with ostrich feathers. Semi-circular huts of the Khoekhoe were covered with animal skins, canvas and, less often, with cardboard or sheet metal.¹²⁰ The untidiness inside them gave a depressing impression.¹²¹ When describing these households, Rehman sometimes called them ‘mud huts’.¹²²

For centuries, the Khoekhoe made their living by raising cattle and sheep, which distinguished them from the San.¹²³ This was already noted by Bartolomeu Dias (ca. 1450–1500), who in 1488 reached the southern end of Africa, calling the Mossel Bay – Angra dos Vaqueiros (Bay of Cowherds).¹²⁴ Rehman, on the other hand, mentioned the word *koup*, meaning ‘pasture’ in the Khoekhoe language.¹²⁵ Their diet was based on milk and meat, including game from hunting, as well as fruit and roots. For this reason, the Bantu used the term ‘Amalu’ to describe them, i.e., those who prefer to kill cattle. The rapprochement with the colonists meant that, in addition to the bow and poisoned arrows, they began to use firearms. Unfavourable environmental conditions, including a shortage of water and grass for grazing cattle, necessitated frequent relocation.¹²⁶ Unlike the San, they did not develop pictorial art. Instead, they showed an interest in music by playing a bow fitted

117 Saartjie Baartman/Sawtche (ca. 1798–1815) – came from the Eastern Cape Province. Initially, she was a slave on a Boer farm, and her steatopygia attracted the attention of British naval surgeon, Alexander Dunlop. As a result of his actions, in 1810, she was sent to England, where, deceived by the promise of freedom and earning money, she was displayed publicly in a humiliating way (later also in the Netherlands and France) as an ‘African peculiarity’, receiving the nickname ‘Hottentot Venus’. In 1815, she was examined by a French zoologists Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772–1844) and Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), who, following Saartjie Baartman’s demise in Paris, purchased her corpse for further research, and prepared a report, scandalous from today’s point of view, published in 1817 in “Mémoires du Muséum d’histoire naturelle”, which serves as proof of the racism prevailing at that time. Her remains were solemnly buried in South Africa only in 2002. Cf. S. Solly, G. Moojen, B. Lindfors, *Courting the Hottentot Venus*, “Africa. Rivista Trimestrale Di Studi e Documentazione Dell’Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente” 1985, vol. 40, no. 1, p. 133–148; M. Lorenc, „Wenus Hotentocka” jako kolonialna reprezentacja kolorowej kobiety, [in:] *Środowisko przyrodnicze*, p. 531–544.

118 Drawings showing Khoekhoe sandals, see F. Ratzel, *Völkerkunde*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1885, p. 91.

119 Almost a century before Rehman, Levaillant studied the nature of South Africa. He was mainly interested in birds. In 1880, he arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. Returning to Europe in 1884, he brought over two thousand botanical and zoological specimens. The aftermath of his travels were travel books translated into other languages: *Voyage de M. Le Vaillant dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique, par le cap de Bonne-Espérance, dans les années 1780*, 81, 82, 83, 84 et 85, 2 vols., Paris 1790; *Second voyage dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique, par le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, dans les années 1783, 84 et 85*, 3 vols., Paris 1795–1796. He was also the author of several scientific monographs, including *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux d’Afrique*, 6 vols., Paris 1796–1808. See more L.C. Rookmaaker, *The Zoological Exploration of Southern Africa 1650–1790*, Rotterdam 1989, p. 177–271.

120 Drawings of Khoekhoe houses, see. F. Ratzel, *Völkerkunde*, vol. 1, p. 98–99.

121 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 194–199; idem, *Szkice*, p. 143–144.

122 Idem, *Szkice*, p. 136.

123 A. Reman, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 265, p. 1; E. Boonzaier, C. Malherbe, A. Smith, P. Berens, *The Cape Herders. A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Athens 2000, p. 36.

124 A. Rehman, *Podróże*, p. 43; A.B. Smith, *Prehistoric Pastoralism in the Southwestern Cape, South Africa*, “World Archaeology” 1983, vol. 15, no. 1, *Transhumance and Pastoralism*, p. 79.

