Visual Testaments:
Re-Collecting the Photographic Archive of the Upoto Mission, 1890-1915

Volume 1

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August 2020

Abstract

This thesis explores the historical information that can be retrieved through a re-collection of archival sources relating to the British Baptist Missionary Society station of Upoto, established in the Congo Free State, between 1890 and 1915. It asks what a reassembly of photographic and textual artefacts can reveal about the events which occurred in the making of a Christian community. Photographs now dispersed between different archives in Europe are brought together to understand the relationships which shaped this particular religious encounter.

The approach to photographic material as sources of historical evidence is two-fold. Firstly, close 'readings' of photographs' content are used to interpret the occasions when images were made in order to analyse the different intersecting motivations of Congolese and British actors. By engaging with photographs, this thesis is able to draw out new kinds of historical traces and question the information articulated in surviving written sources. Secondly, an anthropological perspective, which treats photographs as objects of material culture, enables a consideration of how photographs were made meaningful in diverse social contexts. In doing so it demonstrates how Upoto was represented to people in Britain and how events in the Congo had reverberations beyond the mission field.

This thesis offers insight into a particular moment in the early colonial history of the Congo, shedding light on the actions of Congolese people living at Upoto in response to the arrival of different European organisations. It therefore extends understandings of the transmission of Christianity in Central Africa. It also contributes to scholarship on British evangelical missions as producers of knowledge about Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. The original approach to Upoto's dispersed photographic archive demonstrates the potential of photographic collections to complicate the historical record.

Acknowledgements

Foremost thanks go to the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-east England (CHASE) for the Arts and Humanities Research Council funding that I was awarded in 2016 which enabled me to undertake my doctoral research. I am also grateful to the members of the Sainsbury Research Unit (SRU) who helped me with my PhD application and additional financial assistance for fieldwork. The department has provided an incredibly supportive research community over the past four years.

My sincere thanks go to Prof. John Mack, Dr. Karen Jacobs and Dr. Chris Wingfield, whose combined input as supervisors has helped me to realise my ideas through different stages of the research process. As my primary supervisor, I am grateful to John for his unfailing dedication to the project and my development as an researcher working on Central Africa. He has been generous with his time and expertise and reliable in his assistance, even when circumstances meant that he could not be in Norwich in person.

As my secondary supervisor for the first half of the PhD, Karen has continually challenged me to reappraise archival material, reminding me early on to think in terms of what I had found, as opposed to what I had not. I have valued her guidance and taken inspiration from her research practice since her formal supervisory role ended. I am grateful to Chris for his championing of my research interests which preceded his joining my supervisory team in 2018. He encouraged me to read more widely than I might otherwise have done and brought an enthusiasm for the subject which was a motivating force when my own was slightly waning. I have appreciated both John and Chris's patience over the past year in particular, in which they kept their faith in me. They frequently trusted my instincts about an idea, allowed me the time to develop it and later helped to enrich my arguments.

Special thanks are due to the librarians and archivists at the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, who have put up with my presence in their basement year after year. Without the help of Emma Walsh, Dr. Julian Lock, Emily Burgoyne and Gabriel Ferugean this research would not have been possible. I am grateful to

Emily Burgoyne in particular for sharing her knowledge of the BMS archive, her help in finding material, listening to my pondering its significance, and responding to queries outside of the Library's opening times. Emily made solitary research in the archives a far more enjoyable experience.

I also wish to extend my thanks to Sue Giles and Lisa Graves at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. They both went out of their way to ensure that I got the most out of my museum placement and out of Bristol during my brief stay there. Collections work at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, was made possible thanks to the help of Rachel Hand, Katrina Dring and Jocelyne Dudding, among other museum staff. I am grateful for their knowledge of the collections and the museum's history which informed my approach to their material from the Congo. Johanna Zetterstrom-Sharp at the Horniman Museum and Brendan Carr at Reading Museum were also generous with their time in helping me to access their material. At the Africa Museum in Tervuren, Hein Vanhee and An Cardoen have supported me in navigating the Museum's collections. I am grateful to Patricia Quaghebeur at KADOC in Leuven for her assistance with researching their archives. Thanks also to Patricia Hewitt at the SRU Library for helping to proofread my work.

Thank you to Keith Carey-Smith and David Oram, whose independent investigations into their missionary ancestors helped to fuel this project. Conversations with David and Keith in person and over email have brought different perspectives to bear upon missionary heritage and given my research further contemporary relevance. I wish to thank former BMS missionaries Chris and Christine Spencer, Chris and Jennie Sugg, who welcomed me into their homes and shared their experiences of missionary service in the Congo with me. Their stories transported me to Upoto and brought history to life in ways I had not imagined. I am particularly grateful to Chris and Jennie for enabling me to see colour photographs of Upoto for the first time. I must also thank John Angondo Asaka in Kinshasa who helped me (through my broken French) to source photographs documenting Upoto as it is today.

Special thanks goes to my Belgian colleagues and friends Hannelore Vandenbergen, Vicky Van Bockhaven and Maarten Couttenier, whose early hospitality and expertise helped me to find my feet in the study of Central Africa. Their constructive criticism, along with that of James Green, Carlee Forbes and Rebekah Sheppard has been incredibly valuable in helping me to see my research in relation to other material histories of the Congo. I am very grateful to have met Anke

Schürer-Ries fairly late in the course of my PhD, with whom I was able to discuss missionary photography for hours without fear of boring her.

I have been very fortunate in the friends that I have made since arriving in Norwich. Rosalie Hans, Sylvia Cockburn, Amélie Roussillon, Benjamina Dadzie, Rachel Minott, Claire McGee, Rachel Smith, Bolaji Owoseni, Will Parker, Kerry Stanley and Piers Arnold have provided excellent company and steadfast support throughout my experience of completing the PhD. I am especially grateful to Giulia Nazzaro, Rachel Ainsworth, Abigail Moffett, and Jacob Bongers who greatly improved morale during the months of lockdown and kindly read sections of the thesis. To Giulia I give thanks for her time and wisdom in the final months of writing.

My family, Marina, Richard and Ed have helped me along the research journey with their continuous encouragement and belief in me. I am grateful to David, who has been my companion since the very beginning of this process. Thank you for always lending a willing ear and an outside perspective.

Table of Contents

List of Maps in-Text

List of Abbreviations

BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CEM	Congo Evangelistic Mission
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CRA	Congo Reform Association
LMS	London Missionary Society
Logbook	Upoto Station Logbook
WSC	Western Sub-Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society

Preface: The Beginnings of a Project

This research has roots which developed back in 2013 when I was searching the Pitt Rivers Museum's (PRM) online database for inspiration for my Master's thesis. At that time I was part way through studying for a degree in 'Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology' at the University of Oxford. My trawling of the database led me to come across a brass collar (PRM 2000.49.1) which had originated from the upper Congo in the nineteenth century and had been collected by the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) missionary, John Whitehead. The object itself was compelling, weighing over ten kilograms, and had at some point been given the title 'slave collar' which to me seemed impressively enduring in that it figured prominently in the available description of the digital object provided online. Together these things prompted me to contemplate its provenance and why anyone had gone to the trouble of bringing it to the UK in the first place. Even more intriguing, however, were the photographs also housed by the PRM that were connected to the collar via the Museum's documentation (PRM 2000.49.16-17). The first was a stereograph card depicting a pair of images of a Congolese woman bent over whilst her brass collar was supposedly being removed by a missionary (likely Whitehead). The second was a photographic print showing a view of a Congolese woman wearing the collar (or a near-identical collar) super-imposed onto an image of the collar from above, in the space within its circumference. I was struck by the narratives that seemed to cling to the objects which had been sustained through their various inscriptions that had in turn perpetuated a relationship between individual artefacts during their residence as museum objects. It was also clear to me that this narrative was partial and that the materiality of both the collar and the photographic print contained clues as to their former 'social lives' about which museum documentation was silent (Appadurai 1986). The 'slave collar' attribution had eclipsed any other account of its history in this institutional setting because the information around its production and collection was relatively scant. My interest was piqued further when I learned that, fortuitously, the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society were five minutes' walk away, held by the Angus Library at Regent's Park College. Through subsequent repeat visits to the Angus and conversations with the then college librarian, Emma Walsh and archivist, Dr Julian

Lock, I gained an understanding of the extent of the archive's holdings in relation to BMS activity in the Congo.

My MSc thesis ended up taking an altogether different direction and research into the brass collar was temporarily put to one side. However, after a break from study I found myself still thinking about the BMS archive and the material traces of the Congo mission which had made their way to the UK. A call for papers for the 'Missionaries, Materials and the Making of the Modern World' conference in 2014 seemed to me a sign that it was time to organise my thoughts and chimed with some of the lingering questions I had about the relevance of scattered missionary heritage today (Jacobs and Wingfield 2014). My preliminary ideas about the Congo material at the PRM were cobbled into a paper which, to my surprise, was accepted. The conference, which was held at the University of Cambridge in September 2014, then became the catalyst for putting together a PhD project. I was grateful for the positive feedback that I received from Jane Lydon and David Maxwell at the event which confirmed that the subject was worth pursuing. Chris Wingfield drew my attention to the existence of ethnographic and photograph collections at Cambridge's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) that had been donated by BMS missionaries affiliated with a station in northern Congo and which had been the stimulus for a collaborative project at the Museum with members of the London-based Congolese diaspora group, the Congo Great Lakes Initiative.[1] The collections at MAA proved to be a richer source than I could have anticipated and latterly steered the focus of the research towards just one BMS station in northern Congo, that of Upoto.

I will be forever grateful to Karen Jacobs and John Mack who agreed to interview me for a PhD position at the Sainsbury Research Unit somewhat last minute in December 2015, three days before the end of term. With their generous assistance over the Christmas period, along with that of Lisa Farrington, we were able to put together an application for AHRC CHASE funding which was successful. The beginnings of my doctoral research project will therefore always feel somewhat miraculous, as a request to see one cumbersome object grew into something much greater with the help of a constellation of individuals along the way. As I see it, the thread of continuity between my encounter with artefacts in the PRM and in the

[1] 'Museum archive reconnects a London-based Congolese community with its heritage.' https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/museum-archive-reconnects-a-london-based-congolese-community-with-its-heritage. Date accessed: July 2020.

Angus Library and the thesis as it stands, is the sustained interest in understanding how photographs have been used to author narratives and mediate the experiences of those who have lived among different cultures and world views. The niggling suspicion that the surviving missionary narrative was just one part of the story has compelled me to find alternative ways to think with and about photographs. The agency afforded by photographs when they are brought in relation to different people and artefacts and provided new social settings, has determined not only the subject of this research but also my approach to historical investigation.

Since starting the project my engagement with the material evidence of the thesis has been enriched by the scholarly community of the Sainsbury Research Unit where I have been lucky enough to have been based over the past four years. It has provided a setting in which I have been exposed to anthropological approaches to a world art history of the kind I caught glimpses of but did not have access to during my early academic training. The Sainsbury Research Unit has fostered my first dedicated research into visual and material cultures connected with the African continent but it has nevertheless been infused with inspiration from colleagues whose research interests lie elsewhere in time and place.

Introduction: Landing in the Archive

Material Traces of the Upoto Mission: The Forfeitt Lantern Slide Collection

Housed in the archives of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), located in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, Oxford, UK, is a collection of glass lantern slides which once belonged to the missionary Rev. William Lansbury Forfeitt (Fig. I.1-I.8). The slides' images document Forfeitt's time spent as a missionary at the Baptist mission station of Upoto, which he helped to establish in the Congo Free State in 1890 after leaving his home in Reading. Forfeitt was recruited by the Baptist Missionary Society, headquartered in London, which had first established a presence in the Congo in 1879.[2] The slides constituted a set of mobile images which Forfeitt would have employed during public lectures about his time in the Congo, either for tours made whilst on leave or after his retirement from the field in 1916. Speaking to regional congregations in England, the images would have been used to promote the BMS mission by illustrating aspects of missionary work. The scenes represented in the collection afforded particular sanctioned views of Upoto. They depict portraits of African and European people, of Congolese scenery, BMS infrastructure, mission activity, Congolese evangelists, school groups at Upoto and local industries. The series was held together by an autobiographical thread, evidenced by family portraits of Forfeitt and his wife Anne Marie with their daughter Gladys (Fig. I.1). Hand-written captions visible written on the paper edges and blacked-out surfaces of the lantern slides, intended as titles or prompts, inscribed particular ideas onto the images' material support. These evidence how Forfeitt's public narrative was configured within the linear sequence of numbered slides. In this way the slides were activated through a specific rhetoric of successful mission in Central Africa for audiences in Britain.

This thesis takes as its subject matter the surviving archival material pertaining to the BMS station of Upoto that is dispersed across different institutional collections in the UK. As an artefact, the Forfeitt lantern slide collection contains in microcosm the

[2] The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was founded on 2nd October 1792 in Kettering, Northamptonshire as the 'Particular-Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen' (Stanley 1992: 9-15). From its genesis, the Society sought to establish a broad base of domestic support across Britain to finance oversees missions through congregational donations (Stanley 1992: 16-17). In the nineteenth century, the BMS developed strongholds of congregational support in the East and West Midlands, but failed to gain the support of churches in areas with a history of high Calvinism, such as the east of England (Stanley 1992: 214).

key tension at the centre of this research: what happened at Upoto in the early years of the mission there and what did missionaries articulate about what had happened? The individual images supported on glass slides serve as traces of both actual moments in the history of the Upoto mission and the ways that they later came to be narrated publicly in Britain. As photographic representations they are evidence of how experiences have been refracted as they entered various media over time, acquiring new meanings in the process. Intended as a public interface, the slides were explicitly crafted to bridge temporal, spatial and cultural gaps: between the moment of the photographic event and its recollection. The material form of the slides, intended for use in public displays, indicate some of the deliberate ways in which photographic objects portraying experiences of mission work were mobilised and made meaningful after their creation. As an object of research, the Forfeitt lantern slide collection facilitates a consideration of the ability of historical material to testify in the present to information about the past.

Research into the artefacts connected to the BMS mission at Upoto is important because they are material evidence of a shared intercultural history of British and Congolese people which is yet to be unpacked for what they can collectively reveal about events in the past. The photographs, ethnographic objects and textual documents pertaining to Upoto that have come to reside in the UK attest in distinct ways to the historical interactions that occurred. Whilst surviving written documents from Upoto 1890-1915 were authored by male British missionaries, and occasionally their wives, the photographs and ethnographic collections evidence the Congolese people who were living in and around Upoto from the time of the Baptists' arrival. Photographic sources in particular document the many people with whom the missionaries engaged and who determined the mission's evolution but who are not necessarily recorded in historical written sources.

This thesis' incorporation of photographs alongside other sources is an original intervention in a history which has been predominately understood from the written perspectives of British missionaries. I employ photographs as sources of historical evidence because they have the capacity to both augment and disturb the written narratives which are present in published accounts of the mission. This is significant because it facilitates a consideration of the experiences of Congolese people at Upoto during a period of immense social, political and economic change. It enables analyses to account for the presence and agencies of Congolese individuals who

were filtered in and out of missionary discourse as it suited their narratives of evangelical work.

The history of early Baptist work at Upoto is worthy of attention for the fact that it has seen only minimal scholarship since the early twentieth century when members of the missionary society were seeking to commemorate their enterprise by producing memoirs and official histories sanctioned by the Society.[3] The archival and museum collections in the UK which the Upoto mission produced have lain largely unresearched for over a century since their creation. As such, this thesis is an unprecedented effort to use these collections to complicate aspects of Upoto's written history which has largely excluded the lived experiences of Congolese individuals. The section which follows situates Upoto geographically and historically, summarising the activity of the BMS in the Congo in the 19th century.

Situating Upoto and the BMS Mission to the Congo

Upoto is a riverine town in north-western Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), located west of the apex of the River Congo as it curves through present-day Mongala province (formerly Équateur) (Map 1). When BMS missionaries arrived there in 1890 it was densely populated with people they referred to as Bapoto and Ngombe living in houses stretching up from the river bank to higher ground. The area of Upoto is today a suburb of the nearby city of Lisala, the province's capital. At the time of BMS arrival in the region, Lisala was a Belgian state military post situated two kilometres away from Upoto. The BMS adopted the name of BMS World Mission in 2000 and still retains a missionary presence in the DRC, though no longer at Upoto.

The period relevant to this thesis begins in 1877 when the BMS received funding from the philanthropist Robert Arthington, a Quaker from Leeds, for the purpose of establishing a mission on the Congo River (Stanley 1992: 118).[4] By this time the BMS had placed missionaries in India, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Haiti and Trinidad and China (Stanley 1992: 178). The impetus to develop a BMS foothold on the African continent originated among congregations of former slaves in Baptist churches in

[3] I was unsuccessful in accessing a copy of the thesis by the Congolese scholar J. M. Bokongo Libakea, *L'œuvre des Missionnaires Baptistes dans le Haut-Congo. La Mission d'Upoto (1890-1914)*, which, to my knowledge, is the only existing study of the BMS mission at Upoto to date.

[4] A timeline has been included which provides an overview of BMS activity for the period of interest in relation to the Congo's changing political history from the nineteenth century onwards. See Appendix 2.

Jamaica who aspired to send their own members there as missionaries (Stanley 1992. 106; Hall 2002: 140-150).

Map 1. Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo showing political boundaries. Source: www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/drcongo.pdf Date accessed: October 2019.

With the acceptance of funds from Arthington, a BMS mission in the Congo began in earnest in 1878 when two British missionaries who had recently served the struggling Cameroon mission, George Grenfell and Thomas Comber, set sail to survey the mouth of the River Congo. The area referred to in Europe as the Congo had not been formally colonised by Europeans at this time but had seen sustained Portuguese contact (including Catholic missionaries) from the fifteenth century. By the nineteenth century in the European imagination it represented an unmapped territory to be conquered by 'civilisation, commerce, and Christianity' (Livingstone 1858: 21). The celebrated explorer Henry Morton Stanley had recently returned from an expedition in which he had mapped the main course of the River Congo

descending from its headwaters at the Lualaba River to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.

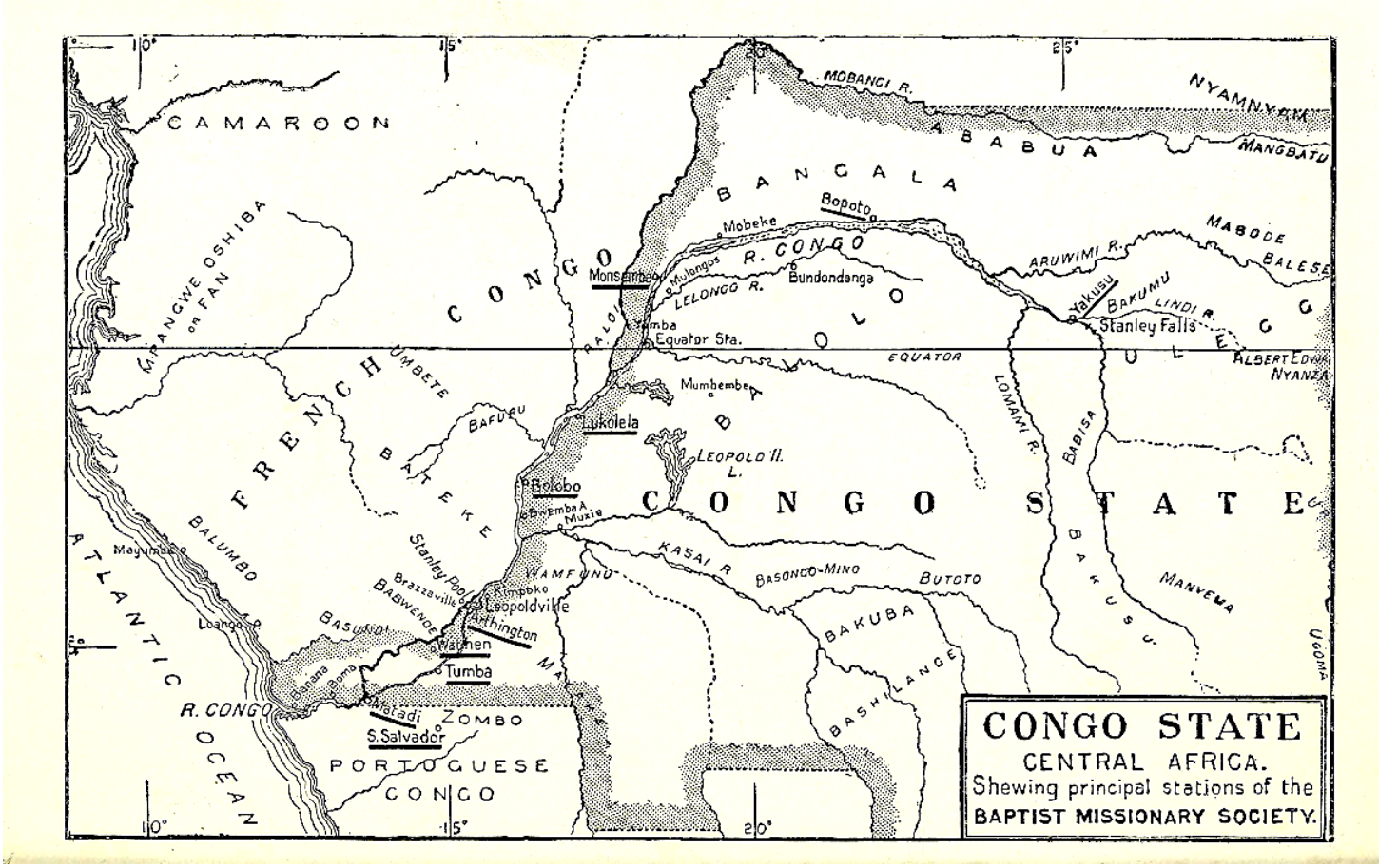
The BMS sought to realise their benefactor's vision of creating a chain of mission stations along the River Congo that would stretch into the 'heart' of Central Africa. The ultimate goal was that this chain would progress eastward and eventually link up with pre-existing stations in Uganda belonging to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Stanley 1992: 133). This plan was conceived in terms of creating a trans-African Christian presence which could function as a barrier against the perceived threat of Islam in east Africa (Stanley 1992: 133). Alongside donations to the BMS, Arthington gave money to the CMS and the London Missionary Society to begin work on Lake Tanganyika so that they might simultaneously enter Central Africa from the east (Slade 1959: 32-33).

Before the start of his reign (1865-1909) King Leopold II of Belgium had been consumed with the idea that his country should have colonies and eventually set his sights on Central Africa (Hochschild 2006: 37-40). He had followed Henry Morton Stanley's exploration on the continent closely and was successful in securing the explorer's help towards claiming the Congo for Belgium (Hochschild 2006: 57-65). After the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, the newly named Congo Free State was declared a possession of King Leopold and his claim received diplomatic recognition on the basis that 'free trade' would be granted to different nations within the territory. The Society's evangelical work in the Congo therefore unfolded alongside the European occupation of the Congo and the development of the burgeoning Belgian colonial state. On the upper River Congo the BMS were gradually granted sites on which to build by the Congo Free State administration (Map 2-3).