125 A. Rehman, *Szkice*, p. 182.

126 Idem, *Echa*, p. 200–201.

with a quill of a feather or a piece of reed called *gora*.¹²⁷

Echoes from Southern Africa contains general information about the Khoekhoe religion. However, the material collected by Rehman is chaotic and full of contradictions. Some believed that they did not profess any religion. Others, on the other hand, claimed that they were followers of monotheism in the form of the god U-Tiko, distinguished good from evil and believed in the immortality of the human soul. Rehman did not believe the stories of practising monotheism, but certainly the members of the Koranna tribe worshipped their former chief or sorcerer Chui-Ckoaba, who once miraculously recovered from a knee injury, becoming an object of worship after his death. Worship also surrounded Heici-Eibib – another hero (perhaps a personification of the Moon) who died and was resurrected several times. In order to commemorate him, piles of stones were erected, and dances and singing were organized. There was also information circulating about another deity, Cui-kwaw. The Khoekhoe, who were not influenced by European missionaries, worshipped the Moon. During the full moon, they performed ceremonies. They ascribed supernatural properties to amulets. They considered illness and death to be unnatural phenomena that local sorcerers could bring upon someone or rescue one from them. Fetishistic beliefs were present among them, particularly in relation to the mantis, which colonists referred to as the 'Hottentot god'.¹²⁸ When entering into marriages, they carefully avoided close kinship. Polygamy was practised occasionally. Drunkenness and addiction to alcohol were serious problems. Rehman pointed out the mechanism behind this addiction. One of the adverse consequences of the colonial conquest of Africa was an attempt to accustom the native population to alcohol, which had a detrimental effect on the local tribes. Alcohol as a cause of addiction and resulting social problems can therefore be regarded as one of the destructive tools used in the European conquest of this continent.¹²⁹ In an attempt to justify their imperial policies, the great powers portrayed African peoples as primitive, carefree, naïve, lacking in subtle feelings and incapable of governing themselves.¹³⁰ The



Fig. 8. A Khoekhoe woman (source: F. Le Vaillant, *Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa, by the Way of the Cape of Good Hope; in the Years 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84, and 85*, vol. 1, London 1790, Pl. II.)

127 Ibidem, p. 209.

128 Ibidem, p. 206–208; idem, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, 1878, vol. 1 (9), vol. 3, p. 477.

129 Idem, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 266, p. 1; idem, *Ludy pierwotne Południowej Afryki*, 1878, vol. 1, vol. 3, p. 469–475.

130 A. Kwiatek, *Oswoić egzotykę. Obraz rdzennych mieszkańców Czarnej Afryki w publikacjach Ligi Morskiej i Kolonialnej ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem miesięcznika „Morze”*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Towarzystwa Doktorantów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Nauki Społeczne” 2011, no. 2 (1), p. 34–38.

English historian and traveller Thomas Herbert (1606–1682) cast the suspicion, criticized by Rehman, that the Khoekhoe dug up the graves of the colonists and fed on their corpses.¹³¹

The colonists clearly separated themselves from the Black people. One of the protagonists in Rehman's account – a Dutch ox herder – when asked if the teenage Khoekhoe helping him was his son, replied with indignation: 'He, being my son?! Sir, my father was white, my mother was white, I am white, my wife is white, my children are white, we are all white, and this is a black Hottentot; do you not see that he is as black as the soil?'.¹³² Racial segregation, which already existed at that time in what was later to become the Union of South Africa, transformed into Apartheid.

Bantu people

There is no doubt that of the black-skinned peoples, Rehman took the greatest interest in the Bantu population (mainly Xhosa and Zulus) – referring to them, in accordance with the contemporaneous terminology, as 'Kaffirs' – who gradually arrived in southern Africa from the northern part of the continent.¹³³ They were divided into numerous tribes differing in language, customs and rituals: Basotho, Tswana, Bamangwato, Fengu, Herero, Xhosa, Ovambo, Swazi, Mpondo, Tumbuka, Makalaka, Matabele, Mashona, Umtelwa, Zulu¹³⁴ and others.¹³⁵ It is reported that the term 'Kaffirs', which now only has a historical significance, was introduced by the Arabs due to the colonial wars of the British and Boers¹³⁶ with the Xhosa and Zulu peoples.¹³⁷ The term 'land/country of Kaffirs' was used by the Arab diplomat Leo Africanus (ca. 1485–1554).¹³⁸ The Jesuit traveller Michał Boym (1612 or 1614–1659) called the coastal part of southeast Africa 'Kaffraria'.¹³⁹ One of the English sources, which also refers to this region as 'Kaffirland', gives six different geographical areas as its location. In general, it can be assumed that Kaffraria included the territory from the Keiskamma River to the Maputo Bay.¹⁴⁰ Other sources reported that the 'Kaffirs' were a branch of the Bantu tribe including: Ama-Zulu, Mashona, Fengu and Matabele, who used¹⁴¹ a language divided into two branches:

131 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 200.