The era of the Congo Free State (1885-1908) is regarded as the most devastating period of the Congo's colonial history, one in which it has been estimated that as many as ten million people may have lost their lives as a result of the arrival of new diseases and state-coordinated violence, particularly in connection with the policy of forced rubber collection in equatorial districts from the 1890s onwards (Hochschild 2006: 3).[5] In Britain the so-called 'red rubber' scandal publicly erupted and is associated with the figure of Edmund Dene Morel, who campaigned to direct

[5] The matter of mortality figures during the eras of the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo is a complex and contentious issue. The total number of deaths in the Congo as a result of European colonisation can only ever be estimated because the exact sizes of populations at the time of European arrival in the nineteenth century are not known, due to a lack of credible historical records. Jan Vansina has contended that the majority of losses were not the result of state acts of mass murder but were indirectly caused by European settlement and commercial exploitation (2010: 58-59).

international attention to the atrocities being committed under King Leopold's rule. Morel established the Congo Reform Association (CRA) in 1904 and the widespread public support which the cause received was instrumental in swaying the British government's position towards Leopold's 'philanthropic' project in the Congo. The Congo was formally ceded by King Leopold to the Belgian government in 1908, from which point it was renamed the Belgian Congo (*Congo belge*).[6]



Map 2. Map showing BMS stations (underlined) in the Congo Free State c.1900.
Source: (Roberts 1901).

[6] Throughout this thesis 'the Congo' is used to refer to the Congo Free State, the Belgian Congo or the Democratic Republic of the Congo respectively. Each designates a distinct historical phase of the country's governance (see timeline, Appendix 2). It is not used here to reference the present-day neighbouring country, the Republic of the Congo, a former French colony known as French Congo or French Equatorial Africa, created in 1880.

Map 3. Map of the Congo Free State in 1900. Source: (Hochschild 2006).

Upoto in 1890

It is difficult to gain a very detailed picture from surviving historical sources of the political and cultural context of Upoto as the BMS missionaries found it on arrival in 1890. This is because the few written accounts by Europeans made before this date were produced by early explorers or military personnel who either only described the area as they saw it from the river or whose interactions on land with populations there were fleeting (refuelling boats and trading for food) or punitive. The two main polities documented as living at Upoto in 1890, the Bapoto and the Ngombe, do not appear to have been the subject of detailed ethnographic study by either the Baptist missionaries themselves or by anthropologists during the colonial period. The earliest written accounts of the Upoto region from a European perspective are those of the British explorer Henry Morton Stanley who passed down the River Congo in 1877. In his depiction of Upoto, Stanley set the literary precedent of describing the topography of the area, which consisted of hills rising up from the riverbank some 250 metres in contrast to the low-lying ground along the river to the east and west (Stanley 1878: 282, 1885: 98-99, vol. 2; Ward 1890: 154). Stanley learned that the people visible living on the slopes were called 'Upoto or Mbapoto' (1878: 282) and later documented that they cultivated 'groves of bananas and fields of cassava' (1885: 99, vol. 2). The Bapoto people have, however, generally been characterised as 'riverine' people for the fact that they were adapted to life on the river as skilled fishermen who made canoes and traded fish locally (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 46-47).

The equatorial region of Mongala province where Upoto is situated is one of immense ethnic diversity as a result of population migrations in the centuries before and during the colonial period. The three main population groups are the Sudanese (Mondunga); the Batswa; the Bantu (composed of Budja, Ngombe-Doko, Mongo) and the 'riverside peoples', to which the Bapoto are considered to belong (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 45). Evidence suggests that the current populations broadly descend from these groups which migrated to the Mongala region at various points during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from elsewhere in Central Africa. The Ngombe populations which were settled around Upoto by the late nineteenth century are believed to have migrated there in the eighteenth century from a former centre established in basin of the Loko, a tributary of the upper Mongala River (north-west of Upoto) (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 45). The Bapoto people living on the north bank of the River Congo encountered by

Europeans in the late nineteenth century are believed to have migrated from Lusengo, downstream from Upoto, and before that from the banks of the Ngiri River, a tributary of the Ubangi river, south-west of Upoto (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 46). The Bapoto were later joined on the northernmost apex of the River Congo by other riverine peoples such as the Motembo from the Mongala River, and during the colonial period by Basoko, Lokele and Topoke from Orientale Province to the east (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 47).

After landing at Upoto, BMS missionaries were surprised to discover that the large community of people living inland on the higher ground in close proximity to the Bapoto were called Ngombe and they were able to discern some social distinctions between the two populations. However, early written accounts, in combination with historical material culture, suggest that that Ngombe peoples had significant linguistic and cultural influence over Bapoto peoples (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 47). The first BMS missionaries focused their attention on learning and then publishing texts in the Ngombe language 'Lingombe' and the related Bapoto language of 'Lifoto' (or Lipoto) (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 65). Stanley estimated that the Bapoto and Ngombe populations combined in 1883 totalled 6,000 people (Stanley 1885: 349, vol. 2) but this figure is not necessarily reliable. Subsequent missionary reports confirm that various Congolese communities inhabited the area of Upoto in the late nineteenth century, which they sought to classify in terms of 'tribal' groups:

> 'Within easy reach of the station there are three distinct tribes. The first lives on the shore, the second halfway up the hill in line with the mission premises, and the third on top of the hill; all running parallel with the river for a considerable distance. The language general on the station is that spoken by the riverine people, and is understood by a great number from the other tribes.' (John Jeffrey, BMS 107th Annual Report, 1899: 103)

A later account from the BMS missionary William Holman Bentley indicates that the Bapoto people were restricted to living on the beach north of the river at Upoto in the 1890s and that the Ngombe people were protective of the forest resources inland:

> 'The inland people of Bopoto are very different in language, are often at war with the Bangala, and never allow them to go any distance inland. For instance, the Bopoto-Bangala were not allowed to go fifty yards behind their narrow strip of houses on the beach. To break the rule meant death by the spear of any one who happened to see him. They were not allowed even to

> gather their firewood on shore. They might buy it from the inland women at the daily market on the mission beach; but if they wanted to gather for themselves, they had to go to Emanga, or one of the other islands. The ground landlords about Bopoto belong to a large tribe found inland on both sides of the river. The inland district is known as Ngombe, and the people are Moya.' (Bentley 1900: 266, vol. 2).

Such descriptions of the different ethnic divisions among the Congolese populations offered by the missionaries are characteristically vague and should be treated with caution. As will be explored in Chapter 1, the first BMS missionaries at Upoto witnessed antagonistic relations between Bapoto and Ngombe people, but to see this as evidence of long-standing political or ethnic separation is to oversimplify the cultural complexity of the region. It is important to consider that the local territorial and occupational patterns, as well as conflicts, recorded by missionaries, may have been a relatively recent result of European occupation by traders and State agents who claimed land and entered into exchanges with Congolese people. Missionary accounts from 1890 onwards do confirm that there were multiple groups of people living within the vicinity of Upoto station, with diverse and overlapping linguistic and cultural forms and specialised modes of subsistence.

It is difficult to establish in great detail how the Bapoto and Nombe peoples organised themselves socially in 1890. There were not centralised kingdoms to which the populations of the Congo basin in Mongala belonged as there were in other parts of Central Africa at this time (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 105). When Stanley purchased land near to Upoto in 1883 (for what would eventually become the Belgian State post of Lisala) he claimed to have entered into a pact of blood brotherhood with a number of Bapoto 'chiefs' (Stanley 1885: 171, vol. 2). Europeans came to use the term 'chief' to refer to the Congolese male authorities with whom they interacted with in this and other parts of the Congo, but quite what chiefdoms meant for Bapoto and Ngombe peoples at this historical moment is difficult to discern. From the 1890s onwards the Belgian administration began delineating territorial chiefdoms by installing local leaders as official chiefs of villages and investing them with new forms of authority, namely for taxation purposes (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 106). As such, understandings of what precolonial political structures existed and the customary role of a chief in this region has been distorted by successive colonial structural impositions. Jan Vansina has highlighted the ways that the tribal identities ascribed by colonial powers in Central Africa had

very little bearing on precolonial African constructions of identity (1990: 19). In reading early missionary and colonial sources which describe different Congolese populations it has been important to recognise that ethnic identities change over time and 'do not necessarily correspond to homogenous units of social institutions or culture' (Vansina 1990: 19). Vansina has also pointed to the ways in which some Congolese people 'had adapted their vision of ethnic identity to the colonial reality' by the mid twentieth century (1990: 20).

Early European accounts suggest that Bapoto and Ngombe people lived in polygamous family groups in the nineteenth century, with men taking multiple wives over the course of a lifetime (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 76). Women were apparently also used in diplomatic exchanges between chiefs to guarantee peaceful relations and gain political influence (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 87). According to the Belgian soldier and explorer Camille Coquilhat, the communal courtyards of rectangular palm-frond houses in which people lived reflected social units within a community (Coquilhat 1888: 209-210):

> 'Villages were built along the watercourses at the best sites. Families lived in neighbourhoods separated from each other by various plots of land or by banana plantations or other crops. Polygamists needed large spaces because each wife had her own hut next to her husband's. The families were separated by land, banana plantations or other crops. Slaves also had their huts in the masters' quarters. Each family had its own port where they tied their canoes and deposited various fishing implements (pots, nets and baskets).'
> (Omasombo Tshonda et al. 2015: 76, translated from French).

Numerous written accounts suggest the presence of a social class of 'slaves' at Upoto in the 1880s and 1890s, but again European reports are piecemeal and vague. Among these accounts, the outside perspective was generally that the Bapoto people did keep many slaves which they obtained through raids on interior and upriver populations, but that these individuals were also treated as freed (Goffart and Morissens 1908: 115; Johnston 1908: 685, vol. 2).

In his comprehensive study documenting the precolonial political traditions of the societies occupying the equatorial regions of the Congo, Vansina (1990) has gathered linguistic data alongside oral histories and ethnographic accounts produced after European occupation. Using this research it is possible to build a broad picture of the probable social organisation of the people living at Upoto at the time of BMS arrival. He describes the main social units of society as follows:

> 'Three interlocking social groups formed the framework of the ancestral society: the district, the village, and a large household establishment often called 'the house' or the 'hearth'. Their interrelations were quite flexible so that the system remained extremely decentralised. Each House freely chose which village its members wanted to belong to, and each village freely chose other villages as allies to make up a district.' (1990: 73)

This mode of social organisation was flexible, and its flexibility was enhanced by the fact that the leaders of a House and separately, a village, achieved their status through competition as opposed to inheritance (Vansina 1990: 73).

The coexistence of multiple House and village leaders may explain the fact that the BMS missionaries indiscriminately referred to numerous 'chiefs' of Upoto as opposed to identifying one individual who possessed authority over the entire region. The people they termed 'chiefs' may therefore have been the recognised heads of Houses and villages in the district of Upoto. Vansina describes how the basic social unit of the House was led by a 'big man', and that Houses often lasted beyond their founder's death to be taken over by another man from within its membership (1990: 74-75). The House was always in competition for members with other Houses and its size could be extremely variable; furthermore, a House could always abandon one village to join another (Vansina 1990: 75). Vansina explains that: 'In the common tradition the House was the unit of food production and comprised from 10 to 40 people, that is, a labour force close to the optimum for the collective labour requirements in agriculture (clearing brush), trapping, and hunting' (1990: 75). The big man was the manager of the House establishment, whose status attracted new members, and the House comprised a spatial unit within the village (Vansina 1990: 75).

According to Vansina, the ideology of the House was based on the fiction that it was a family, with the big man understood as the 'father' of its members, which could be comprised of his own kinfolk, friends, clients and various dependents (Vansina 1990: 75). Big men were commonly polygamous, and gave wives as consorts to clients in order to attract new men to their House (Vansina 1990: 75). Vansina states that 'People did not think or act in terms of unilineal descent', meaning that free men were able to choose which establishment they joined (1990: 75). Comparative ethnography has been used to identify around six or so unequal exclusive social statuses for individuals living within House establishments, including: slave, client, protected/adopted person, serf, friend, and junior member

(Vansina 1990: 75-76). This suggests that there were complex intersecting social relations within the makeup of the household establishment that did not surface in missionary characterisations of the polygamous families living at Upoto. The House was also a unit for matrimonial exchange (of which there were multiple kinds) and such exchanges were central to the reproduction of the House (Vansina 1990: 76-77).

Across equatorial regions, the village was the dominant unit of settlement in the ancestral tradition and was variable in its size, led by the man who founded it (Vansina 1990: 77-78). The village was demarcated according to the quarters of different Houses and contained a plaza area which was a place of authority where major collective decisions were made and court cases heard by the village council of big men from each of its Houses (Vansina 1990: 78). The village was a territorial unit and its purpose was the common defence of the Houses which occupied it, though its structure was impermanent and entire villages would relocate for safety or food security (Vansina 1990: 78).

Districts, unlike Houses and villages, were not ruled over by leaders or principal villages (Vansina 1990: 81). Vansina states that:

> 'The district was the largest institutional organisation of space known. A district came into existence when a group of neighbouring villages began to rely more on each other for common defence, for trade, and for intermarriage than on other villages. Gradually they thus constituted an informal cluster and developed a sense of ethnicity, of 'us' versus 'them.'' (1990: 81).

Like the village, the district offered security through common defence and was also the arena for matrimonial exchanges (Vansina 1990: 82-83).[7]

The earliest European reports indicate that ivory could be readily obtained at Upoto in the late nineteenth century, but it is unclear if both Bapoto and Ngombe populations were hunting elephants. BMS missionaries did observe that elephant traps were used in the forests bordering Upoto and that elephants were among the animals hunted for their meat (Smith 2016: 65, 74-75). Stanley and Coquilhat asserted that there was an abundance of ivory at Upoto in 1883 (Stanley 1885: 99, vol. 2; Coquilhat 1888: 404) and that Bangala traders living along the River Congo to the west travelled there to purchase it (Coquilhat 1888: 325; Werner 1889: 207). It was for

[7] Vansina goes on to explain that a district might be understood as an alliance of Houses, rather than villages, and that the alliance of houses was usually formalised by the institution referred to by anthropologists as the 'clan' (1990: 82). In the nineteenth century clan members shared a common name and story of origin. An ideology of kinship linking the ancestral founding members of Houses was used to express the supposed equality and alliance shared by the clan, but in practice it did not stop the permeable social organisation of the House, village and district (Vansina 1990: 82).

the purpose of obtaining ivory, among other natural products such as raw rubber and palm oil, that the New Dutch African Trade Association (*Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handelsvereeniging*/NAHV) established trading factories along the upper River Congo from 1883 onwards (Schmidt and Westerdijk 2006: 15). By 1890 the people living at Upoto would therefore likely have been encountering European traders for some years. Stanley noted that when his party landed there in 1883 to negotiate a land agreement, representatives from Upoto understood that they were there with the intention to buy ivory (Stanley 1885: 99, vol. 2). As will be shown in Chapters 1 and 2, individual Dutch traders of the NAHV were already known to the populations at Upoto in 1890 and were useful as mediators in the missionaries' early negotiations with Congolese authorities.[8] In return for ivory and other raw materials, the traders exchanged textiles, glass beads, iron and copper, alcohol, guns, ammunition, hats and porcelain items (Schmidt and Westerdijk 2006: 11). Early European travellers noted that people possessed guns at Upoto and that these took the form of flint-lock muskets (Werner 1889: 162; Ward 1890: 98).

Research Questions

The overarching research question which guides this thesis is: what kind of historical evidence of events at Upoto is contained in the archival photographs made by missionaries? Within this, three further questions are addressed:

1. What can historical artefacts reveal about the nature of the relationships between missionaries and Congolese people at Upoto 1890-1915?
2. Why were photographs mobilised beyond the mission field and what kinds of knowledge did they generate in the context of other published narratives and presentations ?
3. How was moral authority conceived and represented in the 'religious encounter' at Upoto?

The Existing Scholarship

This section provides an overview of the existing literature relevant to the objectives of the thesis and how it intersects with their thematic and methodological strands.

[8] In 1891 the Belgian state claimed a monopoly over the trade in natural resources across King Leopold's private domains, which put an end to the practice of free trade and led the NAHV to withdraw its agents from the Upper Congo (Schmidt and Westerdijk 2006: 16-17).

Following calls from within mission studies and those working on the colonial and postcolonial histories of the African continent that photographic archives have been neglected as sources with which to understand the past (Geary 1886; Roberts 1988; Arnold and Bickers 1996: 8; Jenkins 2001; Landau and Kaspin 2002; Vokes 2012; Morton and Newbury 2015a), this thesis approaches a history of the Upoto mission between 1890 and 1915 by using photographs to 'think with' (Edwards 2001b: 3). Paul Jenkins has suggested that the meanings of missionary photographs have previously been considered either self-evident (Jenkins 2001: 72-76) or their images have been thought to represent marginal incidents unrelated to the substance of received histories (Jenkins 2001: 86). For these reasons, photographs have been under-privileged as sources for interrogating missionary society histories from within and from outside, despite the fact that they often exist in abundance in institutional archives (Arnold and Bickers 1996: 8; Jenkins 2001: 72). However, the insistence of some scholars that missionary photography has the capacity to harbour alternative discourses has spurred research that has redressed long-held assumptions about the value of such images (Geary 1991; Gullestad 2007; Maxwell 2011). Jenkins, from the perspective of missionary photography and African history, and Elizabeth Edwards, from the perspective of anthropology, have asked independently: 'what does a photograph offer us as a historical source, which a detailed word description of the same object or situation could not communicate?' (Jenkins 2001: 86) and 'what kind of past is inscribed in photographs?… How can their apparently trivial incidental appearance of surface be meaningful in historical terms?' (Edwards 2001: 5).

There has been increased interest in archives pertaining to missionary societies by researchers in anthropology, African history, and those interested in the colonialisms that have shaped the African continent over the past two centuries. Missionary sources are recognised as useful because of their (now critiqued) proximity to and observation of colonial state formation (Stanley 1990), their insistence on living among the peoples that they sought to evangelise and their fastidious keeping of written records. Whilst mission biases permeate such written texts, these aspects have encouraged reappraisals of the material in mission archives for the information they might contain about indigenous action in periods of economic and political change as well as in local movements in the adoption of Christianity.

The thesis advances the existing scholarship on the globalisation of Christianity and its transmission in Africa. Its focus on the intercultural relationships and quotidian experiences within the Upoto mission community draws upon existing studies of the historical development of Christian missions in Africa. Jean and John Comaroffs' *Of Revelation and Revolution* (1991; 1997) on the missionary enterprise in the northern hinterland of South Africa examines Christianisation as a holistic part of the experience of colonisation, involving material as well as ideological change. In Nigeria, Peel's historical ethnographic studies have elucidated the ways in which processes of religious negotiation contributed to the formation of Yoruba identity (2000) and the development of Orisa religion in the context of other cultural traditions (2015).

In the Belgian Congo, Nany Rose Hunt and David Maxwell have interrogated British evangelical mission archives to understand the social change which was borne out of Christian expansion in the Congo. In north-eastern Congo Nancy Hunt has produced a detailed study of the BMS mission station of Yakusu in the twentieth century and Congolese experiences of British rituals of domesticity and the colonial medical paradigms through which Europeans sought to reform Congolese subjectivities (Hunt 1992, 1999). This work has primarily drawn on textual sources and oral history interviews as methods to examine the relationship between British missionaries and Lokele people. In Katanga in south-eastern Congo the historian David Maxwell has worked extensively on the history of the Congo Evangelistic Mission (CEM) during the twentieth century. He has utilised the mission's archives to examine African social mobility within the 'religious encounter' (2015), in addition to themes of domesticity (2014) and respectability which were dimensions through which Pentecostal conversion was experienced (2013). Maxwell has also examined the photographic and anthropological pursuits of CEM missionary William Burton in his engagement with Luba peoples (2011, 2016). His incorporation of photographs has used their visual content to complicate missionary discourses and expose the nuances of missionary responses to Congolese people through Burton's use of the medium. However, insights are drawn less from a focus at the level of the historical photographic event and he does not address their trajectories as objects of material culture in the way that this thesis does. This may be due to the fact that there are more detailed written sources connected with Burton and the CEM mission so his access to its history is less reliant upon photographs as sources than this study has been.

Multiple reflexive 'turns' within the subject of anthropology have led to the development of some original methodologies for re-engaging with its own disciplinary histories, photographic legacies and the material culture that was collected in its name. This thesis takes up anthropological approaches to photography which deal with their materiality and social constructions of history using photographic images devised by Edwards (2001b), Edwards and Hart (2004b) and Edwards and Morton (2009b) in order to reintegrate photographs as sources alongside other artefacts from the Upoto mission. In utilising these approaches the thesis is able to examine both the encounters that were inscribed photographically in the interactions between missionaries and Congolese people and to engage with photographs as 'physical objects that exist in time and space' to consider their social uses in Britain (Edwards and Hart 2004a: 1). By doing so, this research furthers scholarship which has sought to understand the symbiotic relationship between those living on the religious or colonial 'frontier' and those in the metropoles and centres of imperialism. It explores how they were respectively shaped by the movement of people, things, ideas and practices which flowed between them (Thomas 1991; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997; Coombes 1994; Hall 2002; Wingfield 2012; Jacobs, Knowles and Wingfield 2015). As much as it is concerned with historical events in the Congo, this thesis addresses how ideas and narratives generated from cultural encounters at Upoto circulated in different material forms in Britain. It takes inspiration from the dual perspectives offered by Catherine Hall in her historical study of BMS missionaries in Jamaica and Baptist circles in Birmingham in the mid-nineteenth century (2002). This work followed individuals' involvement in events before and after abolition, analysing the competing discourses around them which ricocheted between metropole and colony.

Significant attention has been given to the key role of a few British missionaries in their photographic documentation of atrocities in the Congo Free State and public campaigning in support of the Congo Reform Association (CRA) after it was formed in 1904. For example, the use of photography to sway public opinion has been discussed in terms of the precedent it set for visually arresting emotive portrayals of individuals in humanitarian propaganda in Britain (Grant 2005; Twomey 2014). However, those British missionaries who openly engaged with the CRA were in the minority and their journalistic use of photography is not representative of other individuals who were simultaneously operating in the Congo. This thesis directs attention to the public representations of Upoto by BMS missionaries prior to, as

well as during the international scandal around the Congo Free State's governance. It thereby provides insight into the alternative images and narratives of the Congo that were disseminated through missionary accounts and efforts to censor details of State violence witnessed at Upoto. While the colonial history of the Congo has come to be synonymous with atrocity and cultural destruction, this thesis brings to the fore alternate facets of how colonialism was lived through by people at Upoto, evidence which resists a totalising narrative of Congolese people's enslavement or cultural erasure. In doing so it provides an important link between the pre-colonial history of people at Upoto and a period of formal colonisation, demonstrating certain Bapoto and Ngombe strategies to create relationships with the British arrivals which were politically advantageous.

This thesis is informed by existing literature that historicises anthropology's early praxis and interrogates the disciplinary and personal agendas which generated anthropological knowledge (Mack 1990; 1991; 1998, Schildkrout and Keim 1998, Schildkrout 1998, 2018; Brown and Peers 2006; Morton and Edwards 2009b; Bell 2009; 2010; Pinney 2011). Specifically, the thesis traces the collecting relationships that determined the acquisition and exchange of photographs and objects of material culture between northern Congo and Britain. By doing so, it provides an analysis of how certain values were attributed to artefacts from Upoto for the construction of ethnographic knowledge when they were admitted into a museum setting. These concerns link the thesis to research dedicated to the role of photographic production, exchange and collecting in the history of anthropology. Pivotal works by Banta and Hinsley (1986) and Edwards (1992) were among the first to offer reflexive analyses of the ways that photography was used in the development of anthropological methods. Since then others have analysed the archival traces of the specific fieldwork projects in order to historically situate the formation of anthropological knowledge in specific relationships (Bell 2009; Herle 2009; Morton 2009a, 2020). My analysis of how anthropological knowledge was constructed through photographs made in specific encounters at Upoto extends existing understandings of the attempts at disciplinary regulation around 1900 and the ways in which non-professionals contributed to anthropological data collection through informal collecting networks (Edwards 2000).

In the Congo specifically, John Mack (1990, 1991, 1998) and more recently Sheppard (2017) have explored the relationships between the Hungarian anthropologist Emil Torday, Kuba and other peoples in the Kasai region of the

Congo with whom photographic and ethnographic collections were made in the early twentieth century. Schildkrout (1998, 2018) has assessed the photography and collecting of activities of American anthropologist Frederick Starr and German zoologist Herbert Lang in the Congo. Geary (1998, 2002) has also examined scientific and popular visual constructions of the Congo, with attention to how Congolese individuals chose to present themselves before the camera. This thesis provides new insights into how photographs were made with anthropological intent at Upoto, comparing missionaries' outputs to now well-documented examples of contemporary photographic projects elsewhere in the Congo. It illuminates missionaries' role in making and exchanging photographs, as well as facilitating professional anthropology in the Congo, thereby broadening existing understandings of nineteenth and twentieth century missionary photography in Africa (Thompson 2012).

A return to the study of ethnographic artefacts through museum ethnography has meant that 'colonial' collections, now recognised to have often been acquired in asymmetrical power relations, are being reassessed for their value in attesting to indigenous choices and actions in the collecting encounter (Gosden and Knowles 2001; Edwards, Gosden & Phillips 2006b; Byrne et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2013). [9] Equally, photographs made in specific colonial contexts are subject to re-appraisals because they are able to attest to unacknowledged cultural histories. Photographs which were conceived in imperial or colonial projects have been shown to hold alternate meanings for present-day communities and have potential as technologies of indigenous memory in the present (Brown and Peers 2006; Morton 2009b; Lydon 2010).

With its attention to missionary photographs produced in northern Congo from 1890 this thesis contributes to research on photography in Africa which has responded to the reflexive shifts in anthropology concerned with the history of the discipline and its visual-material archives. Photographs made in Africa for ethnographic purposes have been re-engaged with as visual sources for latent histories, whilst other kinds of visual archive have been studied from anthropological perspectives (Vokes 2012). Some of this research has attended to

[9] A further example of where this theory has been applied to ethnographic collections is the Pitt Rivers Museum's 'The Relational Museum' project (2002-2006) which combined statistical analysis and archival research as an approach for interrogating the historical circumstances of the Museum's acquisitions. More information about the project can be found at: http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/index.php.html.

specific social applications of the medium within Africa (Thomas and Green 2016; Hayes and Minkley 2019) whilst others have been concerned with the 'visual economies' (Poole 1997) in which photographs have travelled and the representation of Africa outside of the continent (Coombes 1994; Geary 2002; Landau and Kaspin 2002). This thesis offers an original analysis of the trajectories of missionary photographs in BMS propaganda in Britain within a specific period and the ideas they represented about the Christian endeavour and Congolese people.

Morton and Newbury have advocated for a reconsideration of some of the traditional tenets used to discuss the archive in relation to African photography, asking where Africa is located in the archive and what might be seen to be included given its distributed and unstable nature (2015b: 1-15). This has been pertinent to the strategies of this thesis because photographs made at Upoto exist outside of formal archives where their authenticity as sources is legitimated. Photographs were also reproduced in published texts and popular periodicals and these alternate iterations of images have analytical value because they circulated in different material forms and social arenas. In this vein, the work of Kelley Wilder (2017) has been relevant for reflecting upon such densities of images and their historical patterning across archives as significant for understanding the historical narratives perpetuated by sets of photographs.

This thesis engages with questions of how archives constitute historical knowledge by bringing the archival locations of artefacts within the purview of study. What has been termed an 'archival turn' embraced across multiple disciplines has generated critical responses to the concept of archive and archival research. The theoretical pivot from the concept of archive as source to archive as practice is often attributed to the work of Foucault (1972) and later Derrida (1996). Research has turned towards archives themselves as objects of analysis and broadly taken two directions. The archive has been approached anew by those seeking to understand state activities and the structuring of colonial knowledge, recognising archives as the projects of cultural and national institutions. Notably, Stoler has taken up the idea of practicing ethnography in and of the archives to enable a more holistic engagement with historical archival cultures than methods which see documents purely as sources of extractable content (2002, 2009). In addition, scholarship has emerged which questions what archives' present and future potential might be towards the re-imagining of postcolonial public spheres. These responses are rooted in the idea that archives are political technologies of memory (Basu and de Jong 2016: 10) but

that they might be 're-figured' in ways which serve different functions to those in which they were originally conceived (Hamilton et al. 2002), such as toward the decolonisation of colonial subjectivities (De Jong 2016). In addressing the present/future potential of archives, Stuart Hall has asserted that 'Archives are not inert historical collections. They always stand in an active, dialogic relation to the questions which the present puts to the past; and the present always puts its questions differently from one generation to another' (Hall 2001: 92).

Through the lens of BMS archival material, this study offers a detailed analysis of the historical encounter between Congolese people and the British who settled at Upoto and extends existing understandings of an early period of European occupation of northern Congo. Kajsa Ekholm Friedman in researching the Lower Congo has asserted that it is a difficult but pressing task to discern narratives of cultural transformation, continuity and creation during a period of cultural catastrophe (1991). Articulating histories of cultural vitality have not always been possible or paramount when accounts of colonial atrocities are still being unearthed and the information about day-to-day realities of Congolese people is comparatively scant. The notable exception to this is the case of the Kuba, where Vansina (2010) has been able to draw upon the personal papers of the Kuba King Mbop Mabinc maKyeen and supplemented this with ethnographic research and oral histories to offer Kuba perspectives on Belgian colonialism. Any history of Congolese communities during the Congo Free State and subsequent Belgian Congo periods risks either minimising the impacts of the colonial violence or conceptualising cultural interaction only in terms of the binary enactment and response to European force (Vansina 2010: 331). Whilst such pitfalls exist in contributing to the historical record, the search for different kinds of relationships and representation of multifaceted experiences is, nonetheless, a critical undertaking.

This thesis does not take the Belgian colonisation of the Congo as its central focus, but it nonetheless details how mission work at Upoto was shaped by the actions of representatives of the State in the area. Situated next to the River Congo, Upoto was not a site where European commercial companies operated, forcing populations to tap rubber vines as part of the mandatory taxation system, which was happening in the equatorial forests north and south of the mission station during the 1890s. Bapoto and Ngombe people were subjected to incidents of State violence, economic and political oppression, but experienced a different kind of turmoil by virtue of their geographic situation and in part because of the British missionary

presence at Upoto from 1890. Their lived experiences of colonisation are one aspect of this study but are only addressed here through the mission's archives in the UK as opposed to through oral histories or interviews with present-day inhabitants of the area.

Theoretical Framework

The previous section established how this thesis grants new original insights into histories of mission and intercultural relationships in northern Congo through its integration of photographs as sources. The following discussion outlines the approaches taken to researching historical material culture in the course of this project. It highlights the specific theories which have framed the interpretation of artefacts and demonstrates the limitations of some pre-existing approaches to working with colonial archives and historical photographs, limitations which this thesis has sought to navigate.

The theoretical models which inform the analysis in this thesis resulted from an engagement with the archival artefacts of the Upoto mission, in an attempt to limit *a priori* assumptions about their epistemological potential. An ethnographically grounded empirical approach enabled receptivity to the artefacts themselves, ensuring that their interpretation was not driven (or limited) by the search for applicable theoretical concepts (Da Col and Graeber 2011). Following the work of Stoler, who has advocated for an ethnography *in* and *of* colonial archives, archival texts and images were analysed in terms of how they operated within the BMS's administrative ecosystem 'along the archival grain' (Stoler 2009). In this way, the material traces of the Upoto archive were addressed on their own terms, before they were critically unpacked in relation to the project's broader research questions. This strategy proved useful because of the immense variation between archival documents and the differing levels of information which existed about the contexts of their production and use. Through the process of reading the archive of the Upoto mission it was subsequently possible to identify areas of analytical tension where certain theories could be used to critically interrogate specific artefacts and develop thematic areas of inquiry.

The analytical frameworks drawn upon in this study are underpinned by the premise that colonial archives have the potential to disclose information about indigenous experiences and to be productive (if complex) sources with which to

understand colonial history. Ricardo Roque and Kim Wagner have asserted that the epistemological value of colonial accounts has long been dismissed and that nuanced critical approaches are required in order to make constructive use of colonial knowledge (2012: 2-4). In the wake of recent postcolonial criticism, they suggest the need to tread a path between two polarising critical responses to colonial sources. The first is the idea that in terms of locating indigenous histories, 'colonialism has left us only with misrepresentations, rather than representations' (Roque and Wagner 2012: 6-7). The second is the use of an interpretive lens which over-emphasises the power of colonial actors, thereby reducing the complexity of colonial situations to a model of binary relations between '(Western) dominators' and '(indigenous) resistors' (Roque and Wagner 2012: 9). In connection with this is the tendency to attribute a straightforward instrumental relationship between knowledge and power when colonialism is analysed in terms of its texts and administrative apparatus (Roque and Wagner 2012: 14). Instead, Roque and Wagner advocate attending to the singular and biographical specificity of colonial accounts and their differing contexts of use and dissemination (2012: 13-14). Their recommendation that colonial knowledge be treated as 'artefacts, which entail particular epistemologies, imaginaries, political strategies, and cultural conventions, as well as being the product of specific material circumstances, bodily experiences, and sensory engagements with a concrete world' is one which guides this thesis' analysis of photographic and written documents made by Baptist missionaries (Roque and Wagner 2012: 4-5).

It is against this backdrop of scholarship on the colonial archive that this study has sought to chart a course through the analytical frameworks which have been used to explore concepts of power and agency in relation to photographic production in Africa. Foucault-inspired analyses have sought to theorise photography and its inherent dimensions of visuality and observation as an embedded instrument of imperial statecraft onto which straightforward power relations can be mapped. In this vein, photographic imagery came to be read symptomatically, as merely a reflection of the culture and political ideologies of its makers (Pinney 2003: 2). In line with Roque and Wagner's caution that attempts to expose colonial constructs have resulted in over-simplified and oversaturated representations of European power within historical relationships, the 'colonial gaze' has been shown to be a limiting paradigm through which to interrogate photographs. The trend towards reading the archive and the photograph in terms of

the 'colonial gaze' as a set of asymmetrical power dynamics has resulted in dichotomised analyses which have rendered the photographic subject passive and powerless (Morton and Edwards 2009: 3-4). As such, the interpretation in this thesis was careful not to equate European photographers with hegemonic power, nor assume that Congolese participants were inherently disempowered subjects who had been unwittingly coerced into the photographic event. This care against analytical biases was also necessary because there was not always sufficient contextual information about the creator(s) of a given photographic image. Analysis therefore needed to follow from the observable indexical traces and material qualities of the image-object itself, rather than suppositions about a complicated and thinly documented colonial milieu.

An equally limiting analytical framework within scholarship on the history of photography in Africa has been the interpretation of African peoples' creation and participation in photographic practices as evidence of their 'adoption' of Western technologies and cultural assimilation towards a state of 'modernity'. As Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley have identified, such discourses on the uses of photography within the African continent create the impression that 'anything Africans do with photography will, in some sense, always be derivative' (2019: 8). Analyses which subscribe to this idea of technical diffusion again result in reproducing problematic binary geographical and temporal relations by positioning Western colonial metropoles as the bearers of visual-material culture which was belatedly inherited and responded to in local African contexts (Hayes & Minkley 2019: 8). This mode of interpretation has frequently been applied to genres of portrait photography, where African subjects are portrayed as liberated agents of their visual representation in contrast to historical photographic predecessors of the colonial archive. Such narratives risk, as Hayes and Minkley suggest, forming a redemptive strategy, whereby studio portraits and personal photographic collections fulfil an ideological counterpart to histories of objectification (2019: 12-13). In light of this critique, this thesis has approached concepts of photographic genres, agency and intentionality with caution. The analysis is careful not to assume too much about what participation in different photographic events may have meant for individual Congolese people and what it signified in terms of their wider experiences of historical circumstances. Instead, it has been important to acknowledge the limits of what can be asked of photographs, recognising the need

to accept degrees of ambiguity and ambivalence (Hayes and Minkley 2019) in understandings of the photographic archive.

The section which follows sets out the primary theoretical approaches that have informed the analysis of artefacts in this thesis towards understanding historical Congolese experiences, events at BMS Upoto and their ideological significance in Britain. These are: *Thinking Materially*; *Following Archival Grains and the Performances of History*; *Looking Forensically*; *Integrating the Photography Complex* and *Disrupting Archival Configurations*.

1. Thinking Materially

This thesis attends to the materiality of archival photographs to identify physical traces of human agency in order to think about the successive processes which lead to their manifestation in the present. The approach draws on the concept of 'social biography', now firmly engrained in anthropological studies of material culture, which sees objects as the consequence of shifting values and ideas in human relations over time (Appadurai 1986). In this way photographs can be analysed for the 'multiple and dynamic historical presences surrounding the photographic encounter and the resulting image' (Morton and Edwards 2009a: 4). My engagement with sources also takes its lead from scholarship which has developed over the past two decades that has stressed how the material substance of photographs can contribute to understanding how and why they were made meaningful over time (Edwards 20012; Edwards and Hart 2004b; Morton and Edwards 2009; Morton and Newbury 2015). This involves a consideration of the various choices that are made in producing a photograph's material support (Edwards and Hart 2004a: 5-6) as well as scrutiny of how photographs are 'placed' in settings such as albums, brought in relation to other artefacts and incorporated into social spaces (Edwards 2012: 226-227), or undergo acts of physical intervention (Edwards and Hart 2004b: 13-14). Edwards writes that '[p]lacing is defined as a sense of appropriateness of particular material forms to particular sets of social expectation and desire within space and time' (Edwards 2012: 226). In relation to photographic images made by missionaries at Upoto, the various inscriptions on their reverse, captions in albums or published books provide clues as to how their content was drawn upon and *expected* to function (Edwards 2001b: 21). In applying these ideas to the archives of Upoto I have been able to develop an original analysis of how photographs made in contexts of

evangelical mission generated narratives of the Congo in different social settings in Britain.

Following on from calls to consider photographic visual content in relation to, rather than at the expense of material properties (Edwards and Hart 2004a: 2), have been efforts to reintegrate photographs into a more embodied analysis of human experience that brings to the fore the ways in which they engage multiple sensorial registers and have the potential to be affective. Such developments represent a broader shift in anthropological approaches towards more holistic perspectives which seek to redress the dominance of vision and visual paradigms as an instrument and mode of analysis (Edwards, Gosden and Phillips 2006a: 2-4). The results of this for the study of photography have been reaped in that it has opened up the analytical ground of how orality, touch and gesture shape photographs' relational capacities as elements of how they are interacted with (Langford 2001; Edwards 2005). It is now understood that photographs are not only 'read' or looked *at*, but experienced in embodied and emotional registers, narrated *with* in performances composed of verbal and non-verbal practices (Edwards 2012: 228-230). This is significant because it orientates analysis away from visual content alone as the sole site of meaning to consider how individuals and communities constitute ideas in relation to photographs as objects in culturally-prescribed ways.

I have harnessed this perspective in order to demonstrate how photographs made at Upoto were incorporated into different social contexts where as physical objects, their representational capacities were drawn upon in different ways. The metaphysical details of how images were performed, narrated, touched or passed between people on those social occasions is information which is difficult to access from the perspective of the present but which would have shaped their interpretation and generated new meanings. Evidence that artefacts were designed to be used in socially-specific ways demands thinking beyond their representational capacity in present archival situations. In order to understand how photographs made at Upoto became socially salient I have addressed the particular cultural uses of photographs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by British people. For example, the material forms of albums and framed photographic portraits has allowed me to examine how photographs were used as mnemonic devices which contemporaneously connected separated members of Baptist communities and constructed narratives of shared identity between British and Congolese Christians.

2. Following Archival Grains and the Performances of History

In devising alternative methods for the study of colonial archives, Ann Laura Stoler has advocated for reading 'along the archival grain' before attempting to challenge the information that archival documents contain (Stoler 2009: 50). This ethnographically minded approach to 'archive-as-subject' considers historical documents as having been active artefacts in the formation, evaluation and mobilisation of categories of knowledge, as opposed to simply records from which historical data can be extracted (Stoler 2009: 44; 2002). Such an engagement with archives requires a historical grounding in the significance of certain ideas and how they were used, valued and acted upon by the archiving institutions (Stoler 2009: 9-10). Stoler analyses colonial 'epistemic habits' and their historical trajectories in order to access 'the varying uneasiness and differential discomforts about what could be assumed to be communicable and circulated - or unrepeatable and not subject to the economy of official exchange' (2009: 39). This analytical approach grants a perspective on why forms of knowledge became politically charged or were considered neutral, taken for granted (and therefore unremarked upon) or omitted from written documentation and the consequences of that in a given historical moment. This thesis therefore takes up the idea of reading 'along the archival grain' to analyse the sorts of information that was produced by missionaries at Upoto, identify how it was communicated, to whom, and why it was thought to be significant in relation missionaries' representation of themselves and their work.

Photographs themselves can be thought of as having had archival grains or having been enmeshed in forms of inscription as they have been 'remediated' since their production (Edwards 2012: 226). I suggest that photographs have been co-opted into reproducing taken-for-granted forms of collective knowledge and received in accordance with a cultural 'common sense' (Stoler 2009: 38) because of the conditions of social 'expectancy' around how photographic genres operated and the predispositions of the 'interpretative community' (Edwards 1998: 109). Stoler reminds us that 'common sense' is both historical and political (2009: 38). Part of what this thesis does is to identify and dislodge the historical meanings that were taken for granted around BMS missionaries' photographic practice. With an understanding of the patterns of ideas perpetuated by the BMS in its official literature about mission in the Congo 1890-1915 it has been possible to infer how photographic content was activated within specific discourses. Reference to other

forms of documentation in the BMS archive provides insight into the different forms of knowledge that was being produced by missionaries in the Congo for internal and public consumption. An immersion in this wider archival setting has allowed me to devise comparative approaches and hypothesise how photographs operated even when little contextual information about their circumstances of creation survives. This is the case for the vast majority of photographs made at Upoto in collections in the UK.

Alongside Stoler's notion of an archival grain I wish to use Elizabeth Edward's concept of photography's 'performance' in relation to how histories are created. Edwards has explored how photographs might be thought to have performative qualities both in relation to the initial event of inscription and the signature qualities of the medium as it is received (Edwards 2001a, 2001b). She writes that '[P]performances, like photographs, embody meaning through signifying properties, and are deliberate, conscious efforts to represent, to say something about something', and that such a perspective 'allows us to link the mutability of the photograph's signs with their historical contexts, in that larger frames of performance, the cultural stage on which the drama of the photograph is played out, are composed of the smaller, on to which it deports meanings in a mutually sustaining relationship (2001a: 17). For the objectives of this thesis, following the 'archival grain' has granted access to the historical context and 'cultural stage' in which photographs from Upoto were likely conceived and later embedded, lending themselves to and actively participating in historically and culturally specific discourses. Although it is impossible to know fully the intersecting intentions of historical actors involved in making photographs at Upoto, this thesis brings information from the archive (and elsewhere) to bear upon them to create new understandings of their content.

In the context of BMS mission work in the Congo, the Society actively incorporated visual media and photography into its own official propaganda. This has meant that in certain instances it has been possible to gain access to how photographic content was made salient at a specific moment within a Baptist readership. In the dialectic between photographs and the archive it is possible to find out 'how photographs and their making actually operated in the fluid space of ideological and cultural meaning' (Edwards 2001a: 3). Thus, rather than asking photographs to reveal an overriding 'truth' to the history of the Upoto mission, in this thesis I integrate them with other articulations of the past (Edwards 2001a: 9).

3. Looking Forensically (The Devil is in the Detail)

A critical approach to working with historical imagery which has shown the potential for photographs to enable new understandings of the past involves addressing content within the photographic frame 'forensically' (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219). Such an engagement recognises the nature of the medium as a form of inscription which produces 'random inclusiveness' and 'visual excess' and can shift analytical emphasis away from the individual authorship and intentions of the photographer (Morton and Edwards 2009a: 4). Close readings of an image give rise to 'incidental details' which contain information that has the capacity to disrupt dominant interpretations or create spaces for new counter-narratives of historical moments (Edwards 2001a: 20).

The intellectual outcomes of visual 'detective work' attending to the minutiae of image content may be subtle (Prins 1992: 223), enabling a more nuanced interpretation, or may simply generate further questions about the photographic moment itself (Jenkins 2001: 73). Sometimes, however, photographic details can take on incredible significance and unsettle the received ideas about a moment in time which photographs are ostensibly *about* and have been co-opted to narrate. Forensic looking grants access to the 'minor histories' and enables 'less spectacular' re-readings of history (Stoler 2009: 51). As Stoler has written, 'minor histories' matter because they open up a critical space from which to reflect upon 'major' history (2009: 7). Taking the premise that the meanings of photographic content are uncontainable (Edwards 2001a: 17), historical attempts to confine or anchor interpretation become germane sites of analysis for accessing articulations of the past. Throughout the chapters in this thesis the tension between photographic details and images' captions or textual framings is used productively to challenge missionary versions of history.

Forensically appraising the photographic archive of the Upoto mission has been advantageous for critically interrogating its history because the surviving primary sources from the period 1890-1915 were solely authored by the British men and women who were stationed there. In applying this approach this thesis develops new insights into Congolese presence, participation and forms of self-presentation in photographic events at Upoto. It is proven a valuable undertaking in this study because the photographs contain information which is both distinct and absent from

those in written traces. The details of an image's content are utilised to invert and complicate interpretation of photographic moments at Upoto and it becomes clear 'the potential which a photograph has to drive forward an analysis, when it can be embedded in and wired to other types of data' (Prins 1992: 223).

4. Integrating the Photography Complex

This thesis employs the concept of the 'photography complex' as developed by James Hevia (2009) as a means of asking questions of the photographic archive and situating photographic production at Upoto in relation to wider historical processes in the Congo and in Britain. This framework for thinking about photographic production aims to redistribute analytical emphasis, frequently centred at the level of the photographic image, towards a perspective which situates photographs as active within a web of processes and relations (Hevia 2009: 80). The photography complex offers an alternative to tendencies to conceptualise the technological object as divorced from social production, whereby the creation of the printed image is taken for granted as an outcome of the initial photographic event (Hevia 2009: 80). Hevia invites a Latourian way of thinking about the different human and non-human agents which comprise a network within the photography complex (2009: 80-81). This broader analytical purview 'not only introduces a more intricate set of relationships than the usual tripartite division photographer/camera/photograph; they also suggest a novel form of agency, one understood in terms of the capacity to mobilise and deploy elements for generating new material realities' (2009: 81). Such a perspective includes the photographer and their networks, the various reproductive technologies through which images are transformed and circulated, as well as their process of becoming epistemologically charged and socially embedded.