132 Idem, *Szkice*, p. 140–141.

133 Idem, *Echa*, p. 281–282. Rehman reported that the Bantu came to South Africa in the 17th and 18th c. However, this happened much earlier. See F. Lander, T. Russell, *The Archaeological Evidence for the Appearance of Pastoralism and Farming in Southern Africa*, "PLOS One" 2018, no. 13 (6), p. 1–21.

134 In Rehman's writings: 'Zulu'.

135 In his African studies, Rehman listed a dozen or so tribes he had met or heard about. Idem, *Keczeweyo*, no. 46, p. 1.

136 Many Poles, especially from the Russian partition, expressed solidarity with the Boers especially at the beginning of the 20th c. See P. Zajas, *Poolese compendia over Zuid-Afrika in het begin van de 20 eeuw: de Aesopische uitweg*, "Tydskrif vir geesteswetenskappe" 2009, vol. 49, no. 2, p. 321–332.

137 *Nowa encyklopedia powszechna PWN*, vol. 4, *Ion-Lebs*, Warszawa 2004, s.v. Kafrowie.

138 L. Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things therein Contained*, vol. 1, ed. by R. Brown, trans. by J. Pory, New York 2010, p. 65.

139 E. Kajdański, *Michał Boym. Ostatni wysłannik dynastii Ming*, Warszawa 1988, p. 23; P. Zajas, *Polskie postcolonial studies?*, p. 204.

140 *The Encyclopaedia Britannica or Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature. Eight edition*, vol. 13, Edinburgh 1857, s.v. Kaffraria.

141 Bantu languages in southern Africa are currently spoken by approx. 130 million people. Cf. D.W. Phillipson, *The Spread of the Bantu Language*, "Scientific American" 1977, vol. 236, no. 4, p. 106.

Kaffir–Zulu and Ronga–Xhosa.¹⁴² In a geography textbook from the mid-19th c., which was approved for the education of youth in Galicia, the mention of 'Kaffirs' stated only that 'they were tall and shapely but wilder than Negroes'. Also, just like Khoekhoe, they only had a very rudimentary concept of religion.¹⁴³ In the *Reminiscences of the Last Kafir War*, which was published a little later, there is a mention of 'Kaffirs' endowed with a wonderful physique, who would make perfect models for any sculptor wanting to recreate the beauty of the human body.¹⁴⁴

When he was staying in Kimberley in January 1876,¹⁴⁵ Rehman examined the physiognomy of the Kaffirs labouring at the local diamond mine. He stated that their common features included brown skin and curly hair. Compared to Khoekhoe and Sana, they stood out by having much greater average height, estimated at 171 cm. They were particularly fond of various ornaments. They liked to wear brass and iron earrings, necklaces, glass pearls and beads, brown hoops, strings with lion and panther teeth or bird claws, which were very common among men, or wire bracelets on arms and legs. In some cases, the bracelets were placed directly below the knees (Fig. 9). A much-liked decoration among Basotho women was a rectangular piece of leather finished with metal nails or beads, referred to as *ameklate*, which was worn on a string around the neck. The Zulu paid great attention to their hairstyle, regarding it as a person's most important ornament. Hair styling was a woman's job. The first method involved carefully combing out the curly hair, which made it longer. The second popular hairstyle resembled a cap, and it was obtained by cutting the hair in a special way. Yet another method involved shaving the occiput clean and styling the remaining hair into a roll, with its edges shaped using a sticky substance. The finished hairstyle was decorated with porcupine bones or bird feathers, producing an interesting visual effect.¹⁴⁶

Men of the Basotho people wore a cane, a pin, or a porcupine spike in their pierced earlobes. Sometimes, the edge of the earlobe was pierced multiple times, and earrings were placed in the holes. Snuffboxes were commonly used and crafted by some people from animal blood mixed with red clay. Footwear was unknown. Wearing headwear was not practised. Generally, little interest was taken in European clothes, and if anything was purchased, it was mostly shirts and trousers.¹⁴⁷ In *Echoes from Southern Africa*, Rehman mentioned that he had bought various small items several times. The sellers were exclusively men. The prices women demanded for their ornaments were remarkably high.¹⁴⁸ In 1876, while being hosted in a kraal of the Malecani¹⁴⁹ (a tribe of the Basotho people), he noticed that a string of white corals tied to the string was a round snuffbox, made of an unidentified fruit, and an iron object resembling a flat spoon. After much

142 *Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Powszechna Wydawnictwa „Gutenberg”, vol. 7, Izaszar do Kolejowe rozkłady jazdy*, Kraków [s.l.], s.v. Kafrowie.