Throughout the thesis, the photography complex is invoked in order to reintegrate archival objects into the social and political events and relationships in which they were historically active. By doing so, it demonstrates how photographic practices at Upoto were linked to European colonial efforts in the Congo, Baptist religious agendas and Western imperial discourses. Hevia has explored the 'photography complex' during the period of Boxer Uprisings China (1900-1901) to detail the role of photographs in communicating imperial narratives and shaping public understandings of events in ways which chimed with pre-existing imperial knowledge structures (2009: 96). Thus he has been able to show how the

photography complex and the colonial epistemological complex were mutually reinforcing in the crafting of ideas about China in Britain (2009: 96-97).

This approach is pertinent to the study of the Upoto mission because it enables a perspective which, while centred on Baptist missionary photography, reveals how the actions of this community intersected with a wider colonial moment in Central Africa. In this study, the analysis of photographs is directed towards a number of nodes within the photography complex: the human actors who were the practitioners and subjects of missionary photographs, and their social networks at Upoto and in Britain; the aesthetic and ideological precedents on which this practice drew in the creation of photographic documents of the Congo; the professional contexts through which photographic images were interpreted and circulated; and the material and social circumstances of their reception by contemporary audiences in Britain. This more expansive viewpoint means that the Upoto photographic archive, which might otherwise be seen as an isolated and esoteric product of a religious encounter in northern Congo, is shown to have been active in the formation of knowledge between colony and metropole in ways which linked the photography complex to global events.

5. Disrupting Archival Configurations

Recent scholarship has highlighted the role of the archive itself as an instituting power and cultural logic through which knowledge about the past is either excluded or selectively enshrined and reproduced (Hamilton et al. 2002). There have been challenges to established conceptualisations of the archive as a place where universal truths are kept, replaced with the idea of the archive as a social entity with systems and processes that actively constitute historical records and claim the authority to evidence (Hamilton et al. 2002: 9). A perspective which recognises the archive as invested *in* different power relations and invested *with* political agency which serves particular institutions (Stoler 2002; Basu and de Jong 2016) raises the question: what kinds of historical evidence are produced by archives?

A sustained analysis of the BMS archives brings to the fore the sedimented nature of its contents and how the artefacts which had been accrued had once been destined to communicate designated types of knowledge about the mission to select audiences. It was the evolving nature of the archive itself which had led to these various deposits now cohabiting, given structural cohesion in spite of their

epistemological divergence. Once constituting the 'systems of written accountability' (Stoler 2002: 98) of the BMS and physically centred at the Society's headquarters, the archive has since also become a repository for privately owned collections relating to retired or deceased Baptist missionaries. The Society's archives were situated in the basement of its London headquarters until 1989, until new headquarters were established at Didcot shared with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (Stanley 1996: 43). At this time the BMS archives were placed on permanent loan to Regent's Park College in Oxford (Stanley 1996: 43). The college, which was originally based in London, historically offered university education to Nonconformists and trained Baptist men for ministry, and this Baptist heritage is central to its activities today. The Angus Library where the BMS archives are held comprises collections dedicated to the history of the Baptist Church in Britain and Nonconformists worldwide, as well as other artefacts dating from the fifteenth century onwards. Thus, the Angus Library inherited the BMS archives when the BMS relocated and effectively severed its operations from the archives pertaining to its activity over two centuries. The implication of this is that some of the material in the BMS archives maintains its presence there because of an earlier rationale, its 'archival status' (Mbembe 2002: 20) determined by the fact that it was the administrative apparatus of the Society. However, some of the material arrived at the BMS archive latterly and was not made to function in the same way as the documents which were former technologies of bureaucracy (Stoler 2002: 98).

After a prolonged engagement with BMS archival material I began to recognise different photographic images that were familiar to me in new settings, having encountered them in different archival guises: printed as illustrations in *The Missionary Herald*, as a pile of loose photographs stacked in a tin box, pasted into an album, published in a monograph or in a protective plastic sleeve, captioned with an ethnographic description. The discrete forms of knowledge they permitted highlighted the fact that as artefacts they had been enshrined according to alternate archival logics which continue to govern their interpretation. As artefacts they made sense within their respective archival ecosystems, but when I re-collected dispersed material for the first time the epistemological constraints of their archival settings fell into sharp relief. This recognition of the archive as a system through which meanings are conferred upon artefacts (or repressed) enables a critical assessment of the concurrent uses to which missionary photographs were put. Chris Morton and Darren Newbury's reminder that the categories attributed to photographs should

not be seen as absolute distinctions identifiable in images themselves (2015b: 8) has been pertinent for 'unstitching' those social inscriptions which worked to contain them (Banks and Vokes 2010: 338). Archival inscriptions and infrastructures offer evidence of how photographs made at Upoto have been utilised in different social settings according to their perceived narrative or evidential potential.

Academic Contribution

The original contribution of this thesis to the existing scholarship can be seen as two-fold. In terms of the research focus, the history of the Baptist mission station of Upoto has not received any significant scholarly attention. Where the archives connected to the station have been consulted for historical research, this has been directed towards producing larger scale accounts of trends in missionary education (Yates 1971, 1987) and its influences on language (Samarin 1986, 1989), comparisons in the early work of English-speaking missions in the Congo (Slade 1959) or the relationship between Protestant mission organisations and the Congo Free State administration (Lagergren 1970). The archives in the UK have not been read closely for the information they provide about the experiences of Congolese people living at Upoto from 1890. Furthermore, the hundreds of photographs made by missionaries and the artefacts they collected as ethnographic objects between 1890 and 1915 are yet to be the subject of comprehensive research. Secondly, an examination of Baptist Missionary Society activity in the Congo through its photographic representations, anthropologically inspired or otherwise, is so far unprecedented. Other studies of individual BMS mission stations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have relied predominantly on textual records to glean information about the experiences of those who formed Christian communities and their analyses have not engaged with photographs as visual evidence of the cultural encounters that were part of those histories (Friedman 1991; Hunt 1999). This is important because not only do photographs have the capacity to disrupt existing narratives of events, they attest to the involvement of Congolese people who were not otherwise named or noted to have been involved with the mission through written records.

In applying these methods to the surviving photographic record of Upoto it is important to acknowledge that there are limitations to what such an approach can achieve and the extent to which historical events can be re-read on this basis should not be over-stated. To my knowledge there are no first-hand accounts authored by the Congolese people who lived at or became affiliated with the Upoto mission

between 1890 and 1915 that survive in the UK. As such, the BMS archives do not provide ready access to the experiences of many individuals who were photographed in connection with the mission's activities. It is also important to recognise that written documents and photographs represent particular opportunities for articulating history and that memories of the Upoto mission have likely been maintained in multiple culturally salient ways in both the DRC and in Britain. In using photographs to 'flesh-out' textual histories it should be remembered that both are partial, 'authored' forms of inscription and that one is not a more truthful document than the other (Morton and Edwards 2009a: 7). Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid have cautioned against the idea that it is possible to 'fill the gaps' in the archive and suggest instead conceiving its contents as a 'sliver' (2002: 10).

Sources and Research Practice: Re-Collecting the Archives

Archival Encounters and Omissions

My search to understand the early Upoto mission led me to a range of archives and museums in the UK and Belgium. Fieldwork to conduct research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself, with the prospect of visiting archives or carrying out oral history interviews, was outside the scope of this thesis. Periodic civil unrest and outbreaks of Ebola in parts of the DRC before and during the project's realisation have meant that from the outset it was conceived in terms of what fieldwork would be possible within the UK and Belgium. A continuation of this research in the DRC remains a future possibility if the country's stability and medical crises improve.

Brian Stanley testified that there were archives at BMS stations in the Congo, including Upoto, when he visited in 1987 but that these faced significant challenges with the preservation of material (Stanley 1996: 45). Towards the end of my doctoral research I was in contact with a research participant in Kinshasa, John Angondo Asaka, who has helped me to understand a little of what Upoto is like today. With his assistance I received some digital photographs of the church originally erected in 1912 which is still standing and I am hopeful that future research collaboration in the DRC will be possible. By far the most productive source of archival information on the early history of the Upoto mission has been the BMS archive at the Angus Library in Oxford. I made three separate research visits there between 2016 and 2019.

My research visits in Belgium involved consulting the Frantz Cornet Archive and the photographic collections of the Africa Museum in Tervuren. On a further visit I spent time researching in the Stanley Archives of the Africa Museum. In Belgium I also made two visits to KADOC (*Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving*) the centre for religion, culture and society of KU (*Katholieke Universiteit*) Leuven, which houses archives relating to Belgian Catholic missions that were active in the Congo Free State from the late nineteenth century. In particular I consulted the archives of the Scheut missionaries that were established in the northern Congo Free State and some of the surviving photographic material of the Scheut mission more generally. These visits were intended to assess the nature of the primary sources connected with the Catholic missions at KADOC and to understand their potential contribution towards my research. I decided not to

pursue further research into the Scheut archives, in part for reasons of time and because some of their records were written in Latin. There is potential for future research to be conducted in these archives to understand their relationship with Baptist missionaries and for comparative work on their photographic practices in the Congo.

Access to the diplomatic archive of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, which houses the colonial archives of the Congo Free State and Belgian Congo, is notoriously difficult and I was not given permission to consult them. This inevitably shaped the angle of the research as it meant that I did not have access to potential manuscripts made by the Belgian administration which would have enabled a more detailed perspective of how BMS activity at Upoto was perceived. Once the difficulties of accessing this archive became clear, making the Baptist mission community of Upoto and its self-representation the subject of research provided a focus for this thesis.

The Photographic Sources

While I was unable to find an abundance of primary textual sources authored by the first and second generations of missionary men at Upoto, a substantial proportion of the artefacts which have survived are hundreds of photographic objects. Albums, photographic prints and glass slides constitute a huge resource of images produced in and around the Upoto mission between 1890 and 1915. The majority of the surviving photographs were made by William Forfeitt and Kenred Smith who were both keen amateur photographers.[10] Their images were regularly used to illustrate the pages of *The Missionary Herald* (the official monthly subscription magazine of the BMS).

The BMS archive at the Angus Library houses two albums which individually once belonged to the Forfeitt and to the Smith families. Also connected to the Forfeitts are the lantern slide collection and a box of over 200 un-catalogued loose photographic prints. Many of the artefacts were not donated to the BMS archive during the missionaries' lifetime but were deposited subsequently by their

[10] It has not been possible to determine the type of photographic equipment used in the Congo by either Kenred Smith or William Forfeitt, or the precise logistics of how they processed their photographs. As is discussed in Chapter 4, correspondence sent to MAA's first curator, Baron von Hügel, indicates that Kenred Smith's brother, Harrold Smith, ran the Pearce & Smith Photographic Studio in Stamford Hill, London, in the early 1900s. It seems likely that negatives were sent back to England with Congo missionaries returning on furlough, and that Kenred Smith, and possibly William Forfeitt, enlisted the help of Harrold Smith to develop and print photographs.

descendants. In this way they formed personal archives before they were institutionalised, or as may be the case with the lantern slides, re-institutionalised. There are other loose photographs pertaining to Upoto that were made by Forfeitt and Smith (though are not attributed to them) which form a catalogue of images that the BMS likely used in its propaganda. In this pool of 'official' photographic media used for publications are copies of photographs in the albums which later travelled to the archive from private collections. Images which have had divergent 'careers' since their creation now occupy the same space, if not the same material surrounds or classificatory complex.

At MAA is a collection of 252 images in the form of prints and glass slides which were made by Smith and sold to the Museum between 1905 and 1908. This was a collection formed of images that in part arrived serendipitously at the Museum as well as images that were commissioned by the then curator Baron von Hügel on the basis of their ethnographic value. As will be explored, many of these images represent an altogether different view of Upoto from those which were reproduced by the BMS through official channels. There are, however, copies of the images given to MAA in Smith's personal album now in the BMS archive.

The Digital Re-collection of Artefacts

In order to process the material I had photographed digitally I brought the files together on my laptop as well as using a private Flickr account. Flickr is an online storage facility for photographs which allows users to organise large volumes of images easily. This was a critical part of my methodology because the software enabled me to reassemble my digital photographs out of their camera memory card configurations, which reflected the physical confines of discrete archival storage methods and temporalities of my archive visits, in order for them to be analysed side by side. Using Flickr I was able to make new digital albums which reflected my research interests and tag photographs according to themes (Fig. I.9, I.10). This enabled the digital avatars of different artefacts from disparate museum or archival settings to coexist online in a way that they would not be able to in real life, except in the context of an exhibition. It was a useful tool for making comparisons between photographs because it enables users to scroll quickly between images and magnify their content in order to scan for details.

Faced with hundreds of archival photographs I was forced to limit my analysis to a small selection of images. The patterns I had noticed within and between archival

collections included subject matter, genres of photograph such as portrait variations and particular scenes of evangelical work-in-progress as well as certain Congolese forms of self-presentation at photographic events. When I discovered particular images which had been reproduced in different formats such as *The Missionary Herald* or as lantern slides I was able to assess the ideas which the mission sought to communicate with them in different contexts. This ability to analyse images alongside the particular historical inscriptions made them more accessible as cultural artefacts than other photographs I encountered in the archive. These were flashes of insight into how photographs had been made meaningful at precise historical moments. A further decisive factor which influenced my selection process was that I was able to identify Congolese individuals who had been photographed by the missionaries on multiple occasions, and sometimes these images existed across different institutions. The repeated presences of certain people in the photographic archives formed theoretical questions about their identity, status and relationship to the mission staff at Upoto. In some instances, Congolese individuals can be traced through different life stages as they appear to have grown up at or close to the station, evidence that they had relationships to the mission as children and as adults. Using other historical sources, I was able to infer that some Congolese men who had political authority at Upoto participated in making photographs on different occasions. Where I could identify individuals who had been assigned names in photographs, I also connected this with biographical information elsewhere in the archive. The fact that more written information centred around certain photographed Congolese individuals survives than for others is no coincidence but reflective of how the mission produced narratives about cherished Congolese converts. In some cases, photographs appeared to obviously contradict or complicate information which I had read about events at Upoto this tension provided an analytical in-road. On other occasions I found a photograph's content visually compelling and this subjective response meant that I chose to write about it over other images which might have illustrated the same point.

Navigating the Textual Sources

'There has been but little attempt to keep strictly to the historical order of events and matters extending over years. The literary material at my disposal used under the headings of the different sections of the book has not always lent itself very readily to a date sequence.' (Smith 2016: 5)

Reverend Kenred Smith's admission of the partial nature of his personal archive corresponding to his time spent in the Congo, and the way in which historical material sometimes resists coherent reassembly, resonates with my own experience of conducting archival research. Smith's published memoirs have been an important resource for the writing of this thesis. Keith Carey-Smith, the grandson of the BMS missionary, compiled and serendipitously published his grandfather's memoirs in 2016. I was lucky to obtain a copy of *With Christ in Congoland* from him at an early stage in my research. Subsequently unable to find any primary textual documents pertaining to this key figure of the early Upoto mission, the published memoirs formed a critical source for understanding his time in the Congo. The memoirs proved somewhat cryptic when it came to locating historically rooted information. In places it details tantalising accounts of events and conversations but offers no sense of when they occurred during his eighteen-year career as a missionary. As an artefact of research it served as a pertinent reminder that information which is handed down is consciously mediated by various personal and institutional choices. Interpreted from the perspective of the present, Smith chose to construct the story of his career in deliberate ways, which his grandson later assembled for publication. It also reflects the subjective and partial nature of memory which resists precise chronological ordering. I have been fortunate to have maintained email contact with Keith Carey-Smith throughout this project and his generous assistance has been invaluable for checking facts about Kenred's life and sharing information with me contained in his personal archive.

The majority of the primary sources which I consulted for this research were housed in the BMS archive in the Angus Library. In the archives I consulted different textual sources authored mostly by the first generation of BMS men living at Upoto between 1890 and 1915. There would have been local Congolese church members and evangelists educated through the mission who were writing in the late nineteenth century, but documents authored by them have either not survived or did not make it into the BMS archives in Oxford. I found virtually no primary texts authored by the English women who lived, worked and often died on the mission station between 1890 and 1915. All the written administration during this period was seemingly carried out by their husbands. Of the primary sources from Upoto in the BMS archives there turned out to be a greater number of documents made for

internal station records than personal letters or diaries penned by individual missionaries, which speaks to the earlier bureaucratic function of the archive.

Of the surviving artefacts of the mission's early operations, the one which proved the most valuable source of information was the mission's logbook (1890-1953) because entries of events were recorded under dates from the station's foundation. Information written by the station's male staff in the logbook was summarised into concise annual reports for the BMS home committee.[11] More detailed letters about the subjects covered only cursorily in the logbook would likely have been sent to the home secretary but few of these have survived. It is worth noting that a continual turnover of staff (as a result of death, temporary postings to understaffed stations, or compulsory furlough) has contributed to intermittent archival records from Upoto. There were frequent temporal lags when the mission's internal recording activity dwindled or ceased, and paper trails corresponding to some missionaries' time at Upoto remain but not others.

The detail of the information that was recorded in the mission's logbook receded between 1890 and 1915. These entries became more formulaic, less dense and increasingly regimented in the kinds of topics committed to paper. This can be interpreted as a deliberate choice by the senior staff to limit the sort of information that was formally recorded. This change is significant because it evidences how certain forms of knowledge could prove contentious and had the potential to threaten the Society's relation with the State administration. The logbook evolved to be more introspective after the turn of the century as the BMS learned to be more protective of their reputation as news of the Congo Free State's misrule reached Europe. What was known in Europe, and how it came to be known, about the day-

[11] In the nineteenth century the administration of the Society was overseen by an elected secretary and assistant secretary. The promotion of the Society and circulation of missionary 'intelligence' through publications and the organisation of preaching tours was the responsibility of a General Committee, composed of a maximum of fifty members (Stanley 1992: 209). The Society produced a monthly subscription bulletin, *The Missionary Herald*, from 1819, which provided updates on its work in different mission fields (Stanley 1992: 209). From within the membership of the General Committee, a Central Committee of twenty-one persons, alongside treasurer and secretaries, conducted the affairs of the Society through monthly meetings held in the London office (Stanley 1992: 209).

Updates about the progress and obstacles faced in foreign mission fields reached the BMS secretary by way of letters from individual missionaries. Pertinent information was then selectively raised at meetings of the Central Committee, who collectively formulated policies and decided upon actions to be taken. At some point in the nineteenth century, as oversees mission work expanded, the Society created two sub-committees which oversaw the administration of missions in the West Indies and Africa (Western Sub-Committee) and India and China (Eastern Sub-Committee). Brian Stanley's work on the history of the Baptist Missionary Society (1992) provides the most comprehensive overview of the organisation's structure and administrative procedures, but does not offer more substantial detail on the relationships between missionaries and the home secretary or how specific policies shaped Congo mission work in practice.

to-day conditions of Congolese people (in rubber-producing districts in particular) became an overtly political issue with the establishment of the CRA. It is important to note here that the logbook's records prior to 1903 were already a redacted version of William Forfeitt's personal notes, as he wrote on the title page: 'Written in February 1903 by William Forfeitt from diaries and letters in his possession up to the date of his departure for England March 1903'. I was unable to find in the BMS archive the diaries or letters from which the first portion of the logbook was compiled retrospectively, nor Forfeitt's 'diary' that Ruth Slade apparently used in her doctoral research (1959).

I discovered that the most constant but by no means the most detailed or reliable documentation of work at Upoto came in the form of articles published in *The Missionary Herald* where accounts from the field were reproduced in edited form. Missionaries were expected to provide features and offer regular updates which gave the impression of a unified, continuous narrative. *The Herald* communicated the official versions of events in the Congo deemed suitable for British publics. Accounts were serialised and their content sanitised. From a research perspective this meant accounting for the delay between when events actually occurred, when they were recorded in a letter, when a letter was received by the BMS secretary and when the edited content was eventually published. As will be seen, often the month of a particular magazine issue was the only recorded date of an event or a photograph's existence that I could reference. Whilst it presented itself primarily as a source of news regarding the various international missions, providing updates about missionaries' welfare, the overarching purpose of the periodical was to generate support for the continued work of the Society. It contained information about missionary lectures and events, church fundraising initiatives, appeals for funds, itemised lists of charitable donations and their donors and updates regarding individual converts whose education was being sponsored by specific church congregations. Issues of *The Herald* made visible and credited the charity of individual Baptists at home and encouraged further acts of generosity. *The Missionary Herald* was therefore the primary public interface between subscribers, the Society's Home Committee in England and missionary personnel working abroad.

A further important source for analysing how events at Upoto came to be represented officially were the published books that BMS missionaries (or other authoritative British public figures) wrote about the history of the Congo mission.

Missionary autobiographies and hagiographies were a popular genre in the nineteenth century which fused elements of adventure novels and travel literature. These texts, published during the period of focus for the thesis, became crucial forms of evidence for how narratives of mission reached wider public audiences, were glamorised and glossed over, and became resting places for photographs made at Upoto where they were reproduced as illustrations.

Creating an Archive

Through this research I have been confronted by the dispersed nature of archival material pertaining to the history of the Congo. For example, a photograph of a prominent Bapoto 'Chief' living at Upoto prior to the BMS arrival circulated in *Country Life* magazine in 1928 (Fig. I.11). I was able to purchase a few items of historical ephemera such as magazine articles and postcards relating to Upoto from online sellers. I could have purchased more photographic postcards depicting scenes from Upoto dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that frequently crop up in online auctions of colonial-era postcards from the Congo. However, I decided to draw some artificial limits on this dispersed archive. The material I was able to obtain outside of institutional settings now forms part of my own personal archive for the time being.

In the course of the research I also impacted the content of the BMS archive. My internet searches lead me to discover a photograph album of images which had been wrongly attributed to Kenred Smith that was available from a seller in the US. The album contained nineteenth century photographs made of missionaries at the BMS station of Lukolela and the Angus Library decided to purchase it on the basis of my appraisal. This was an unanticipated role-reversal in which I found myself with the authority to recommend what artefacts should achieve archival 'status' (Mbembe 2002: 20). The recommendation was made with the hope that the album would be accessible to more people in a public library than if it had been purchased for a private collection. I am, however, conscious that much of the material heritage relating to Christian missions comes to be located in the global north and this restricts access for many.

Ethnographic Collections and Silences

At the outset of this project I planned to survey the ethnographic collections of material culture accumulated by Reverends Kenred Smith, John and William Forfeitt

which contained a significant amount of material originating from northern and north-eastern Congo, and the region around Upoto in particular. The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge (MAA) houses a collection of 92 objects which were donated by Smith in 1905, in addition to the photographs made by him. The Forfeitt Collection is comprised of 254 objects which were donated to MAA between 1908 and 1911 which seems to comprise artefacts collected by William, who was stationed at Upoto, and his brother John, who served as secretary to the BMS in the lower Congo, based at Matadi between 1889 and 1909. Some time after his retirement from mission service, Smith made a further donation to Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) in 1945 and this collection comprises 355 objects of material culture. There is also a small ethnographic collection housed at Reading Museum (RM) which comprises 29 artefacts collected by the Forfeitt brothers, acquired between 1890 and 1896. The Museum's documentation indicates that the original collection was slightly larger than what exists today (Minott 2014: 29).

Collections research in these museums initially constituted a core part of my methodology because I was keen to understand what the objects could reveal about material exchange as part of the religious encounter at Upoto (Wingfield 2012; Jacobs, Knowles and Wingfield 2015). My hypothesis was that the objects which were acquired could evidence Congolese agency in the choices of objects that were exchanged with missionaries, following approaches to ethnographic collections developed in museum ethnography (Byrne et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2013). I had intended to employ a perspective which recognises the presence of objects in museum collections as evidence of 'deliberate human action' (Torrence & Clarke 2011: 33). My research into the collections made by Smith at BMAG was carried out as part of a placement at the museum, made possible by CHASE, from October to December 2017. Similarly, I was awarded a Crowther-Beynon grant by the University of Cambridge to carry out collections research at MAA which was fulfilled during June and November of 2018. I also spent a day at Reading Museum in October 2018 researching the objects and an album of photographs connected with the Forfeitt family housed there.

The Natural History Museum (NHM) in London holds collections of beetles and Lepidoptera collected from Upoto by missionaries Frederick Oram and Kenred Smith and I made a short visit there in 2019. This fortuitously came about by chance through my being contacted by David Oram in 2017. David is the great nephew of one of the founding members of the Upoto mission, Frederick Oram, and

coincidentally works in the NHM Entomology Department where he encountered the collections made by his missionary ancestor. The research relationship struck up with David has been rewarding because of our shared enthusiasm for Upoto's material heritage.

The work carried out in museum collections consisted of documenting the objects themselves through making digital photographs as well as studying affiliated museum documentation. I made records of museum labels, catalogue cards, accession registers and correspondence in order to gain the fullest possible picture of the circumstances around the acquisitions from BMS missionaries. From my research into these collections I learned that the surviving documentation around the missionaries' collecting activity or precise incidents of exchange in the Congo is relatively minimal. Where object labels do exist, they are occasionally inscribed with a cultural group, but very often registered an object as having originated from 'Upper Congo'. Museum documentation was also relatively silent on how objects had originally been used and valued in the Congo. Instead, the archival traces connected to objects bore evidence of how the BMS had conceptualised the objects and attributed new meanings. Detailed accounts of collecting practices by the missionaries stationed at Upoto have not emerged in other archival settings, except for a couple of passing references.

This lack of information about how the collections were amassed in the Congo might have been overcome if there was a substantial and detailed body of ethnographic information about the cultural groups living in the region of Upoto. I am currently unaware of any ethnographic studies dedicated solely to this region, nor has there been the level of art-historical scholarship on the area as on other parts of the Congo historically celebrated for their artistic traditions. The majority of the material culture in the collections that I surveyed were everyday objects. These items, which now exist in museums in the UK, comprise a rich and critical record of historical material culture from northern Congo obtained during a period of immense socioeconomic change. Items of Bapoto and Ngombe material culture, in particular, significantly outnumber comparative collections such as those held by the Africa Museum in Tervuren or the American Museum of Natural History, New York, so their importance cannot be overestimated. In relation to this thesis, however, the ethnographic objects proved difficult to work with to understand the experiences and motivations of Congolese people at Upoto in response to the arrival of Christianity.

In their existing institutional configurations at MAA, without further historical sources or the possibility of carrying out research in the DRC itself, the sorts of questions which could be asked of the ethnographic collections within the parameters of this project were limited. By far the most productive source of contextual information was the set of ethnographic photographs made by Smith also in the collections of MAA. It is possible that the museum's first curator, Baron Von Hügel believed that the photographs supplied the requisite context for understanding the provenance of the material culture collections; and that they operated together as an anthropological resource. My collections surveys suggested that contextual documentation was otherwise limited, which led me to concentrate my research on the hundreds of photographs relating to Upoto. My research focus was subsequently reoriented in order to consider photographs as historical inscriptions and as objects of material culture themselves. Discussions of ethnographic object collections in this thesis are therefore limited, appearing in Chapters 4 and 5, where the objects come to life when situated against historical Congolese performances in the creation of photographs.

Chapter Structure

'Mapping Morality' follows the first generation of missionary men at Upoto and their efforts to come to know the physical, political and moral landscapes in which they were situated. It focuses in on their attempts to gain influence among Congolese authorities and analyses the sorts of textual and photographic representations that emerged from early encounters.

'Navigating Turmoil' explores Congolese people's interactions with the BMS a few years after their initial reception at Upoto. The chapter examines the mission's increasing documentation of violent incidents and illustrates that the missionaries were forced to adopt unanticipated roles in response to local European oppression of Congolese people. It subsequently demonstrates how the Society attempted to navigate the international scandal around King Leopold's regime.

'Picturing Transformation' examines how the first Congolese Christian community came into being at Upoto, tracing individual station employees who later became evangelists. Different genres of photographic portraits are analysed for the symbolic themes they were charged with when framed by official narratives of mission's progress. The photographs are used to generate insights into the actions of

those first generations of Congolese people who chose to engage with the BMS message.

'Curating the Ethnographic' is focused on the ethnographic collections made by Kenred Smith for MAA. It sheds light on the relationships which facilitated the exchange of photographs and material culture made in northern Congo to the Museum and explores the aesthetic criteria through which photographs were considered useful as anthropological evidence. Comparison of the photographic material at MAA with material in other archival settings discloses Smith's relationships with the Congolese subjects of his images which enabled the construction of ethnographic views of Upoto.

'Curating Memory' continues with the theme of how photographic objects connected with Upoto came to be mobilised and made meaningful in Britain. It concentrates on the different social and material assemblages which provided photographs with new interpretative contexts. These assemblages are analysed for the deliberate ways in which they were active in the construction of public and private narratives about the BMS mission at Upoto.

Chapter One
Mapping Morality

'I think my wildest and brightest dreams of boyhood have been realised as regards to scenery and the unknown virgin soil. And as for natives in their own wild haunts as yet untouched by white man's hands – why we have as many as we like. Can you imagine anything more like a boy's ideal dream of missionary life than this.'
(Frederick Oram writing from Upoto to his sister, Nellie, January 16th 1893)

'You must bear with me while I once more emphasise the importance of this system of navigable waters which has been so very marvellously opened up to us during the past few years. If the old slave traders could only have reached them, what havoc they would have made! Happily the secret has been kept till the dawn of happier times, and now these 6,000 miles and more of unbroken communication, stretching N., N.E., and S.E. from Stanley Pool, are avenues by which the young Congo State is earnestly endeavouring to carry law and order into the far interior; and they are also the avenues through which the various sections of the Church are striving to make known the glorious truths our Lord and Saviour commanded us everywhere to teach.'
(George Grenfell, *The Missionary Herald*, November 1891: 425)

Constructing Upoto

This chapter analyses some of the earliest photographic and textual representations made by BMS missionaries on arrival at Upoto to explore the events which unfolded as a result of different cultural encounters. By following the 'archival grain' (Stoler 2009: 50) of these early missionary documents, tensions in the kinds of information which was logged internally by the Society and that which was made public in BMS propaganda become apparent. Visual and textual representations which were circulated publicly by the BMS at this time sought to portray a consistent narrative of missionaries' progress and mastery of the landscape, languages and people who they encountered. Rather than regarding these representations as baseless fictions which reveal nothing of the 'true' historical circumstances of early mission work, by attending to their recurrent themes it is possible to see how missionary identity and Upoto itself was constructed to chime with pre-existing forms of knowledge about the purpose of evangelical work and

British imperialism at home (Hevia 2009: 96). This engagement with the first missionaries' 'epistemic habits' (Stoler 2009: 39) as they sought to establish themselves at Upoto reveals something of their own worldview and makes it possible to critically interrogate some of their preoccupations and better situate or challenge certain narratives of the religious encounter.

This chapter demonstrates how photographs made at Upoto that were reproduced in BMS literature were given significance according to epistemological frameworks through captioning and textual narratives, thereby becoming active agents in the creation of ideas about Britain's place in a perceived moral and cultural world order. By paying close attention to the settings in which images were reproduced, it is shown how photographic content was expected to function within a particular community at a given historical moment (Edwards 2001b: 21). BMS photographs operated within a wider 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009: 80) which linked events in the vicinity of Upoto to Baptist people in Britain, who were instructed on the character of Bapoto and Ngombe people through their engagement with such authoritative documents.

In addition to opening up the spaces of 'ideological and cultural meaning' associated with the early photographic archive (Edwards 2001a: 3), this chapter employs techniques of looking forensically at image content (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219). Photographs made at Upoto stand as alternative historical documents to those textual narratives authored by missionaries, offering up incidental details of moments which were not recorded in writing. Furthermore, analysis of archival sources indicates discrepancies between what was deemed possible or desirable to be communicated in writing and that which could be represented photographically by the first missionaries posted at Upoto. The patterns of the archive suggest the existence of different kinds of historical consciousness and documentary impulse: the desire to perform certain triumphant aspects of mission work before the camera stands in tension with brief ambiguous written accounts of conflict and disarray.

The first photograph known to have been made (and to have survived) by the first generation of BMS missionaries who established themselves at Upoto is an image of a scene on the beach next to the pre-existing Congolese town of Upoto, made in May or early June 1890 (Fig. 1.1). The photograph is currently filed with a number of other photographs documenting BMS work in the Congo which comprise part of the Baptist Missionary Society Archive, housed in the Angus Library, Oxford.

The image was made by the Reverend William Forfeitt to commemorate the founding of the BMS mission station there. In the image, the missionary Frederick Oram can be seen standing, surrounded by a group of over fifty African men. The majority of those who were gathered were most likely Bapoto authorities from the area surrounding Upoto. Also visible in the scene are a number of cases, crates and other articles that the missionaries had unloaded onto the beach with which to establish a permanent post. At the rear of the crowd the wooden frame of a house can be seen, which had been assembled and brought upriver on a steamboat from the BMS station at Lukolela. According to Forfeitt's account, which was published in *The Missionary Herald*, the land for the station had been purchased from the 'chiefs' some months prior to when the missionaries made this landing photograph:

> *'The ground palaver was soon settled and paid for, the price consisting of 800 brass rods, two pieces of cloth, three empty preserved fruit bottles, two knives, two forks, two spoons, two mirrors, a cup of beads, and a cup of cowries. Mr. Reichlin, who was with us, very kindly helped us in this matter.'* (MH October 1890: 366)

The photograph therefore represents a subsequent meeting with the people of Upoto after a location for their station had been agreed with State authorities and the site paid for with the help of a Dutch trader (MH October 1890: 365-366). Figure 1.3 is a photograph of the Dutch trading post near to Upoto where traders affiliated with the New African Trade Association (*Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handelsvereeniging*/NAHV) were based until 1893, probably depicting their base at Umangi. The photograph made of the 'official' landing at Upoto beach reflects the missionaries' impulse to document a moment of arrival in anticipation of imminent change. In performing their reception among the Bapoto people as if it were the initial encounter, they self-consciously reproduced the romanticised trope of the dramatic 'first contact' between European peoples and the African 'other' (Pratt 1986). Mary Louise Pratt has identified affinities between first-person narratives of arrival in foreign lands by European travellers from the sixteenth century onwards and twentieth century ethnographic writing, demonstrating the legacies of a discursive form that has been used to imbue texts with personal and scientific authority (1986: 31-33). Their enactment of this familiar scene from popular travel literature indicates that the missionaries recognised the narrative potential of their interactions on the beach at Upoto which could connect them symbolically to a long tradition of male pioneers. The photograph would later be reproduced in published texts about the Congo mission to illustrate a triumphant moment of arrival and provided an historical

anchor for conveying the mission's subsequent progress. It preserved a moment in time against which all other visual representations of Upoto could be measured and contrasted.

This particular photographic print in the Angus Library was at some stage glued to a cardboard support, which may have once formed a page of a larger album (spine now disintegrated) pertaining to the BMS in the Congo. On the cardboard backing the print was given a caption in pencil below: 'Oram put ashore at Upoto to start B.M.S work there, a cannibal crowd surrounding.' A near-identical cropped version of the photograph was reproduced in the 1909 publication *The Life of George Grenfell* (Hawker 1909, opposite page 288) where it was given the title 'Arrival of the Revs F. R. Oram and Wm. Forfeitt at Bopoto, to found [the] new station,1890.' A photographic print of this second image exists in the BMS archives in a box of uncatalogued photographs that once belonged to the Forfeitt family (Fig. 1.2). The captions that were given to these images after they had been made are indicative of acts of inscription which fused particular meanings with the photographic object in order that they would support certain narratives of mission. Once inscribed and part of the photographic object, the descriptive captions operated in conjunction with the images to confer textual authority to the image content and imbue its future interpretation. In this instance the description of the British landing on the shore at Upoto created the idea that the image conjured the concept of a first encounter with 'pristine' Bapoto people as though they had not been contacted by Europeans. Secondly, the notion of a 'cannibal crowd' was a trope which heightened the sense of civilisational difference and conveyed the idea of Oram's evangelical self-sacrifice: he was willing to expose himself to danger to bring Christianity to Upoto (Pratt 1986: 39). British explorer Herbert Ward's travel account *Five Years with Congo Cannibals* published in 1890 had declared the 'Oupoto villages' cannibals, so there was an extant literary tradition which the photograph's caption can be understood to have drawn on (1890: 155).

Following in that archival grain (Stoler 2009), this chapter also takes the Upoto landing photograph as its starting point to explore how the first missionaries sought to represent themselves to the inhabitants of Upoto; and represent Upoto back to the Society and Baptist community in Britain. The first few years of the mission were a critical period in which the BMS men attempted to win over local Congolese authorities and convince people to listen to their message. They sought to distinguish themselves from the European traders and State representatives

operating on the upper Congo, both ideologically and in their day-to-day practice. The processes of carving out an identity for themselves in the Upoto neighbourhood were accompanied by efforts to understand the communities with whom they sought to work. From observations and mediated conversations, they began to generate a moral landscape by identifying those facets of Congolese life which presented obstacles to evangelisation. Examples of Congolese immorality were to be sought out in the daily existence of the people in the town of Upoto.

In the landing photographs there appear to be a number of Congolese male authorities, predominantly seated to the far right of the frame. Their status can be inferred from their grouping and possession of knives and spears, but little more. There also seem to be younger men in the crowd, some of whom were likely already employees of the BMS from other parts of the Congo. The BMS men would have relied upon Congolese porters and so-called 'boys' to help bring the materials up the river and act as translators in the early negotiations at Upoto, possibly using the Bantu creole language Lingala, which came into use during the latter part of the nineteenth century in north western Congo spreading partly through its use by missionaries (Samarin 1986). Oram can be seen standing among the African men to the right of the scene, wearing a pith helmet, hand on his hip. One man who is standing near to Oram is wearing European-style clothing and another holds up a large hessian sack in view of the camera. The sack has printed on its surface the letters 'W. L. F' contained within a diamond, the initials of William Forfeitt. In this way Forfeitt was able to index his presence at the photographic event and attest to his having been a participant at the mission's founding, by using the sack like a flag. Below this are a number of piles of folded striped or checked cloth, which was used as a trade good on the upper Congo River by Europeans at this time. The visibility of the cloth placed among the missionaries' belongings may not have been strategic for the photographic event but its value as an established item of exchange was probably not lost on the Congolese people. When he was making the photograph, Forfeitt probably enjoyed the visual contrast between the figure of Oram in neat white clothing outnumbered by the group of visibly armed Congolese men. These sorts of images played into a BMS discourse which cast their missionaries as noble white men whose righteous purpose would be achieved through only peaceful means. The practice of creating visual and textual representations which sought to highlight the differences between missionaries and those Congolese people who

were the target of their mission was by this time well-established in BMS media.[12] The photograph attests to BMS missionaries' self-conscious portrayal of what was seen as the symbolic start of the Upoto mission using the medium of photography and the way in which the image would be returned to subsequently to recreate narratives about Upoto.

In official BMS literature, information about the mission's interactions with Congolese people emerged in the form of recurring tropes and self-aggrandising mythologies. Such characterisations served to justify missionaries' conduct, disguise the complexity of relationships with Congolese communities and engender interest and financial support for the mission. The missionaries would have been familiar with the sort of information that was reproduced in *The Missionary Herald* before their appointments with the BMS, and likely deliberately tailored the content of their letters to the Society's secretary in order to generate the desired genres of writing for the periodical. Photographs also proved an effective medium with which to create impressions of Upoto for audiences in Britain. Missionaries' experiences could be transported through the reality-effect of photographic representation and interpreted with the authority of those who *were there.* The pencil caption beneath the mounted landing photograph is evidence of the ways that photographs were latterly inscribed with meaning through supplementary information which was designed to shape interpretations of the photographic content. It is not always possible to know who was responsible for supplying captions and interpreting the photographs which were used in BMS propaganda. The recurrence of certain kinds of images in different BMS texts over time suggests that the mission house in London may have steadily accrued photographs sent by members and incorporated them into an archive so that there was a ready supply of photographic content with which to illustrate official publications.

As the quotes at the beginning of this chapter indicate, BMS work at Upoto began in earnest against an ideological backdrop of collective and individual beliefs about the Congo and what Christian missions would bring to its inhabitants. The figurehead of the BMS Congo mission, George Grenfell, invoked the African slave trade of recent history to emphasise the contrast between historical crimes and the new era heralded by the arrival of European 'civilisation' in Central Africa. Not only

[12] Articles in issues of *The Missionary Herald* from 1878 onwards were used by missionaries in the Congo to give descriptions of Congolese peoples. Before the 1890s articles included engraved illustrations as opposed to reproductions of photographs, but even after photographs were being used, such illustrations were never phased out completely.

was Britain's role in the abolition of slavery flaunted as a hallmark of British cultural and moral superiority by the mid-nineteenth century (Walvin 1987: 243), but the central role played by BMS missionaries in Jamaica in the struggle for emancipation was a treasured keystone in the construction of Baptist missionary heritage (Hall 2002: 336-337). The selective popular memory of Britain's involvement in the slave trade enabled the British to see themselves as uniquely civilised people in an imagined world order (Walvin 1987: 245).

The men and women who went to work at Upoto arrived there with personal ambitions for their missionary calling, an ingrained sense of ethnic and moral superiority, and harbouring cultural prejudices about Africans. Portrayed in the quote by the missionary Frederick Oram, the ideas they cherished about work in the Congo were partially inspired by childhood fantasies and literary genres (particularly mission society propaganda) which detailed heroic tales of exploration and missionary crusade. Among the recommended readings for new BMS missionary recruits to the Congo were works by the famous British missionaries David Livingstone and Robert Moffat, and the explorer Henry Morton Stanley (Comber 1885: 19).

Accounts published in a book commemorating the life of the BMS missionary Harry White offer some insight into his commitment to evangelical service and his expectations of the missionary lifestyle in Africa. The exuberant young missionary from London sailed for the Congo in April 1889 and joined his colleagues at Upoto some time in 1890 (Roberts 1901: 23). In letters penned to his future wife Jessie, before his acceptance into the BMS, he was rapturous about the life that lay ahead of him: 'I feel than I cannot live my full life anywhere but in Congo… I doubt whether even you yet understand how I long to be out there working with the brave fellows… If not stronger yet more constant is the longing desire to see the shores of Congo land' (Roberts 1901: 22-23). White had clear aspirations to fulfil his dreams of a missionary career and prior to his appointment fantasised about the fabled 'shores of Congo land' (Roberts 1901: 22-23) yet he cautioned Jessie against a romanticised view of the life of a missionary wife in Africa:

> *'The strain of African life you cannot imagine. I am afraid the romance of books of travel deceives. Pray think seriously about the relation of this life amidst enervating home comforts, and the life amidst wildness without society to keep the drooping spirits alive, and with a constant strain on all the powers; and remember the sin of throwing oneself unarmed into danger'* (Roberts 1901: 22).

White seems to have misused the term 'enervating' but it can be inferred that he sought to draw a contrast between the comfortable life that his beloved Jessie was able to lead at home and the challenges of a life in the Congo, as if to dissuade her from ever joining him. The 'brave fellows' he saw as his future compatriots were other independent missionary men who went to the Congo to found stations and the implication was that this was a singularly masculine calling. Women were permitted to join the BMS mission in a supporting role as missionary wives when the nature of the work had changed and conditions were supposedly more favourable to the sensibilities of British women. The areas conceived as feminine spheres of Baptist mission work at Upoto are explored in more detail in the Chapter 3. Jessie never did join White in the Congo, but dutifully helped to compile a biography detailing his achievements after he became a martyr of the Congo mission (Roberts 1901).

For the Upoto missionaries, evidence of what they took to be Congolese immorality, and consequent need for evangelical influence, was to be found everywhere in the lives of the people around them. This chapter examines the processes through which the missionaries attempted to map their own notions of morality onto their new surroundings at Upoto and the practices of the people they encountered. Through an analysis of some of the unfolding events that were documented in photography and writing it identifies their early preoccupations and considers how their actions were determined by diplomatic relations with Congolese and Belgian authorities. In particular it examines photographs and written records as different forms of inscription. In doing so it analyses the discrepancies not only between what was photographed and what was written down, but how text was used to anchor the meanings of photographs in order to generate narratives of events. The chapter concentrates on the epistemological frictions between reassembled archival artefacts to highlight the competing narratives of mission work that were produced for different audiences. The archives relating to the first few years of the mission demonstrate that missionaries' convictions about their divine calling were repeatedly tested by the quotidian realities of mission life at Upoto. Many of the ideologies which had fuelled the BMS mission to Central Africa would be undermined in the confrontation with European exploitation of Congolese people.

Peaceful Intentions

The geography of Upoto, and in particular, the town's proximity to the Belgian State post of Lisala was significant in determining how the missionaries were received and how they were able to operate during the first few years. Forfeitt, Oram and their colleagues built their station within pre-existing socio-spatial relations that had developed in the late nineteenth century among and between the Congolese inhabitants, Dutch traders and Belgian State forces. According to missionary sources dating from the 1890s, the Bapoto people living at Upoto when the BMS arrived were confined to living near the beach between the north bank of the River Congo and forested higher ground. People referred to as Ngombe purportedly lived inland from the river and were described as landlords who exercised control over Bapoto peoples' movement and had monopoly on certain agricultural goods which they exchanged with them. The BMS missionary William Bentley interpreted the situation at Upoto in the 1890s as follows:

> *'The inland people of Bopoto are very different in language, are often at war with the Bangala*[13]*, and never allow them to go any distance inland. For instance, the Bopoto-Bangala were not allowed to go fifty yards behind their narrow strip of houses on the beach. To break the rule meant death by the spear of any one who happened to see him. They were not allowed even to gather their firewood on shore. They might buy it from the inland women at the daily market on the mission beach; but if they wanted to gather for themselves, they had to go to Emanga, or one of the other islands. The ground landlords about Bopoto belong to a large tribe found inland on both sides of the river. The inland district is known as Ngombe, and the people are Moya.'* (Bentley 1900: 266, vol. 2).

In this period missionaries frequently alternated between applying place names and linguistic designators to groups of Congolese people in order to identify them. This is suggestive of their own uncertainty at how to categorise people on the upper river who travelled vast distances and spoke different languages but who were often connected through their ability to converse in the dialect Lingala. As some of the earliest Europeans to live in the Congo, missionary efforts to attribute cultural and political distinctions to people and align them with geographic territories meant that they played an active role in constructing authorised knowledge about Congolese

[13] At this time the term 'Bangala' was used by Europeans as a catch-all designator to refer to Congolese peoples living on the banks of upper River Congo, in the north east of the Congo Free State, who spoke the dialect Lingala.

populations in the nineteenth century. Bentley's description corroborates other contemporary missionary accounts that there was linguistic and occupational diversity among the people observed around Upoto at the time of the BMS landing in 1890. These perceived differences were latched onto and glossed as 'tribal'. Static ethnic and political categories were therefore imposed on populations, classifications which did not necessarily reflect individuals' sense of identity, social relations and alliances.