143 A.E.C. Gaultier, *Geografia przez L. E. K. Gaultier podług XVIIIgo wydania dla domowego i szkolnego użytku młodzieży*, ed. by H. Witowski, Lwów 1854, p. 140–141.

144 *Pamiętnik z ostatniej wojny kaferskiej*, p. 359.

145 More on this subject: M. Będkowski, *Polacy na krańcach świata: XIX wiek*, part 3, Warszawa 2016, p. 32–45.

146 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 228, 233, 235; idem, *Podróże*, p. 190, 192.

147 Idem, *Echa*, p. 229, 231–232; idem, *Podróże*, p. 191–192.

148 Idem, *Echa*, p. 233.

149 Kraal is a village of the Bantu and Khoekhoe peoples, usually palisaded, with a square in the middle to keep cattle. Cf. *Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Powszechna Wydawnictwa „Gutenberg”, vol. 8, Kolejowe sądy rozjemcze do Laud William*, Kraków [s.l.], s.v. Kraal.



Fig. 9. A Zulu youth from Inanda in a dance costume (source: G.F. Angas, *The Kafirs*, London 1849, Tab. 19)

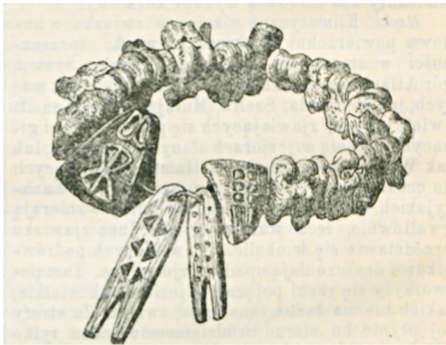


Fig. 10. An amulet of 'Kaffir' sorcerers (source: *S. Orgelbranda Encyklopedia powszechna z ilustracjami i mapami, vol. 1, od litery A do Ażur*, Warszawa 1898, s.v. Afryka).

(Fig. 10). Superstitious beliefs were widespread among the Bantu people.¹⁵²

According to the British writer Harriet Ward (1808–1873), who lived in the Cape Colony for several years, many Bantu, to whom she generally ascribed Arab roots – as reflected

pleading, the older man who owned this interesting item decided to sell it.¹⁵⁰

Regarding the information provided by Rehman on the Bantu religion, it is noteworthy that many Bantu people believed in the afterlife and resurrection. Among them, the Basotho and Makalaka practised the custom of tying the hands and feet of their dead. In Natal, the remains of the deceased were excavated from the graves to be used for magic rituals. People were afraid of ghouls referred to as Itongo, Mocimo or Modimo, which brought misfortune and death upon the living. In situations of danger, such as diseases, a sorcerer would be consulted to explain the required sacrifice for the evil spirit. For this purpose, an animal was chosen from their livestock. After it was killed, the meat was left overnight in an empty hut so that the spectre could feed on it. The next day, the meat was divided between the sorcerer and the inhabitants of the kraal. Any attempts to practice magic by unauthorized persons – which meant anyone other than the sorcerer – were severely punished. There were various cases of intrigue and abuse on the part of sorcerers, which brought death upon innocent people. Fetishism was less developed in the Bantu population than among the San and Khoekhoe. It was manifested, for instance, in the belief that deceased chiefs of kraals appeared to people in the form of a snake. The Zulu believed in Unkulunkulu, a being – or a deity, according to some – which formed the human being out of mud after emerging from the swamp.¹⁵¹ Talismans were commonly used

150 A. Rehman, *Podróże*, p. 155–157.

151 The Zulu consider the god of heaven (sometimes a kind of energy or spirit pervading the universe) also called uKqili, i.e., 'wise' or uGuqubadele, meaning 'the irresistible one', to be their best guardian. Cf. A. Cotterell, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia*, p. 46, 174.

152 A. Rehman, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 268, p. 2; idem, *Echa*, p. 269–276.

in practices such as the use of the assagai spear¹⁵³ – believed only in what they saw. They could not imagine that there were other countries besides their own. Some of them were convinced that the English were a nation that lived exclusively on ships. Ward urged the Bantu to adhere to the law, emphasizing in particular the issue of cattle theft. At that time, the regulations did not provide for compensation for settlers, unless the stolen animals could be found in Kaffirland, which was no easy task.¹⁵⁴ She denied them a benevolent image by emphasizing the wickedness of their nature, the relentless and ferocious aspects of their character, and their involvement in the murders of colonists.¹⁵⁵ One of the most tragic episodes of this conflict was the murder of the Boer leader Piet Retief (1780–1838) and his companions by the Zulus in 1838.¹⁵⁶ The consequence of this event was a subsequent massacre near the present-day town of Weenen, when several hundred Boers and their accompanying Basotho and Khoekhoe were killed as a result of fighting with the Zulus, and the Battle of the Ncome River (or the Battle of Blood River).¹⁵⁷

Rehman described the disposition of the Bantu quite differently. He concluded that they were characterized by politeness, gentleness, and hospitality. They were eager to help and shared food if needed. Cheerfulness accompanied them from early childhood. They avoided sadness and grief. On the other hand, a sense of melancholy was induced by loneliness, which they tried to avoid. They were rarely known to exhibit unruly behavior. They were incidentally involved in thefts, and if so, it was only undertaken in order to satisfy hunger. Drunkenness, though present among the Khoekhoe, was only sporadic in the case of the Bantu. Apparently, he had never met any 'Kaffirs' who were arguing with one another. Situations of this type mainly occurred among the wives of the same man, especially if there was a significant age difference between them. They valued justice and showed gratitude and kindness. In return for making a gift of old clothes, Rehman received thanks from the recipient and was given a cake made from corn flour. They easily satisfied their modest life needs. They lived their day-to-day life without planning for the future.¹⁵⁸ Did the Polish traveller not hear anything about the crimes committed by the Bantu in the past? Did he, while travelling alone across vast areas of southern Africa, not realize the potential danger he was facing? It can be assumed that those representatives of the Bantu nation that he had encountered – especially in Natal – made a positive impression on him. There are few negative comments about them to be found in his writings. The features he attributed to them were, among others: pride, propensity to laziness, unreliability, arrogance, and instances of brutal behaviour towards women. These traits and behaviours, however, did not refer to the whole Bantu population. Nevertheless, in one of the fragments of his printed account from 1884, he mentioned that opinions about these people were very diverse, stemming from their fragmentation into different

153 Assagai (djerid) was the basic Bantu hunting weapon next to the club. It featured a narrow spearhead mounted on a short haft. Cf. *Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedja*, s.v. Kafrowie.

154 H. Ward, *Five years in Kaffirland: with Sketches of the Late War in that Country, to the Conclusion of Peace*, vol. 1, London 1848, p. 126–127, 131–134, 137, 139, 188.

155 Ibidem, p. 179, 185–187.

156 J. Grobler, *The Retief Massacre of 6 February 1838 Revisited*, "Historia" 2011, vol. 56, no. 2, p. 113–132.

157 J. Laband, *Bloukrans massacre (1838)*, [in:] *Historical Dictionary of the Zulu Wars*, ed. by J. Laband., Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford 2009 (Historical Dictionaries of War, Revolution, and Civil Unrest, no. 37), p. 16–17.

158 A. Rehman, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, 1879, vol. 2 (14), issue 5, p. 275–276; idem, *Podróże*, p. 198–199; idem, *Echa*, p. 254–258, 261–262; idem, *Keczeweyo*, no. 45, p. 1.

tribes and geographical dispersion. Negative references were made to the Fengu, Xhosa and Tumbuka tribes, which were even considered to be specialized in cattle theft. According to Rehman, their tendency to behave negatively developed as a result of contact with the colonists. He considered the Bantu living north of Maputo Bay¹⁵⁹ and in Eswatini¹⁶⁰ to be the most dangerous tribes, attributing to them a penchant for cannibalism practised during wars or periods of famine. While staying by the Caledon River, he heard about the so-called 'cannibal cave' full of bones, which he did not visit because no guide was available.¹⁶¹ He experienced the greatest disappointment with 'Kafirs' during his expedition to the Limpopo River. Robbed and abandoned by his black companions, he was forced to turn back.¹⁶² According to Zajas, the general portrayal of the Bantu presented by Rehman is idealized and refers to the myth of noble and innocent savages living in harmony with nature.¹⁶³