It is important to recognise that the political and ethnic distinctions which missionaries sought to draw between 'Bapoto' and 'Bangombe' were constructed in a specific political context which they themselves were implicated in. This can be understood as an attempt to impose a 'rational' order and simplicity on communities that were actually far more complex. A thematic thread running through missionary accounts in the 1890s is that the Bapoto and Ngombe were disparate political entities and that their relationship was antagonistic at times. It seems that there were boundaries ascribed to the land inhabited by the people referred to as Ngombe and Bapoto which determined their movement, but these may well have been boundaries recently created by colonial administrators or may have reflected differences in allegiance to the missionaries, traders and State representatives living in the area. The BMS built their station on the hill close to the boundary between what they later believed were two political factions, presumably unwittingly, not yet understanding the political complexity of Upoto, but driven by the perception that they would have ready access to the populations of numerous Congolese towns.

An undated photograph of Upoto made once the station complex was established illustrates the BMS station's physical proximity to Bapoto houses which occupied the slope between the river and the higher plateau (Fig. 1.4). This geographical accessibility suggests that BMS missionaries could easily wander into the areas where Bapoto people were living and scrutinise their daily life. The missionaries were concurrently visited by Congolese people who came to observe them. Inserting themselves into the extant political power dynamics had unanticipated repercussions for how the mission would take shape. The Bapoto and Ngombe people in turn interpreted the missionaries' arrival against their own backdrop of experiences with white men in the area.

From May 1890, Reverends Forfeitt, Oram and Balfern set about conceiving their sphere of work, in terms of the physical perimeters of their parish, establishing contact with towns accessible by foot or canoe journey. Observation was the key

means of generating knowledge about their surroundings and enabled them to devise plans for the preaching work that would be possible in nearby towns. They orchestrated occasions to meet local Congolese authorities to announce their arrival and convey their hopes for future relationships. These instances involved rehearsed, self-conscious performances at the towns which they were permitted to enter. Being seen and heard by Congolese communities constituted a significant part of missionaries' early activity and they revelled in the drama of arriving unannounced in Congolese towns, as if playing the leading role in a heroic tale of exploration (such as *Through the Dark Continent* of 1878, following in Henry Morton Stanley's footsteps). The desire to construct an image of Upoto and the reachable towns was shared by every new recruit posted to the station who sought to acclimatise themselves. Early on the men made what Oram referred to as 'tours of inspection' to survey the position of accessible communities in the hope of targeting them for itinerant evangelical work (BMS archive A/35/15/IV). These tours were orchestrated by the local men and boys who had come to the mission seeking employment and whose language skills were critical for early communication with Congolese people. Moving through the landscape in this way enabled the collection of useful facts: geographic descriptions of the terrain, necessary modes of transport, size and apparent temperament of visible populations, place names, dialectical differentiation and samples of vocabulary.

In a letter reproduced in *The Missionary Herald*, written by Forfeitt on November 25th 1890, he documented a recent visit to some upriver towns by canoe, the farthest one being Likassa, which was thirty miles away and on the opposite side of the River Congo to the station (MH September 1891: 371). Forfeitt's party consisted of local men chosen from the existing employees at Upoto and three of his 'boys', totalling twenty people (MH September 1891: 371). He described his preparations for the expedition, which included packing supplies into the canoe, and went on to remark:

> *'This will hardly be a true account if I fail to describe with what eagerness everyone watched to see if I put my gun on board. For several days we had been constantly reminded that the natives where we were going were great man-eaters, and that if I did not take a gun we should all be eaten up. And my workmen also said that they would not go without it. I treated their fears lightly, knowing they stood for very little. I deemed it, however, myself to be not altogether an undesirable companion… So I carried it into the canoe amid the rejoicings of all.'* (MH September 1891: 371).

The fact that the missionaries at Upoto possessed firearms was clearly significant to those Bapoto people who had allied themselves with the British arrivals. Forfeitt's account suggests that gun-ownership at this time automatically made them more powerful and shaped how they were perceived by Congolese people on the upper river. Their possession of guns may have been a definitive factor in the kinds of reception they received from the communities they visited, particularly if they were mistaken for State representatives.

According to Reverend Comber's *Manual for Missionaries to the Congo* (1885) the recommended outfit for newly enlisted BMS missionaries posted to the Congo included both a self-extracting revolver and double-barrelled rifle (Comber 1885: 13). The instructions given around the use of their weapons are brief: 'No weapon should, on any occasion, be pointed at a native to frighten him, and nothing could possibly justify the use of a gun against a native except in absolute defence of a life' (Comber 1885: 97). The implication was that guns could be used to catch game when possible but the manual anticipates their being required in self-defence. Being visibly in possession of a gun was itself powerful, whether or not the missionaries intended to use one. It drew upon a popular nineteenth century construction of ideal manliness known as 'muscular Christianity' which was in part a deliberate reaction against the equation of Christianity with weakness and perceptions of Protestant religious introspection as 'effeminate' (Mangan and Walvin 1987: 3; Springhall 1987: 53-54). Physical fitness, skilled use of firearms and courage were also attributes used to construct the idealised British masculinity embodied by game-hunting, pioneering and the imperial elite (MacKenzie 1987: 177-179). For the Congolese communities at Upoto all their interactions with Europeans prior to BMS arrival would have been with gun-wielding explorers, traders and soldiers. They would have become keenly aware of Europeans' use of firearms and likely interpreted the missionaries' possession of guns in relation to the other white men they had encountered on the upper Congo.

BMS ideals of Christian masculinity were not usually overtly expressed in relation to hunting and military force but subtly drew on a shared symbolic currency of European 'frontier manliness' in Africa (MacKenzie 1987: 177). Guns were permissible props because they alluded to the respectable pastime of hunting, which itself honoured a moral code (MacKenzie 1987: 179). The associations with hunting supported the idea that missionary men had the requisite ability to dominate their environments, and by extension, penetrate African heathenism with a message of

truth. That hunting credentials had conceptual overlap with military training for war was in principle antithetical to an ideology of evangelical salvation (MacKenzie 1987: 188); it was nonetheless useful in conveying the metaphorical strength of missionaries' conviction as an allegory of Christian virtue (MacKenzie 1988: 8). The tacit message that seems to filter through the allegorical flirtations with violence in BMS missionary rhetoric and self-representation was that real violence might indeed be a resort to bring the Congolese heathen to their senses.

In Forfeitt's narrative, the invocation of cannibalism by the expedition's crew, a trope usually reserved for Congolese people used by Europeans, may have been used deliberately to persuade Forfeitt to bring his gun in order to display their potential force. Whether the comment was meant literally or as a metaphor for political hegemony, the Bapoto people wanted to ensure that their visit to Likassa involved a show of strength and Forfeitt complied, with the proviso that it might be useful to hunt game. The idea that the people at Likassa were man-eaters may also have been used to conceptually distance their identity as Bapoto. Such snippets of information imply that those individuals who sought involvement in the mission's early work had their own motivations for forging this relationship. Bapoto authorities likely saw the material items including trade goods which the mission used to employ local people and the guns they wielded as incentives to build alliances with them to enhance their own political standing. The Bapoto representatives who accompanied Forfeitt and Oram on their explorations seem to have conceived this friendship as beneficial for their own status in the region. This is further corroborated by Forfeitt's description of travel in the canoe and his crew's chants:

> *'Their river-choruses are very monotonous, according to our idea of music. The words of one of them are simply these: 'Our white man is coming, see him reclining in the boat;' … At other times they will denounce 'Bula Mutadi' (meaning the State) and his wars; at other times they will call the people of certain towns fools for running away at the approach of the white man…'* (MH September 1891: 371-2).

That the Bapoto people considered Forfeitt *their* white man and mocked the communities who feared their arrival suggests that they deemed the missionaries' arrival a political advantage over their neighbours and were keen to flaunt the alliance. The use of the phrase apparently criticising the State forces is also significant in understanding local perceptions of the European occupation in 1890. *Bula Matadi* or 'Breaker of Rocks' was originally a name given to the preeminent

explorer of Central Africa, Henry Morton Stanley, by Congolese people when he was using dynamite to carve a road through the Lower Congo between Matadi and Stanley Pool by commission of King Leopold II from 1879 (Hochschild 1998: 68; Lagergren 1970: 38-39). This name gradually transferred to his European successors and was later used to refer to representatives of The Congo Free State (Lagergren 1970: 39). David Lagergren has described the pervasive climate of fear towards the *Bula Matadi* among Congolese people documented by Protestant missionaries based along the Lulonga River in neighbouring *Equateur* District around 1890 (1970: 102). It was precisely the initial ambiguity of missionaries' identity - white men with guns who could be mistaken for traders or Belgian officers - which had an impact and frequently generated fear when they made their way into Congolese towns.

The act of map-making was a means of inscribing knowledge and a process through which the social and geographical environment could be ordered and rendered more comprehensible. But exploration and mapping were themselves cultural practices which were seen to contribute to rational scientific knowledge and demonstrate its practitioners' capacity for enlightened reason (Driver 2001: 21). As such, exploration and mapping were instrumental in enabling missionaries to feel in control of their immediate surroundings. Writing in *The Missionary Herald* in 1891, Oram described a canoe journey he had made in order to 'get a look at this portion of our parish' (MH February 1891: 44). Printed with his account was a map showing the location of Upoto and his route to the town of Lakongo on the opposite bank of the Congo river (Fig. 1.5). What comes across is the extent to which this was an opportunity for the mission's debut to be made visible as much as it was about discovering nearby communities. Oram was accompanied by sixteen schoolboys and two men who paddled their canoe through the 'labyrinth' of islands (MH February 1891: 44). His efforts to plot all the towns on the map were apparently thwarted by the Bapoto schoolboys who lied about the whereabouts of other communities in an attempt to 'cheat' him out of seeing them all (MH February 1891: 44) According to Oram, this could be explained by their jealousy in not wanting to share their white men with other districts (MH February 1891: 44). The chief at Lakongo would not tell Oram everything he wanted to know, even after he had sat with him and offered a gift of some salt (MH February 1891: 46). In response to Oram pressing the chief as to the location of other towns nearby, he answered: 'There are none' (MH February 1891: 46). Oram was intent on exposing what lay inaccessible and beyond his existing knowledge of the area. His annotations on the map inscribed his

uncertainty: 'possibly a hidden town'; 'Island town of Lakongo?' (MH February 1891: 45). The process of coming to know the region of Upoto was heavily reliant on local Congolese actors who had the power to determine the purview of missionary knowledge at this time.

A recurrent theme in descriptions of missionaries' first encounters with the Congolese communities they visited from Upoto was the importance of conveying their intentions of friendship. It was critical for them that they be distinguished from the Dutch traders operating in the vicinity and from Belgian State officials. Conversely, in many practical respects, the BMS missionaries at Upoto were reliant on the knowledge and generosity of those European individuals already operating there. One of Oram's inspecting tours was instigated by a trader at the Dutch House, Johan Lankamp, with whom the BMS missionaries developed a friendship. Lankamp was travelling to Ngingiri, 100 miles east from Upoto at the mouth of the River Itimbiri, to purchase ivory (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). Oram accompanied him on the journey with a crew of twenty men and they made overnight stops at a number of towns *en route*. They camped the first night at a town called Nkumba, three hours paddling from Upoto. On arrival they were met with 'long lines of men armed with spears and looking at us in a nervous and suspicious manner', and the people apparently took some convincing that they 'had come for friendly purposes' (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). They apparently gained an audience as the Upoto crew pitched Oram's tent and he played the harmonium, which the Nkumba people were impressed by, convinced that it must contain a man (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). According to Oram, the 'chief' rose in the night to reassure the restless town that these white men were peaceful 'so the people must put away their spears and knives and behave in a peaceful and friendly manner' (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). The next morning the 'chief' invited Lankamp and Oram to make a 'blood-brotherhood' pact of friendship with him, which only Lankamp obliged (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). This seems not to have been the sort of alliance that Oram wanted to make, believing it to have a 'spiritualistic connection' when made between Congolese people (BMS archive A/35/15/(iv) Oram to Nellie, May 28th 1892). Presumably, he also wanted to distinguish his identity and purpose as separate to that of the Dutch trader, although no information is given about how this rejection of the pact was received. Oram's depiction of his movements around Upoto detail the way in which

the early mission agenda was shaped by the multiple agencies of different European and Congolese people on whom the men were initially dependent.

Alliances Tested and Re-appraised

Although the BMS missionaries who first established themselves at Upoto cherished the idea of settling into harmonious work and engaging Congolese people living on their doorstep in an unhindered manner, they gradually learned that the European occupation of the region and local expectations of them would made operations more complex. Their aspirations for how evangelical activity would progress were confronted with the quotidian realities of life at Upoto and their roles were partially determined in response to the evolving political circumstances. The threat of violence – both real and imagined – is a theme that permeates the station's internal accounts during the station's early history and into the twentieth century. The written records made by Forfeitt and Oram convey that they were often fearful for their safety as a result of fighting between Bapoto and inland Ngombe towns, raids on Upoto and Congolese revolts against the actions of State officers. Entries in the mission logbook from 1890 document various occasions when the missionaries were fearful of events taking place nearby and initially convey their confusion around the cause of some Congolese uprisings. The earthly struggles for authority in the region which manifested violence on a regular basis threatened to undermine both the physical security of the mission and ideals of the evangelical endeavour. Congolese communities in the district were classified by missionaries on the basis of whether they had warmly received a BMS preaching party and perceived violent tendencies were inscribed in the mission's logbook. Whilst an ethnic propensity towards violence was one of the prejudices held against Congolese people in general, the missionaries were also exposed to violence enacted by Europeans and State soldiers. They would be witness to increasingly brutal acts by the local State administration. On occasion, violence erupted on the station itself.

In line with their primary calling to the Congo, the missionaries sought to stamp out what they saw as undesirable violent tendencies of Congolese people as part of their civilising project. Conversely, however, they found themselves appealing to Europeans to behave more humanely. This dimension of their lives at Upoto did not fit the anticipated narrative arc of successful evangelical work on the upper river in official propaganda. The men at Upoto sought to ideologically resolve

the moral paradoxes in their work in their writing through partial and glossed reports of situations. As official propaganda *The Missionary Herald* was extremely reserved in commenting on the effects of State domain policy in the 1890s (Largergren 1970: 114). The overt narratives of events of Upoto that reached British publics never strayed too far from an idealised script that shielded readers from complicated realities and protected the reputation of the BMS. This stance was adopted because the BMS were dependent on King Leopold's permission to operate within the Free State, so they maintained a public impression of political neutrality in order to protect this diplomatic relationship (Slade 1959: 242-244).

Internal accounts from the first few months of work at Upoto from May 1890 give a sense that the missionaries were alert to potential attacks on the station as a result of their arrival. Regular written audits of the mission's progress were punctuated by entries about war scares, raids and deaths in the surrounding towns. In reality, the violence they experienced may have had more to do with the fact that the men had chosen to build in the centre of Upoto and the Bapoto people were already involved in political conflict with the Ngombe and at other inland towns. Oram, Forfeitt and Balfern were at this stage living in a 'temporary house' made from bamboo and palm fronds (Logbook June 2nd 1890). In the mission's logbook they documented occasions of unrest witnessed around their site as well as rumours of outbreaks of war which reached them through the Bapoto community. Contrary to the characterisations of local people they set about forging, the fighting they detailed frequently took place between Congolese people and Belgian State officials from Lisala. The impression from the mission's logbook is that conditions at Upoto were disorientating. Rumours of war were received from both Congolese and European sources at a time when the missionaries were trying to ascertain which parties they could trust.

The missionaries were party to localised State violence towards Congolese people from the very beginning of their work at Upoto. In September 1890, four months into mission work, the Upoto logbook reads:

> *'Sept 10th Moved from bamboo house on the beach to two-roomed frame house on piles on the higher level.*
>
> *Sept 12th State official came and fought Ngombes here then sent to ask W.L.F to amputate thumb of a woman prisoner he had taken. On request he brought the woman here and operation was successful. He said he had made war on the people because they had been selling ivory to the Dutch*

> *House. We reminded him that this was a Free Trade State and asked if the Gov. Gen. would sanction his conduct. He said in my own and Oram's hearing that he is here only for the purpose of buying ivory and slaves. Name of official E. Wilverth.'* (Logbook September 12th 1890)

This sort of account came to typify many of the interactions the mission had with the State Forces operating from Lisala and their attempts to mediate in conflicts which they were alerted to. Mediation often took the form of dressing wounds and bringing both Congolese and Europeans into their homes. Two months later, Forfeitt recorded an incident in the Logbook as 'Great excitement in the middle of the night. State officer fighting at Bokoti at 2 am' (Logbook November 3rd 1890). Violence occasionally erupted close to the mission site. In December Forfeitt wrote 'State official fighting natives just behind the station. People call us to resist him with our guns and taunt us with being cowards!' (Logbook December 1st 1890). The fact that Oram and Forfeitt visibly owned guns shaped Bapoto perceptions of the mission's power and ability to defend themselves. Their being heckled by Bapoto people in the vicinity of the station and encouraged to use their weapons against the Belgian official suggests that they were perceived as having an obligation to them and not the Ngombe towns. This would not be the only instance in which the missionaries' reluctance to employ their guns was questioned. Incidents of State violence were cursorily logged in internal records, such as one on December 1890 which reads 'State officer fought at Langalanga. Killed 2 and captured 14' (Logbook December 11th 1890). The fraught relationship between Bapoto people and the African soldiers who made up the State's army, the *Force Publique*, was also detailed on occasion.[14] This tension crept into mission records early on as innuendo with phrases such as 'palaver with State soldier' (Logbook June 4th 1891). Though they became a regular feature in their day-to-day experiences of mission work during the first five years at Upoto, contextual details around these events are mostly absent. The frequency with which unrest involving State representatives occurred locally may have caused the mission to summarise events in the logbook because it had become a routine feature. Having acclimatised to local disturbances BMS missionaries may have assessed the

[14] The Congo Free State's military was formally organised by King Leopold in 1888 and named the *Force Publique* (Hochschild 2006: 123). Its soldiers were ethnically mixed, with men from Central Africa serving alongside mercenaries drawn from East and West Africa, who served under the command of European officers (Hochschild 2006: 123). By 1900 it had grown to more than nineteen thousand officers and men, who operated out of small garrisons established along riverbanks, usually with several dozen African soldiers under one or two European officers (Hochschild 2006: 123-124). Adam Hochschild has described the *Force Publique* as having functioned as 'counterguerrilla troops, an army of occupation, and a corporate labour police force' (2006: 123-124).

level of threat posed to their station differently over time and therefore only have logged incidents considered most noteworthy.

Threats of violence were occasionally directed towards the missionaries themselves. This seems to have occurred when Congolese individuals believed a contract had been broken or that they had been wronged by the mission staff. By July 1891 a local 'workman' who had been employed by them threatened to burn the station as a result of not receiving any 'dash' (Logbook July 21st 1891). 'Dash' here referred to a small gift that would have been given in addition to payment in an exchange. It was documented in the mission accounts as a supplementary part of the wages paid by the BMS to their African workforce which had become a formalised practice. On the subject of 'dashes', Comber instructed new missionaries that they would be required to make 'presents' to chiefs in order to comply with the established social etiquette in the Congo (1885: 52). This incident reveals that a year on from the missionaries' arrival at Upoto there was growing dissatisfaction among Congolese people who had chosen to work for the BMS when initial expectations of the relationship were not met.

On other occasions, the geographical situation of where the BMS had built their station meant that the men were caught up in local unrest. Recalling the chaos which accompanied a 'war scare' at Upoto in a letter to his sister in March 1892, Oram described the scene:

> *'Some big towns at the back of us have been making war on our towns and threatening all sorts of mischief. So the women have been running out from their homes into places of safety, carrying perhaps two babies, a huge basket of food etc., a sleeping mat or else a baby on the back, a dog in her arms and a basket of vast proportions slung from the shoulder. The men are all armed to the teeth with blood-thirsty knives, spears, guns and shields. They shout and yell and gesticulate in the wildest fashion, calling on us to bring out our guns and help them fight their enemies or at the very least protect our own homes and lives. And it staggers them altogether that we persistently refuse to fight either for them or ourselves.'* (BMS archive A/35/15/(iiv) Oram to Nellie, March 27th 1892)

Evidently, it was important to Oram and Forfeitt that they maintain an image of being men who used only peaceful measures and did not resort to violence to resolve conflict. This was one of the ideological principles which guaranteed their moral integrity and was seen to separate them from State personnel. From these accounts, it would seem that sudden mass evacuations of the town were common

and that the women took supplies with them into hiding to sustain them for a period of time until it was safe to return. For example, on August 21st 1894 Forfeitt recorded 'War scare in the town. People expecting visitation from M. DeKeyser, State officer. People all fled' (Logbook August 21st 1894). It is not clear why the officer had cause to visit Upoto, only that by this point the community anticipated violence of the sort that encouraged them to flee their homes. Oram's letters combined with the mission's official records indicate that the Bapoto people were regularly under siege as a result of regional conflicts and were living in a state of turmoil that had been exacerbated by the State authorities in the time since the BMS's arrival.

The atmosphere in which the first four years' evangelical work was taking shape as conveyed through the internal station records is one of fear, uncertainty and a pervasive distrust of Congolese people. Contrary to reassuring reports in *The Missionary Herald* that were used to convey the positive signs of how mission work was flourishing (albeit not yet in the form of converts), other archival material exposes their experiences of the power struggles and social unrest. In Oram's surviving letters home he marvelled at the opportunities available to them at Upoto and chose not to dwell on the unrest and its implications for their work. Whether he preferred not to reveal to his family the difficulties they faced, or really was continually buoyed by a sense of hope for what might be achieved in the future, is hard to discern. The competing representations of Upoto that he supplied confirm that work was not straightforward and that the missionaries themselves had complex responses to experiences that did not match their dreams of service in the Congo.

An incident relating to some of the mission's Christmas festivities at Upoto demonstrates that there was sometimes confusion for Bapoto people around the missionaries' contradictory eagerness to display their guns at the station. The Christmas 'feast' was designed as an exclusive event to reward those Congolese children who had been attending school classes regularly at the station and became a ritual that was maintained into the twentieth century. Recalling the Upoto Christmas celebrations to Jessie, some time before his first furlough in 1892, Harry White described how he had been left alone at the station over Christmas with only their neighbour, a 'Dutchman' named Mijnheer, for company (Roberts 1901: 70). He described how the 'youngsters' had 'feasted' and received prizes, continuing: 'We had throwing the spear and racing before the feed. The great cauldron, which you

will notice I am ladling from in Forfeitt's photo of a former feast, was to-day again ladled from in presence of a much larger crowd' (Roberts 1901: 70).

The photographic image of the former feast which White referred to in the letter survives reproduced in an album that the BMS gave to Henry Morton Stanley (discussed in Chapter 5) and a version of it was reproduced as an artist's rendition in the book *Harry White: Missionary to the Congo* (Roberts 1901) (Fig. 1.6-1.7). Both artefacts can be considered forms of official propaganda made by the BMS. In the Stanley album the image was given the caption 'A school feast at Upoto' and in White's biography it was labelled 'Boys' Treat at Bopoto'. Forfeitt photographed the school feast from the far end of the seated group of Congolese children opposite the figure of White who was apparently engaged in serving food from the 'cauldron'. The event seems to have taken place in a gated enclosure behind one of the missionaries' houses. The children, most of whom turned towards where the photograph was being made, were seated on planks of wood with a dish on the floor before each of them. White's description and the photograph confirm that the first children to come to school classes were Congolese boys. Behind the fence and White is a large group of Congolese people, mostly adult men and children, who appear to have gathered to watch the feasting ceremony.