The Polish scholar regarded the Zulu homesteads – semi-circular huts built on a scaffolding base finished with *tambuki* grass leaves and bark-string buildings – as solidly constructed and comfortable dwellings. The Tswana built the most durable houses. They consisted of clay walls covered with beam roofs. Villages were surrounded by palisades. A talisman depicting a spider, or some other insect, was sometimes hung above the gate made of poles. The Bantu exhibited well-developed craftsmanship skills, exemplified by pillows made from wood. They crafted everyday-use utensils from fired clay. They wove baskets for storing grain. The Bantu from Natal lived in villages called kraals. The huts were surrounded by grass fences. In small backyards with a clay surface, a fire was kept for preparing hot meals. The houses viewed in the Basotho country were protected by stone walls and thorny branches. They were almost always located in hard-to-reach locations. Skillfully integrated into the landscape, they could be nearly impossible for strangers to spot. Villages were ruled by chiefs, subordinate to the king (*ukumkani*), chosen from the wealthiest family. He had the right to settle disputes and, if necessary, impose penalties. Most of the Bantu made a living from farming. It was the women's task to grow sorghum, beans, corn, gourd, tobacco,¹⁶⁴ sweet potatoes and melons. The men were engaged in shepherding. Grain was stored in baskets or in small caves. Two stones were used to grind it. The flour was poured into boiling water, resulting in a thick, goo-like consistency that was served with sour milk. Meat was consumed occasionally. It happened that children were given roasted mice, as well as beetles and locusts. The meat of predators, fish, and birds was avoided, as were eggs, which were considered impure foods. Ablution of hands was practised before and after dining, as well as rinsing the mouth. The vodka sold by Europeans was not particularly popular among the Bantu. Rehman, wishing to express his gratitude with a bottle of alcohol for the opportunity to buy the aforementioned necklace with a snuffbox and a spoon, noted that the man hosting him was satisfied with

159 In Rehman's writings it is called Delagoa Bay – a bay in Mozambique at the mouth of the Maputo River flowing into the Indian Ocean.

160 In Rehman's writings: 'the land of Swazi'.

161 A. Rehman, *Echa*, p. 256, 261, 264–266; idem, *Keczeweyo*, no. 45, p. 1.

162 Ibidem, p. 113–138; idem, *Podróże*, p. 279–294.

163 P. Zajas, *Polskie postcolonial studies?*, p. 216.

164 The tobacco cultivated by the Zulu, and even 'tobacco gardens', were mentioned by G.F. Angas. Tobacco was ground on stone and mixed with ash from aloe leaves. G.F. Angas, *The Kafirs Illustrated in a Series of Drawings Taken among the Amazulu, Amaponda, and Amakosa Tribes; also, Portraits of the Hottentot, Malay, Fingo, and Other Races Inhabiting Southern Africa: Together with Sketches of Landscape Scenery in the Zulu Country, Natal, and the Cape Colony*, London 1849, Tab. 26.



Fig. 11. Preparation of beer in the Gudu kraal on the Tugala River (source: G.F. Angas, *The Kafirs*, London 1849, Tab. 26)

only one shot of vodka, refusing to accept the gift. For their own needs, in turn, many Bantu produced sour beer (Fig. 11) and an alcoholic beverage from molasses considered distasteful by the colonists. As far as stimulants are concerned, they attached the greatest value to hemp leaves or tobacco offered by the Europeans.¹⁶⁵ According to Angas, a beer called *outehualla*, made from fermented millet, was served during ceremonies, particularly at weddings.¹⁶⁶

From Rehmań's account, we learn about the strong bonds between Bantu children and their parents. These relationships were usually characterized by respect and attachment. The girls helped their mothers with their daily chores, while the boys looked after the grazing cattle. In Natal, children were given names immediately after birth. Upon reaching adulthood, a boy could change his name, which was a common practice. The Polish scholar also learned through word-of-mouth accounts that some Bantu were capable of killing their own children under certain circumstances. Infants with congenital defects were killed. There were instances when children who suffered permanent disabilities from accidents were treated similarly. When twins were born, one of them was sentenced to death by leaving it at the mercy of hyenas. The choice of which of the newborns was to die was determined by drawing pegs, which were considered a tool of divination. Polygamy was practised. A husband could exchange or give his wife as a gift to another man. The woman's value was expressed in terms of the number of oxen. It was forbidden for close

165 A. Rehmań, *Echa*, p. 236–246; idem, *Podróże*, p. 157, 169; idem, *Ludy dzikie*, no. 267, p. 1; idem, *Keczeweyo*, no. 43, p. 1–2.

166 G.F. Angas, *The Kafirs*, Tab. 26.

relatives to marry. Incestuous relationships and adultery were punished severely, even by death. In Zulu tribes, the girls who experienced sexual initiation before marriage were denied the right to marry later in life. To celebrate the wedding, several days of festive dining and dances were organized in the huts of the newlyweds. Entering into marriage resulted in the woman becoming her husband's slave. In the event of his death, she went through a period of mourning, avoiding social interactions and meat. In the Tswana and Zulu cultures, the mother often took the name of her eldest son. The wife dealt only with preparing meals, raising children and farming. One of her numerous responsibilities was to make butter, which was used for cosmetic purposes. The Bantu possessed a valuable skill of smelting iron, from which they crafted wire, axe and hoe heads, as well as assagai spear heads. They also specialized in copper processing. There was no mention of land ownership, which was deemed a commonly held property. The right to use a free patch of land was acquired just by occupying it.¹⁶⁷

Dissemination of knowledge about the indigenous peoples of South Africa

At the beginning of December 1877, in Warsaw, Rehman gave a three-part lecture titled *On the primitive peoples, and those currently living in southern Africa, based on my own observations collected during a two-year voyage in the years 1875–1877*. While talking about the San, he stated that they used moral concepts similar to those of Europeans. They created their own mythology, superstitions, poetry and art.¹⁶⁸ The economic exploitation conducted by the colonists, combined with the alcohol they made widely available, had a particularly disabling impact on the social development of the Khoekhoe. The Bantu peoples were the most developed ones.¹⁶⁹



Fig. 12. A tool for digging up tubers and edible roots from before 1880 (source Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, inventory no. 18765/MEK, 18766/MEK, photo by Marcin Wąsik)

In 1881, in Bonn, he gave a talk on his two voyages to Africa.¹⁷⁰ While leading the Geographical Institute of UF from 1885 to 1900, he taught the Geography of Africa course five times¹⁷¹.

Another way Rehman popularized ethnographic knowledge about the indigenous peoples of South Africa was through his collection of objects related to their everyday life. These items are now

- 167 A. Rehman, *Ludy pierwotne południowej Afryki*, 1879, vol. 2 (14), issue 4, p. 31–44; idem, *Keczeweyo*, no. 43, p. 2.
- 168 "Gazeta Polska" 04.12.1877, no. 268, p. 2; *Odczyt dra Antoniego Remana w sali resursy Obywatelskiej „O pierwotnych ludach Afryki”*, "Kurjer Warszawski" 21.11(04.12).1877, no. 268, p. 1–2.
- 169 *Odczyt Dra Antoniego Remana w sali resursy Obywatelskiej „O pierwotnych ludach Afryki”*, "Kurjer Warszawski" 24.11.(06.12)1877, no. 270, p. 2; "Kurjer Warszawski" 28.11.(10.12)1877, no. 272, p. 2.
- 170 *Allgemeine Sitzung am 4. Juli 1881*, "Verhandlungen des naturhistorischen Vereines der preussischen Rheinlande und Westfalens" 1881, vol. 8, p. 162–163.
- 171 *Skład personelu i program wykładów w zimowym półroczu 1885/6*, Lwów 1885, p. 42; *Skład personelu i program wykładów w letnim półroczu 1885/6*, Lwów 1886, p. 28; *Skład uniwersytetu i program wykładów w półroczu zimowym 1889/90*, Lwów 1889, p. 30; *Skład uniwersytetu i program wykładów w letnim półroczu 1894/5*, Lwów 1895, p. 50; *Skład uniwersytetu i program wykładów w letnim półroczu 1899/900*, Lwów 1900, p. 47.



Fig. 13. 'Kaffir' necklaces from South Africa (source: Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, inventory no. 66779–66785, photo by Marcin Jędrysiak)

part of the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow (Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udziela w Krakowie, MEK). The collection comprises at least 24 items. However, not all have been described, and some need conservation efforts. These include: jewellery, weapons, snuffboxes and elements of clothing.¹⁷² Two tools used for excavating tubers and larvae are associated with the San peoples (Fig. 12). These objects, equipped with spherical stone weights, date back to the 1870s. These are the only objects of this kind in the Polish museum collections.¹⁷³ An item associated with the Bantu or Khoekhoe sorcerers in the MEK collection is a pre-1880 rain charm whistle, made from the horn of a male *Antidorcas marsupialis*. It was an indispensable attribute of the so-called 'rain charmers'.¹⁷⁴ Some Bantu jewellery was also sent to Krakow. The multi-coloured 'Kaffir necklaces' are of particular interest within the MEK collection (Fig. 13).

Conclusions

Rehman's two trips to the colonies of South Africa in the second half of the 1870s provided valuable geobotanical and geographical knowledge. While conducting natural research, he also explored the everyday culture of the indigenous peoples – the Bantu, Khoekhoe, and San. His contribution to the ethnographic exploration of southern Africa was, of course, considerably smaller than that of Orpen or Bleek. It is worth noting that, during the time of Polish partitions, the primary sources of knowledge about African

172 Information obtained from MEK on 09.01.2024.

173 J. Kukuczka, *Narzędzie do wykopywania bulw i korzeni jadalnych*, Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow (Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udziela w Krakowie), etnomuzeum.eu/zbiory/narzedzie-dowykopywania-bulw-i-korzeni-jadalnych [accessed 09.01.2024].