In the letter home, however, White revealed why people had gathered to witness their celebrations, both when the earlier 'feast' photograph was made and at the Christmas festivities about which he was writing. Bapoto people had come to the station because they heard gunshots being fired. According to White, playing with guns comprised part of the recreational activities on 'feast' days. The people congregated '[a]s before by our having a shot round at the old chalk man on a board that the boys had been trying to transfix. For the fourth time in my life I 'let off a gun'- will not say fired, for I missed the haystack' (Roberts 1901: 71-72). He provided further details that illuminated the more recent incident:

> *'The boys have begun the day with climbing and paddling matches, and sort of parade and (very) miniature sham fight, when one boy's gun went off and the others wouldn't; but the paddles which all except the two captains carried, went off splendidly, and without any noise… yet the bangs made a running and a shouting and a chattering and a laughing around our house very emphatic and very African.'* (Roberts 1901: 69)

At these recent festivities, where he was the sole missionary in charge, the commotion had been caused by a sham fight that the boys were engaged in, some of

whom played with paddles and others with loaded guns. The casual way in which shooting exercises appear to have been integrated into an agenda of masculine sporting activities in the Christmas celebrations presents a somewhat different picture to that of missionaries' reluctance to wield a gun in defence of the station. The account confirms that although BMS missionaries supposedly objected to using their guns in combat, they actively encouraged games which mimicked military training or hunting practice. Interestingly, spear-throwing formed part of the entertainment, which suggests that the festivities incorporated games associated with both Congolese and British displays of masculinity. White does not indicate whether the guns present on these occasions were solely those belonging to the mission that were handed over or if their schoolboys also possessed firearms. But the fact that 'civilised' play with guns was a semi-regular occurrence for the first generations of Congolese children to attend classes at the station would presumably have compounded any confusion about what a BMS education would entail. The knowledge that Bapoto people congregated at the station because gunshots were heard prior to the photograph being made presents an altogether different reading of the Christmas school feast image. The audience gathered behind the fence separating them from the feasting children was probably conceived as a useful pictorial device by Forfeitt when he made the photograph because it would enhance the sense of spectacle and exclusivity of the occasion for the deserving schoolchildren. The visibility and audibility of the Upoto missionaries' guns must have factored into Bapoto perceptions of what the mission's training meant and its symbolic power at a time when Congolese parents were deciding whether to let their children engage with the missionaries' teaching.

An incident recounted in a letter by Oram later that year to the Society's home secretary and recorded in the BMS Western Sub-Committee's minutes (on April 20th 1893) illustrates that he reached a crisis-point in managing the threats of violence. It was a decisive moment when Bapoto demands for physical protection by the BMS missionaries could no longer be ignored that led them to take a 'side' in the conflict with Ngombe people. Oram began the letter by outlining recent disturbances at Upoto and how the Bapoto people had called during the night to inform them that 'the wild Ngombe Tribes at the back of this Station were making a raid on our Towns and would soon swoop down on our Missionary Station' (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142). He went on to describe how their regular work had been stopped by 'Bopotos armed to the teeth crowding about our Station for two or three days' (WSC

Minutes, No. 9: 142). His choice of words indicates that by 1893 the Upoto staff saw the Bapoto communities as their affiliates whose political struggles with the Ngombe were inadvertently their own. According to Oram, the Ngombe 'enemy' did not dare attack because of their 'white men's guns' (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142). When Oram's colleague Balfern was forced to leave him alone at the station, however, the 'inland enemies of the Bopotos' threatened to attack, taunting them with 'Your white man is not strong enough, he has only one gun and his workmen are not like the State soldiers, we will come and burn your towns to ashes and your white man's town too' (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142). This is clearly Oram's version of the events that took place, but he admits to feeling unprotected by virtue of the fact that none of his Congolese workmen owned guns (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142). Eventually one morning a group of Ngombe people from Kalagba attacked the Bapoto houses on the upper plateau where the mission station was situated, setting them alight, and Oram was forced to react (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142). His description continues:

> *'They came up to our fences with the Bopoto people before them, and threatened our carpenter and his assistant with poisoned spears. They ran away and shouted to me to come quickly with my gun. We have never had to use a gun in defence of this Station before, and I was extremely loth to do so now; but there were the wild Ngombes facing us… To one who has never fired at a man before, such a moment is full of terrible perplexity… The Bopotos were hurling spears and blazing away with muskets with no effect. After a short prayer aloud for guidance – with my Congo boy Nlamvo – to Him who I knew protected us, I fired, first four bird shot, which only made them yell in derision, and then two ball cartridges. A Bopoto Chief instantly rushed out and claimed to have killed one of the enemy with his spear… But on the following day I learned that the man had been killed by one of my bullets, the boys hid the matter at first because they thought we did not like killing.'* [15] (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 142-143).

Oram confessed that he was 'very sorry to have to report that I have shot even one wild Ngombe' and admitted that he expected condemnation from the Committee (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 143). He concluded by justifying his actions on the basis of being the 'friends of the Bopotos', having been unwittingly caught up in the violence

[15] The 'boys' Oram refers to would have been Congolese children employed as domestic assistants and translators. It was a traditional for missionary men (and other Europeans) to obtain local 'boys' to facilitate their desired lifestyles on arriving in the Congo but these individuals were also critical as intermediaries for missionary men in novel cultural situations. The close relationships developed between missionaries and 'boys' at Upoto is discussed in Chapter 3.

because the missionaries 'dwell in their midst' (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 143). Clearly Oram's actions conflicted with his own conception of himself as a Christian. The moral high ground on which he had believed he was firmly rooted no longer appeared to be stable. The ideological certitudes of ethnic and behavioural difference which had initially separated his moral sphere from that of Congolese people were in disarray. As much as Oram had tried to remain a neutral bystander in the conflicts between the Bapoto and the Ngombe peoples and had flaunted pacifism as a core dimension of his missionary identity, he went on to kill a Congolese man.

It is telling that Oram chose to highlight how his masculinity and ability to defend himself had been called into question during the attack. Whether this insult was in fact verbalised, the perceived weakness of the missionaries and their mockery by Congolese people were employed as an emotive argument in defending his actions to Committee members at home. The fact that his masculine pride had been damaged was used as an argument in conjunction with that of self-defence. Oram seems to imply that what was at stake was more than the foundations of their nascent station but the reputation of BMS men in the Congo as a whole. Such humiliations rendered them incapable and ineffective in the eyes of Congolese and European onlookers. Martyrdom for the cause of the Congo mission was not inconceivable to Oram - he even professed to welcome it in his letters home - but apparently not at the hands of a Ngombe man (BMS archive A/35/15/(v) Oram to Nellie).

From the events that took place at Upoto which led to Oram's killing of at least one Congolese man it is possible to extrapolate a number of aspects about how the BMS had come to be perceived three years after their arrival. The Bapoto called upon Oram for protection and, in particular, for use of his gun. Although they did possess some of their own guns (Oram describes them as having fired ineffective muskets) the missionaries' technology was understood to be more powerful. The Ngombe adversaries apparently mocked Oram and his workforce to the Bapoto people, deriding their lack of guns and stating how his men weren't 'like the State soldiers'. This suggests that the missionaries were not seen to pose a real threat and had been successful in promoting a local reputation as non-violent agents. In his testimony to the BMS secretary Oram simplified events and drew upon the dual characterisation of their 'good friends' the Bapoto and the menacing characteristics of the 'wild Ngombe' who carried poisoned spears. By doing so he hoped to vindicate himself by pleading self-defence. In this narrative, the Ngombe were

constructed as the default enemies of the mission enterprise because they threatened the people who they happened to live among. Oram's honour could remain intact because he had attested to the barbarity of the lesser-known Ngombe foe, who, it was implied, were further from salvation than the Bapoto. What is again apparent from the final outcome of the clashes is the way in which the BMS mission was able to command the protection of the State for the Bapoto towns. The Ngombe crowd reportedly retreated when a State soldier who had heard the gunfire arrived on the scene and 'threatened the enemy with punishment from Bangala if they ventured near our station again'[16] (WSC Minutes, No. 9: 143). This outcome would have shaped how the missionaries were perceived by the Bapoto and by Ngombe people: the mission's ultimate defences were those of the State. It also would have been seen as a turning point in the missionaries' supposed position of neutrality among different polities at Upoto could because Oram had used his gun against a Ngombe man.

After the BMS men had been established at Upoto for a few years it appears they felt able to intervene in instances of Congolese 'bad behaviour' which they were alerted to. If they could make a public example of the wrong-doing of a Congolese authority figure this was seen as a useful demonstration of the values the mission represented for communities as a whole. Critically, BMS threats of disciplinary measures carried weight because their ethical code could be enforced, essentially underwritten by State officials. In their written representations of their work, Forfeitt and Oram seem to have increasingly presided over local inhabitants with a sense of authority. They were likely emboldened by the reassurance of State-backing in their dealings with Congolese people.

One example of this was recorded in an undated letter by Oram to his sister, written some time before 1894, which details the ways in which missionaries sought to intervene in Congolese social relations (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). According to Oram, a Bapoto chief had been on one of the nearby islands at his fishing camp with his family and had drowned one of his slaves who was ill (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). The slave apparently had poor eyesight and was no longer able to work, so would require some looking after - in Oram's words: 'his master would have to feed him for nothing – a thing contrary to Bopoto ideas' (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). He

[16] 'Bangala' here probably referred to the State post of Bangala, situated downriver from Upoto.

went on: 'As we are here, we said this custom must be stopped – that a slave to us was the same as a chief, and that any such murder would be reported to the *commissaire*, who would make it very hard for the murderer' (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). On learning that the missionaries planned to take action, the chief fled, apparently asking another Bapoto chief to talk over the matter with them on his behalf and offered to pay a fine to the *commissaire* (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). This negotiation was successful, the fine paid with the understanding that the practice would not again be repeated. Oram's closing remarks were 'I trust nothing very severe will be done to the chief as this is the first case discovered and it was done more in ignorance than in actual wickedness' (BMS archive A/35/15/(vi) Oram to Nellie, undated). In this way the BMS mission was able to endorse their Christian ideologies through the system of fines upheld by the State. Through the experiences of imposed fines and reprimands the people around Upoto learned about those aspects of their ways of life which the missionaries condemned. With the State backing their code of conduct the mission was more likely to have moral influence and attain their desired results. The Bapoto people could be forgiven for rejecting the initial BMS message of friendship as hypocrisy.

As time went on it appears that both Bapoto and Ngombe authorities grew dissatisfied with the BMS missionaries (or the European presence more generally) and had cause to intimidate them. In 1895 Forfeitt reported that a man referred to as 'Chief Jamie' had 'threatened to burn our house down. He has lately given us much trouble and resides next door' (Logbook May 28th 1895). In dealing with this threat, Forfeitt and Oram escalated the situation by taking their complaint to the State for assistance. The next entry documents how soldiers of the *S.S. Ville de Bruxelles* steamship attempted to arrest the chief (Logbook May 29th 1895). State forces were unsuccessful but went on to capture 'several inoffensive ones' according to the logbook (Logbook May 29th 1895). This comment gives the impression that the *Force Publique* (the State's army made up of African recruits) were prone to violent methods and overreacted in this instance, capturing other people in lieu of Jamie. The subsequent entry reads 'Prisoners set free. Palaver settled. Bopotos take responsibility for J's good behaviour' (Logbook May 30th), and finally 'Jamie allowed to return to his village on condition of his behaving peaceably' (Logbook June 2nd). These cursory accounts imply that the missionaries at Upoto resorted to leveraging State forces when they felt threatened or were met with resistance by local people. It

suggests that the so-called 'Chief' Jamie was beginning to take issue with the fact that the BMS had built their station in the vicinity of their towns and expressed his resistance to their continued presence. In this instance the BMS manipulated the chief into non-threatening, 'good behaviour' by requesting the use of State-sanctioned weapons as opposed to their own (Logbook June 2nd). Forfeitt and Oram were determining the moral coordinates of their relationship with officials at Lisala and the degree of arbitrary State violence that they would overlook in return for protection against Congolese uprisings. The actions of missionaries at Upoto could easily have been read as contradictory to their claims of political neutrality and peacefulness. They were simultaneously engaged in efforts to distinguish themselves from the Belgian State, whilst also drawing on their guaranteed allegiance as members of a white European community in the Congo.

Oram did eventually become a martyr of the BMS mission after four years on the upper river. He succumbed to a fever at Upoto and died there on 17th February 1894 (Bentley 1900: 274. vol. 2). He was buried close to the mission station and a photograph made by Forfeitt which depicts his grave exists in the BMS Archives (Fig. 1.8). Oram would be memorialised in subsequent BMS publications as a heroic founding member of Upoto and friend of the natives. In Holman Bentley's two-volume monograph about the BMS Congo mission, published in 1900, he would write of Oram:

> *'Brave, warm-hearted, intensely in-earnest, plodding and energetic, Oram could ill be spared… Those wild Bopoto lads had never before known a friend so good… His dying prayer has been heard - his testimony has been made a blessing. His remains lie buried on the hill, 100 feet above the river, beside a beautiful cluster of palm trees. No nobler epitaph could be written for him than the very words one hears from native lips: 'He loved us.' 'He died for us.' 'We loved him.'* (Bentley 1900: 274-275)

The photograph of his grave printed alongside this eulogy was reassurance that Oram had been laid to rest with the dignity he deserved (Fig. 1.9). Though his grave could be visited by few in person, the photograph would have enabled his family to mourn him and offered a lasting image of Oram forever entwined with a seemingly uncontentious narrative of his triumphs at Upoto. The twenty-five year old missionary who had helped found the station would be remembered in print for making the noblest possible sacrifice for the Congo mission.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the relationships which Congolese people crafted with the BMS missionaries from the moment of their arrival in 1890, revealing them to be heterogeneous and changing over time. Strategic attempts by Bapoto authorities to engage the missionaries on their own terms for political advantage have been explored, as well as their rebukes when expectations were not met, or mission work was seen to encroach unnecessarily with their ways of life. Early on, the mission's perceived alliance with Bapoto communities over Ngombe people living nearby shaped the terms on which mission work was enacted. Furthermore, the missionaries' reliance on the State for protection and to enforce their moral code on Congolese livelihoods altered how they were perceived locally, complicating their message of peace and political neutrality.

The analysis of archival sources in this chapter has revealed the extent of the confusion experienced by missionaries in efforts to implement evangelical work. Internal accounts suggest the precarity of BMS attempts to meaningfully engage local people as Belgian forces were arbitrarily suppressing Congolese communities to assert their power over the region. Congolese trust in BMS proclamations that they were neither white men of the state, nor traders, were confused by their alliances with other Europeans in the area whose languages they spoke and with whom they shared a symbolic currency of power. The chapter showed that although the missionaries were reluctant to help the Bapoto fight their wars, they did resort to violent means to defend the station and those people who they had come to be allied with.

By re-collecting diverse sources contained within the BMS archives it has been possible to identify the different streams of missionary intelligence produced at Upoto, some of which was publicised in the Society's periodical, *The Missionary Herald*, while other forms were restricted for the consumption of BMS committee members. It has been argued that the early challenges and crises of conscience faced by those founding members of Upoto station (admitted to in more private textual accounts) was censored from official narratives because such information had the capacity to undermine the image of robust Christian masculinity and moral superiority which the BMS sought to maintain. The archival frictions between sources which have been identified here have been used to unsettle official representations of the history of the mission which were perpetuated by the BMS. Snippets of information produced at the station indicate the complex negotiations

that took place between the British men and different Congolese communities which were part of the cultural encounter at Upoto. It has been shown that the moral certitudes used to justify evangelical work in the Congo which were perpetuated in public accounts in Britain, were challenged in missionaries' day-to-day experiences as they sought to gain trust in a volatile colonial landscape.

Chapter Two
Navigating Turmoil

Unforeseen Dimensions to Missionary Work

This chapter continues 'along the archival grain' (Stoler 2009) of missionary-authored sources made at Upoto to interrogate why particular representations were created, how they related to the wider colonial contexts of northern Congo (and understandings of those contexts in Britain), and what they can reveal about Congolese experiences of European occupation. The epistemic frictions between different kinds of archival sources which were seen in the previous chapter are once again employed here to critically assess the tensions that existed in missionaries' experiences of work at Upoto. The gulf between individual's expectations and aspirations of evangelisation and the reality of day-to-day engagements with local people is addressed. Also explored is the dissonance between the increasing hardship experienced by Congolese people in the 1890s as a result of State violence, taxation and food insecurity and how the BMS chose to represent the colonial milieu in which it was operating to its supporters in Britain.

By adopting Roque and Wagner's recommendation that colonial knowledge be recognised as artefacts with 'particular epistemologies, imaginaries, political strategies, and cultural conventions' (2012: 4-5), this chapter demonstrates the potential for distilling Congolese experiences of colonialism from BMS sources. The close reading of missionary-authored accounts to understand day-to-day events at Upoto discloses the recurrence of certain terms in missionaries' discourse which are shown to be significant because of the ways in which they concealed information. When situated in the historical cultural contexts of their production (Stoler 2009: 9-10), such vocabulary can be understood as expressions of discomfort, prejudice and cynicism in the face of unanticipated challenges at Upoto. Missionaries' decisions to label the actions of Congolese people and frame their experiences of cultural encounter in particular ways can again be linked to the desire to represent their work according to ideologies which would resonate with Baptist communities at home. Photographs made and circulated by the BMS are analysed for their role as active agents in the structuring of imperial knowledge about King Leopold's regime in northern Congo, as part of a 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009: 80-81). Documents made at Upoto helped to shape the reception of events in the Congo by

people in Britain, which in turn reinforced understandings of the supposed benevolence of the Belgian colonial enterprise.

The dialectic between images and the archive is conceived as a productive space to understand how photographs entailed particular 'performances' that were premised on historically and culturally specific meanings (Edwards 2001a: 17). By attending to *why* photographs were made and represented from particular cultural and ideological standpoints for audiences in Britain, it is shown that such framings can be lifted from these images in order to allow other 'readings' of their content. In creating this analytical space, photographs are considered for what they can reveal about Congolese people's historical interactions with the BMS staff at Upoto. Seen in light of the tumultuous circumstances around the mission station in the 1890s, photographs, when integrated with textual sources, generate new insights about Upoto's inhabitants' response to deepening social crisis.

The print 'A/P/29/37' (Fig. 2.1) is a somewhat anomalous image within the photographic archive of the Upoto mission. It is catalogued in folder alongside other loose prints grouped together because of their association with having been made at Upoto or by missionaries who were stationed there. It is distinctive because it is unlike other surviving genres of image in the BMS archive. The group of photographs with which it is now situated could be said to comprise fairly standard representations of BMS mission activity in the Congo in accordance with popular themes illustrative of successful evangelical work-in-progress (discussed in detail in the next chapter). The photograph represents five Congolese people in an outdoor setting. Two men and a woman are seated on a log in the foreground, striking different poses, while two women stand behind them holding up a white sheet to create a makeshift backdrop. The three seated individuals hold different objects in a loosely symmetrical position. These are a saucepan, a plate and perhaps a type of foodstuff. The two outer figures mirror each other, positioned with their heads facing the central man who faces forwards and gazes upwards. Such a composition was evidently arranged to communicate a particular set of ideas. What exactly the choreographed scene was intended to convey is now unclear and its interpretation is unaided through reference to its immediate archival context. There is, however, a handwritten inscription on the reverse of the print which provides some insight into when the photograph was made but does little to elucidate why the particular assemblage of people and objects was considered meaningful. The description reads: 'Group of Mongo people who brought an indictment against the S.A.B. Co. to me at

Bodala. Taken there by C. J. Dodds Sep. 1910.' Charles Dodds was a missionary stationed at Upoto from 1895 and 'S.A.B. Co.' was a reference to the *Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce de Haut Congo*, a Belgian trading company established in 1888 which operated in northern Congo. The visual content of the photograph is difficult to resolve with the serious circumstances in which it was purportedly made. The inscription only raises further questions about the nature of the individuals' visit to Bodala, the precise reasons for the indictment and the complainants' relationship to Dodds. It connects the image with the atrocities which were committed against Congolese people by agents of European trading companies in order to enforce rubber collection, a context of violence which is otherwise undetectable from the visual content alone.

As an artefact, the print attests to a kind of work that Upoto missionaries were engaged in by 1910 which was outside the remit of their evangelical project. In 1908 the Congo came under the control of the Belgian government after King Leopole ceded his personal territory to the state, so the photograph was made in the recently renamed colony, the Belgian Congo. As will be detailed in this chapter, the years leading up to this date saw increased social unrest among Congolese populations in response to the activities of traders and state agents which created unprecedented situations for British missionaries. Faced with new moral dilemmas they were forced to reconfigure their responses to Congolese requests for assistance. Dodds' description of the photographed scene implies that after two decades, missionaries at Upoto had come to accept a new role acting as representatives of certain Congolese people, helping them bring complaints to the colonial courts. The fact that Dodds photographed the Congolese people whom he claimed to be assisting with the indictment suggests that he was keen to exhibit this aspect of his work and that it was congruous with public expectations of missionary enterprise in the Congo at this time. Physical interventions to the photograph's surface indicate that it was intended for reproduction at some stage, probably in some form of BMS propaganda. In addition to a process of overpainting, whereby the image's highlights and shadows were defined, a square was drawn which cropped out the bare-chested women in the background to delineate the area of the image that was deemed suitable. On the print's reverse the same lines were traced and 'omit' was written in the resulting negative space in a separate hand to Dodds'. It is unclear if the women holding the sheet were also in the group of complainants or if they were co-opted opportunistically for the purpose of staging the photograph. Either way,

the annotations confirm that they were considered redundant to the seated trio who were the intended subjects of the image.

In light of the signed inscription it can be inferred that Dodds had determined the sitters' positions when they collaborated in making the photograph. The figures' symmetrical arrangement might be read as an attempt to stage an allegory of justice, but the objects held up do not obviously support such an interpretation. What can be said of the photograph with any certainty is that Dodds sought to record through photography evidence of BMS missionaries' efforts to help ensure justice was served in northern Congo. This was a role adopted reluctantly by the missionaries at Upoto in the mid 1890s as incidents of malpractice by state representatives and agents of trading companies were increasingly reported to them.

This chapter explores the archival evidence of heightening political tensions and social turmoil in the region around Upoto after the first few years of the BMS presence. After five years at Upoto the original mission staff had been severely depleted, following the deaths of Oram, Balfern and White, meaning that new men were recruited to replace them. Missionary wives also gradually joined their husbands at Upoto. These individuals arrived at a different Upoto to that encountered by the station's founding members in 1890, both in terms of the station's physical construction and the nature of the relationships which had developed between the British staff and local Congolese people. By the mid-1890s they better understood one another and the potential limits of any alliance as a result of lessons learned during the mission's early history (discussed in the previous chapter). This chapter will chart the missionaries' responses to deepening social crises in the districts around Upoto, which they were largely geographically removed from. As will be seen, this distance did not stop them from being drawn into the forms of resistance against the State engaged in by Congolese people. The second half of the decade saw a decisive shift in Congolese interactions with the mission staff as local people came to anticipate the political power the missionaries could leverage as white men and the dimensions of daily life they would try to intervene in. By examining the archival traces of this phase of the mission's history, this chapter explores the context of events leading up to when the photographic print 'A/P/29/37' came to made, demonstrating how such narratives of mission work at Upoto were politically charged at different points in time.