174 Idem, *Gwizdek do przywoływania deszczu*, Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow (Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udziela w Krakowie), inventory no. 62183/MEK, etnomuzeum.eu/zbiory/gwizdek-doprzywoływania-deszczu [accessed 09.01.2024].

indigenous cultures were missionary magazines and foreign-language travel literature. The information provided by Rehman in his two books from 1881 and 1884, as well as in articles published in "Ateneum" and "Kurier Warszawski", offered Polish readers a wealth of new insights into indigenous peoples and the changes they experienced due to European colonization. Some of the information shared by the Polish scholar was the result of the specialist literature he studied. Other pieces of information were an outcome of field research using what was later called the technique of participant observation and ethnographic interview. As a result, he produced noteworthy publications of considerable scientific and educational value. The author exposed and dispelled numerous stereotypes regarding the tribes he encountered. He polemicized with the commonly held opinions about them. He openly opposed their dehumanization and xenophobia. He rejected all claims that the San practised necrophagy as false. In his descriptions of the aboriginal peoples, he emphasized that they had their own cultures and belief systems developed long before the arrival of Europeans. The manifestations of those cultures and beliefs could be found in their language, art, music, poetry, mythology, and fetishism. Despite the primitive living conditions, the tribes he encountered used similar moral concepts to those of civilized nations, which was especially conspicuous in some Bantu tribes. Gratitude, kindness, and honesty were among the noblest qualities of their demeanor. On the other hand, some of their rituals and behaviours incited fear among Europeans. The Polish scholar condemned the crimes of the English and Dutch colonialism, observing that imperialism – understood as a civilizing mission and a duty of the European powers – brought with it many negative consequences: from slavery and racial segregation to economic exploitation and the introduction of diseases previously unknown in Africa. However, he did not entirely abandon an ethnocentric perspective.

Having arrived at his destination, Rehman, who was well versed in the literature on Africa, corrected the accounts of earlier French and German travellers. He repeatedly drew attention to inaccuracies and omissions in their descriptions. Unlike other authors who put African wildlife in the foreground, the Polish geobotanist also addressed the ethnographic aspect. The principle of avoiding interaction with the indigenous population, adopted by him in the book from 1881, was rescinded in the publication from 1884. Rejecting the dehumanization of South Africa in his descriptions – characteristic of works produced from the second half of the 18th c. – he focused not only on nature but also on the human being.

In addition to his published works, Rehman should also be credited with other contributions to the popularization of knowledge about Africa's indigenous peoples, such as his lectures delivered in Warsaw in 1877. As a naturalist, he brought a herbarium containing almost 9,000 specimens from South Africa. As an 'ethnographer', Rehman assembled a small but unique collection housed in Polish museums – comprising objects related to the everyday life of the Bantu and Khoisan peoples. The artifacts preserved in the MEK collection document aspects of their craftsmanship and ritual practices. In conclusion, Rehman stands among the most important Polish amateur ethnographers of the 19th c. with an interest in the indigenous peoples of southern Africa.

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Ludy Bantu i Khoisan jako przedmiot zainteresowań etnograficznych Antoniego Rehmana

Antoni Rehman (1840–1917) – uczyony związany z uniwersytetami w Krakowie i we Lwowie – znany jest głównie jako botanik, chociaż większość życia zawodowego przeżył w służbie geografii. Będąc doświadczonym podróżnikiem, w drugiej połowie lat siedemdziesiątych XIX w. przebywał w Afryce Południowej prowadząc badania geobotaniczne i geograficzne. Trzy lata spędzone w miejscu ożywionej ekspansji kolonialnej były również okazją do zapoznania tamtejszych autochtonów z grup Khoisan i Bantu. Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest historii etnograficznych badań Rehmana wśród ludów rdzennych z Basuto, Kolonii Natalu, Kolonii Przylądkowej, Republiki Południowoafrykańskiej i Wolnego Państwa Orani. Ich autor zdemaskował i rozprawił się z wieloma stereotypami dotyczącymi tamtejszych plemion. Polemizował z obiegowymi opiniami na ich temat. Otwarcie wystąpił przeciwko ich odczłowieczaniu i ksenofobii oraz przyczynił się do spopularyzowania wiedzy o kulturach afrykańskich grup autochtonicznych.