Unwelcome Congregations

Kenred Smith, a missionary from Cambridgeshire, joined the Upoto workforce in 1896 and would become a prominent figure in the evangelical enterprise during his eighteen-year career. He was an avid photographer (many of his photographs are explored in Chapter 4) and he documented interactions at Upoto in his memoirs in some detail (Smith 2016). It is through his written accounts that it is possible to gain a sense of some of the frustrations of mission work among the Upoto staff as well as rare written records of exasperation voiced by Congolese individuals towards them. Smith also documented in some detail aspects of Bapoto and Ngombe beliefs, which although filtered through a missionary sentiment, offer important insight into some of the Congolese ideas and practices which missionaries systematically targeted in hope of eliminating them.

A specific Congolese activity at Upoto which the missionaries crusaded against because of its perceived immorality was the so-called 'poison ordeal'. In their minds the poison ordeal represented a straightforward example of where Bapoto moral coordinates diverged from their own, and so it was seized upon. According to missionary sources, sometimes when there had been a death or some misfortune, an individual was accused of being a witch and was believed to have caused the death among the community. The individual was made to prove their innocence in the form of a test and would forcibly be given a poison obtained from the bark of a particular tree. Smith reported that in the Upoto area communities sought help from so-called 'fetish priests', known as *nganga*, to defend against malign acts of witchcraft and 'evil spirits' associated with the forest (Smith 2016: 86, 81). In poison ordeals *nganga* had a central role in identifying the witch and were responsible for administering the poison, referred to as *mbondi* among the Bapoto (Smith 2016: 86). A person's innocence would be proven by their surviving the poison; but death would confirm their true identity as a witch. After death the corpse would be opened in order that the *nganga* might locate the witch itself. Forfeitt collected a sample of the bark from which the poison was apparently made, which was donated as part of a collection to MAA Cambridge (Fig. 2.2). Into the second month of work at the station Forfeitt recorded the death of a woman who had been given poison:

> *'July 2 Further excitement. Discovered that poison had been administered to a woman in the town. W.L.F. tried to give an emetic but was prevented. The woman soon fell prostrate and was immediately cut open for the witch to be sought for. Occasion, death of Chief Liminamina.'* (Logbook July 2nd 1890)

The death of chief Liminamina heralded the first of many poison ordeals that missionaries at Upoto purportedly witnessed and tried to prevent. For them the ordeal represented all that was wrong about Congolese beliefs: in their ignorance they committed murder because of their irrational loyalty to the *Nganga*. For Balfern who witnessed ordeals at Upoto these events were mindless killings - he lamented: 'Alas! It is just a common case of murder out here, crime and death caused by the dread, of the unknown' (Smith 2016: 25). Balfern was incensed by the custom and wrote in some detail about it:

> *'The witch doctor comes and fixes the charge on someone. Imagine a crowd of some hundreds waiting for the wretched wizened little man to give his verdict, the whole crowd and every member of it conscious that his name may come - an almost certain death doom. He names the name and a great shout goes up. The wretched man or woman singled out drinks the poison - perhaps boldly, with bright hopes; perhaps hopelessly, with forebodings of the end… There stand the relatives of the dead, the men glaring hatred on the accused, and grasping their spears, waiting and hoping for that fall which will be the signal for them bury their spears deeply in yonder man. Still he walks, but now he staggers slightly, and sways from side to side, groping with his hand as the death glaze comes over his eyes. The shouts grow louder and louder and the dead man's relatives positively gloat over every sign of failing.'* (Smith 2016: 25)

Referred to as 'murders', mission staff sought to stop poison ordeals from happening when they could (Smith 2016: 45). This practice became a serious point of contention for missionaries who sought to expose the immorality of it which they perceived as a warped Congolese judicial institution (Smith 2016: 86). According to Smith, people refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing, citing the protection of the community as the rationale (2016: 45). Eventually the State administration brought criminal charges against anyone known to be participating in poisonings. This was purportedly the fate of a particular local chief charged with murder and sent to Boma at the mouth of the Congo River (Smith 2016: 106).

For the Baptist missionaries it was more than the crime of murder committed during the poison ordeal which was problematic. The hold which the *nganga* seemed to have over the community meant that they came to be characterised as tyrannical figures. That individuals classed as *nganga* were highly revered by Congolese people made their practices appear suspiciously akin to a system of institutionalised religious hierarchy. The rejection of priestcraft was integral to anti-Catholic

prejudices, but in the nineteenth century anti-Catholic sentiment was used to mobilise evangelical unity in Britain and contributed to a sense of historically rooted national identity (Wolffe 1991: 143-144). The likening of *nganga* to Catholic priests therefore constructed an emotive argument against them on a number of levels. Exposing the lack of real power of the *nganga* would, it was believed, destabilise the central figures who controlled the institution. Smith claimed to have received an account of some Bapoto mythology which told of the superior spirit called Mongita-Libanza, who was the first to employ the poison ordeal to retrieve his slave-brother from the body of a woman named Ngombe (2016: 53). Bapoto people were said to revere Mongita-Libanza over the supreme spirit Akongo, and the 'witch-doctor priests' were thought to descend from this first practitioner of the ordeal (Smith 2016: 55). Smith wrote that the *nganga* 'still claim authority and power over the mysterious forces of witchcraft and the unseen spirits of evil; still, by means of the poison ordeal, they pretend to discover and destroy witches; still they claim to have communication with the spirit world' (2016: 55). In his view the institution represented a type of oppressive social control over 'individual emancipation of thought and practice' (Smith 2016: 76). 'Age-long custom and tradition' were conspiratorial measures enforced by the *nganga* and town authorities as barriers to 'individual initiative or self-assertion' (Smith 2016: 76). This interpretation seems to deliberately chime with a narrative of Reformation and evangelical awakening in England. Géraldine Vaughan has asserted that there was 'a liberal and progressive flavour to the theological and political anti-Catholic discourse in Britain' from the 1880s and Smith's comments might therefore be understood as invoking a contemporary discourse which constructed British Protestants as the defenders of civil liberties (Vaughan 2018: 368). As such, the introduction of religion at Upoto represented a means of correcting the perceived political oppression and moral disorder created by the institution of *nganga*.

Crocodiles became contested symbols in the struggle for truth between the mission staff and people of Upoto. Deaths and injuries caused by crocodiles were recorded in the mission's logbook because of the perceived commotion they caused in the towns and because the missionaries sought to treat victim's wounds (Log book 29th June, 8th July 1890). For the Upoto staff, crocodile attacks were random, unfortunate events; but, according to local Congolese beliefs, individuals could be in league with leopards or crocodiles and cause such attacks through witchcraft (Smith 2016: 39). The 'owner' of the crocodile believed to direct the killings was referred to

as the *moswa* (Smith 2016: 39). It became important for the missionaries to dispel local understandings about what was causing the deaths and prove their authority on the matter.

One undated incident after a string of crocodile attacks illustrates the way in which missionaries fought to change Congolese understandings according to ideas of natural phenomena. A woman from Kalagba, two miles from Upoto, was the third woman to have been killed by a crocodile (Smith 2016: 39). People began to suspect witchcraft and it was suggested that a man named Monyoto from Upoto was responsible (Smith 2016: 39). According to Smith, Monyoto was a young chief of some standing, who had influence in town councils (2016: 39). Following this, the older generation at Upoto remembered that as a child Monyoto had once brought home a young crocodile and kept it in a canoe for a few days before it eventually escaped (Smith 2016: 40). The rumour spread that the crocodile had matured and now Monyoto possessed the power to control it, selecting its victims. Monyoto was said to be slowly killing the population of the towns, and to have buried 'medicine' in the sand on the beach which would protect him from being accused (Smith 2016: 40). The next morning drums could be heard and a crowd had gathered outside the chief's compound, demanding that Monyoto be administered poison. Word reached Smith and he decided to intervene. Though Monyoto was not a Christian, he was a 'firm friend' of the mission (Smith 2016: 40). Smith then entered into the crowd to stand next to Monyoto and in the Lifoto language declared that he would come between anyone wishing to harm him (Smith 2016: 40). Apparently, this caused great excitement. The response given by chief Mampengo which Smith quoted is telling of the frustrations felt within the community that missionaries were intervening:

> *'Mampengo… stated that this was a native palaver and something only natives could understand. He advised me to withdraw. "Why", he asked, "do you come and mix up your teaching and your work amongst us with affairs which are altogether and only the business of ourselves?"'* (Smith 2016: 40)

Smith then retorted that the poison ordeal was certainly the concern of 'the white man' (2016: 40). After some discussion, Smith offered to try and shoot the crocodile at the centre of the incident. This was finally agreed but Smith was warned that there would still be many living children of the crocodile and Monyoto would not be freed from suspicion. By nightfall the commotion had only increased as men from Kalagba had apparently come to seek vengeance for the death of their women, vowing to

wage war on Upoto (Smith 2016: 40). In threatening the town, they exclaimed "You have white men but they are not white men of war. They only come to teach the book." (Smith 2016: 40). In the days following, Smith recalled being told by people that he would be unable to kill the crocodile on account of Monyoto's power. Clashes between people from Upoto and Kalagba continued and Smith was unable to shoot the crocodile before it disappeared from the area.

The ideological struggle for the truth about the crocodile fatalities and for control over Monyoto's fate exemplifies the way in which the mission at Upoto came to be seen as meddling in local Congolese affairs. Local people had come to recognise that in addition to teaching 'the book', the missionaries were starting to concern themselves with unanticipated dimensions of their lives. Chief Mampengo's frustration that the missionaries thought they understood enough to intervene in their customs is evident. It is suggestive of the ways in which Congolese perceptions of the missionaries' purpose and degrees of tolerance exercised by leaders at Upoto shifted over time. The date of this event must have been after 1896 and Mampengo's stance towards the missionaries indicate that they were no longer seen as useful potential allies in political feuds but disruptive outsiders who meddled in Bapoto ways of life which they did not understand. His tone is suggestive of growing despair towards the British presence and markedly different from earlier accounts where their arrival seemed to be celebrated.

There were, however, other occasions when missionary men did manage to shoot crocodiles who had been killing local people, and these were occasions which often warranted the making of photographs. Images of dead crocodiles were reproduced in *The Missionary Herald* (Fig. 2.3) and seem to have constituted a broader genre of image-making in the Congo (Fig. 2.4). The killing of crocodiles with guns was an activity shared by European men in the Congo and the making of photographs became part of their displays of triumphal masculinity. These trophy portraits, which drew on a visual economy of hunting imagery, served to communicate ideas about individuals' power to control nature and technological supremacy (MacKenzie 1987: 180). The two surviving photographs of dead crocodiles at Upoto were made by Forfeitt at the same occasion (Fig. 2.5, 2.6) and share similar compositional qualities to other sorts of crocodile trophy photographs made by BMS missionaries. These sorts of images often show Congolese children sitting or standing on the corpse of the crocodile, with people congregated behind, sometimes with weapons visible. In the Upoto images, Smith and Mrs Forfeitt stand

with a group of boys and men, many wearing school uniforms, behind the slain crocodile. Anne Marie Forfeitt arrived at Upoto in 1894 to take up the position of missionary wife and girls' school teacher (see next chapter). The killing of a crocodile seems to have represented an acceptable form of civilised violence for BMS missionaries as opportunities to exert control over their surroundings in order to demonstrate the power of their truth. The missionaries supposedly selective use of guns for hunting and their habit of flaunting their self-restraint in the use of firearms was yet another way that they expressed their moral superiority over Congolese people and other Europeans.

When Bapoto understandings and experiences of crocodiles are considered, these images take on further symbolic meaning as object lessons through which the missionaries could exterminate perceived superstition about the metaphysical agencies at play. In published descriptions of their work, missionaries relished recounting how many metal ornaments had been retrieved from the stomachs of dead crocodiles, indicating the number of victims who had been consumed. Crocodile-shooting was therefore perceived both as a social service and an opportunity to expose the terrestrial reality of these creatures to a Congolese worldview, thereby doubly triumphal for missionary hunters. Such events were used as occasions through which white male force in the guise of an enlightened lesson could be performed in the hope of gaining influence among local Congolese communities. Nancy Rose Hunt has described similar efforts to hunt crocodiles by BMS missionaries at the station of Yakusu in the 1930s, where such acts were conceived as opportunities to 'slay' superstition (1999: 30). It was a social performance of technological power which allowed Upoto missionaries to visibly use their guns whilst maintaining the moral distinction between themselves and the State or Congolese 'cannibals'. Hunting crocodiles was considered an acceptable pastime for Christian pacifists.

A crocodile story recorded by Anne Marie Forfeitt for the *Juvenile Missionary Herald* and printed in the book *George Grenfell and the Congo* (Johnston 1908) likely corresponds with the two photographs which were made of the dead crocodile at Upoto (Fig. 2.5, 2.6). Anne Marie had followed her husband to Upoto in 1894 and joined the teaching staff (discussed in the following chapter). The story described an event that had taken place at Upoto and it is useful because it is illustrative of public portrayal of the relationships that developed between the mission, Congolese people, and the State forces at Lisala after 1898. In the remainder of this chapter the

complexity of the relationships that were sustained is unpacked, showing that such nuances were glossed over in official discourses of mission work. Mission propaganda favoured simple narratives of the triumph of good over evil, truth over ignorance. The moral of this particular story was the unequivocal improvement of conditions on the Upper Congo as a result of the State militarisation and BMS Christianisation of Congolese men. The event would have taken place sometime between the establishment of Lisala military camp in 1898 and the story's second publication in 1908. By this time the mission had at least a decade's worth of experience in managing their relationship with State authorities and it seems that the image they were keen to perpetuate was one of work in unison.

Mrs Forfeitt began the story with: 'The whole district of Bopoto has been troubled for a long time by a man-eating crocodile. It has had many victims lately, and I dare say it has been responsible for others less recent' (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 494). She went on to describe how Matombi, an ex-sergeant of the State army and ex-pupil of the Upoto mission had returned to service at Lisala but was residing at Upoto (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 494) One day Matombi asked 'if he might take with him a gun and cartridges, in the hope of shooting the enemy' (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 494). According to Mrs. Forfeitt, the terrified local people heard of Matombi's plan to kill the crocodile and proclaimed "It is no use taking a gun, for no gun or cartridge can kill this crocodile. He is a witch' (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 496). Venturing out in a canoe, Matombi fired a shot which mortally wounded the crocodile and he called upon the spectators to attack it with their spears (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 495-496). She went on: 'The shouting and excitement grew every moment; then, to our surprise and delight, we heard a song of praise to God for delivering the enemy into their hands' (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 496). According to Mrs. Forfeitt, the townspeople refused to entertain any other possibility than that the crocodile was an agent of witchcraft. In this narrative Matombi's conduct served as an example of the rational mind and disciplined character that was attainable for Congolese youths through military service and Christian education:

> *'Matombi, of course, was the hero of the hour; but he took it all very quietly. He was as pleased as anybody at having got rid of their enemy, but his seven years' discipline in the army was quite evident in his control of himself and his feelings, a thing that is quite foreign to the ordinary person. Said they, 'You must not sleep tonight, as the crocodile will make you dream most horrible dreams.' But Matombi refused to be frightened and quietly went to bed. They could not make*

> *him excited, frightened, or angry. 'I have been away from this village,' he said, 'and I have seen and heard many things, and I can no longer credit all the absurd things I used to believe."* (Johnston 1908, vol. 1: 496)

Matombi was described as having mastered his feelings and rationalised his fears towards the crocodile, which in the context of mission literature, could be seen to symbolise the devil or an allegory for heathen Congolese understandings. The resounding message of the story was that Matombi had been triumphant on a number of levels: he had left his town and raised himself up as a Christian and servant of the state, adopted the tools of western 'civilisation', thus conquering the irrational heathen beliefs of his cultural upbringing. The gun and Christian truth had triumphed over superstition and been proven more powerful than the mistaken worldview at Upoto. In this portrayal of the BMS endeavour in the Congo, mission and state were sympathetic bedfellows. The support for the state expressed in the account indicates that it was made at a time when the Upoto missionaries were careful to appease colonial administrators at Lisala and were cautious about printing any information which might be considered critical of King Leopold's rule. As will be shown, convivial narratives such as this concealed the day-to-day reality of the mission's dealings with the State.

Native Palavers

Just as the British staff at Upoto intervened in local Congolese practices in ways that they hadn't anticipated, Congolese people also demanded the missionaries' time in unexpected ways. The word 'palaver' came to gloss a range of incidents in the Upoto mission's reports and was attributed to the many types of interruption that missionaries felt impinged on evangelical work. Palaver had its roots in earlier cross-cultural interactions on the west coast of Africa, originating from the Portuguese *palavra* meaning 'word' or 'speech' (OED). Moradewun Adejunmobi points to the way in which the term *palava* has come to serve as a metonym for dispute or calamity in contemporary West African vernacular languages, linking it back to the history of slave trafficking on West African coasts (2004: 7). The sense in which it came to be used among the anglophone mission community at Upoto was to describe lengthy discussions involving Congolese people; disputes perceived to require differing degrees of (European) adjudication; and activities which were either troubling or which presented direct obstacles to their endeavours. In this way, the term conveyed many of the same meanings born out of historical trading

negotiations: pertaining to intercultural dialogue involving difficult and extensive discussion (OED). For BMS missionaries, palavers came to mean anything unnecessary or antithetical to their notions of productive work and efficient use of time. As a term reserved for Congolese institutions and action, contained within it were their prejudices about 'correct' rational and sophisticated social forms.

A fight recalled by Smith not long after his arrival in 1896 encapsulates the way in which the missionaries had reluctantly become a mediating power in disputes involving State representatives and Congolese people. Here the term 'palaver' was employed to gloss the mission's actions in de-escalating the incident and down-play its severity:

> *'A number of State soldiers on their way down river to Bangala passed in eight canoes. In passing twelve soldiers with rifles landed at the Upoto market and stole food. One of the Mission workmen wounded a soldier. Blood flowed. Forfeitt was conducting household morning worship. He was interrupted and entreated to go down to the market place and settle the quarrel. He and I went down to find an excited crowd. We took our place between the two parties. Forfeitt heard the palaver; I dressed the wounds. Forfeitt gave a 'dash' to the wounded man, who was appeased, so the matter ended without State intervention.'* (Smith 2016: 28-29)

The account demonstrates the way in which Smith and Forfeitt sought to appease the different parties involved in the clash because it took place on mission property and involved a workman for whom they likely felt responsible. If their Congolese employees were found to be involved in disturbances with State soldiers it threatened to jeopardise the mission's ongoing efforts to placate Belgian officials at Lisala in order to ensure the Society's work continued to be looked upon favourably. Although in part the missionaries entertained the idea of a trusting symbiotic relationships with local European representatives of the State, the actions of individuals within the *Force Publique* could not always be easily justified. Nor were these situations from which virtuous lessons could be wrought or which enabled exemplary Christian responses from members of the BMS. Instead, they reverted to bribing State soldiers in order to keep the peace. While they did their best to condemn violence by State soldiers, there was a competing imperative to minimise frictions with the State wherever possible.

Palavers classed as 'native' by missionaries referred to gatherings of men or formal councils held to settle disputes involving authorities from around Upoto. Palaver conceptually distanced the mission from native politics and dismissed such

occurrences as trivial and peripheral to their real priority of establishing services and school classes. In propaganda, it was a term which served to conceal the severity of events too unsavoury or damaging for public consumption. Its application to so many of the interactions between BMS staff and Congolese people also betrays the uncertainty of encounters which involved misunderstandings and necessitated the translation of cultural ideas and explanation of institutions for the British men. It was a term through which the mission attempted to both censor and give voice to the frustrations and precariousness of situations in which they felt out of control. In the BMS Congo mission's vernacular, it served as innuendo for those events which were both unnerving and literally disturbing to their daily schedules, which comprised technical work, school teaching, translation work, medical work and preaching (Smith 2016: 147).

So-called 'palaver judging' did, however, refer to a specific type of interaction which Upoto missionaries had with local people and which shaped the early history of the mission. A photograph in an album once belonging to the Forfeitts is captioned 'Palaver judging at Bopoto' and shows both Reverends Smith and Forfeitt sitting with a large group of men (Fig. 2.7). In the centre of the image four authorities, probably Bapoto men, sit on a stool and a bench whilst others are crowded together on the right of the scene at the foot of a large tree. It is evident that the group knew the photograph was being made because everyone has turned to face the camera. Smith sits on a wooden European-style chair and Forfeitt on a stool, both slightly elevated above the Congolese men. The photograph has been composed symmetrically to visually distinguish between the missionaries and the visitors who outnumber them, giving the appearance of two 'sides'. As a result, the full extent of the seated Congolese group was cropped out. An empty chair suggests that the photographer may also have been engaged in the discussions before standing up to document the occasion. Included within the frame of the photograph are numerous spears belonging to the congregation which have been propped against the tree trunk. Read as cultural signifiers, their inclusion seems to enhance the contrast between the two seated parties. Objects which had come to confirm missionaries' prejudices about Congolese aggression were here framed in direct opposition to the space occupied by the white men. The subtext invited by the composition of the scene is that the missionaries' only resource in the conference was peaceful diplomacy through reasoned debate.

Reasoned debate was something that Smith practiced regularly at Upoto and, like the missionaries who had come before him, he emphasised his own peaceful diplomacy without resort to the use of guns. For example, Smith documented one instance which is undated but that took place early on in his career:

> *'I returned from Mbangi to find a row on at Bonjingili and some sixty warriors with knives, spears and shields ready for a fight. I intervened for peace, walking unarmed and bareheaded (it was nearly 6 pm) between the contending parties, and using all the arguments I could think of for peace. Eventually after much difficulty I was successful. At present my moral influence is almost nil in this town, but I hope time will alter that.'* (Smith 2016: 120)

The details that Smith chose to provide in these accounts seem to have been intended to draw comparisons between his own civility and the armed combatants. The contrast between placid British civility and Congolese barbarity was a favourite trope used by BMS missionaries in their public narratives, one that often found expression in the implied conceptual difference between European guns and Congolese 'war knives' as symbols of masculine power. In Smith's own words he would 'harangue' and essentially preach in the centre of crowds but conceded that often this approach proved useless and physical intervention took place (2016: 117). On one occasion he remarked that he had 'spoiled' his 'clean white suit' not long after breakfast in having to break up a fight among Bapoto people who had been brandishing knives (Smith 2016: 117).

The oxymoronic tone of the 'Palaver Judging' photograph's caption and the unusually relaxed, slouched postures of the two missionaries suggests that this event was not conceived as important work, merely necessary. The farcical spirit in which the photograph seems to have been framed by the caption in the album was repeated by Rev. Dodds in an article published for *The Wide World Magazine* in 1899, where the same image was reproduced.[17] Scathing in tone, the caption given to the printed photograph was: 'THE CHIEFS OF THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES HAVE COME TO POUR THEIR GRIEVANCES INTO THE EARS OF THE SYMPATHETIC MISSIONARIES' (*The Wide World Magazine*, 1899: 202, vol. IV). Here, as in other articles in issues of this magazine, readers were invited to empathise with the features' authors who provided authoritative reports of

[17] *The Wide World Magazine* was a British monthly illustrated publication which ran from April 1898 to December 1965. It printed articles under the topics of adventure, travel, customs and sport and the tagline in use from its first issue was: 'The Truth is Stranger than Fiction'.

photographed 'others'. The description which Dodds provided suggests that this was a regular feature of their experience arising from the political landscape of Upoto and the status of the missionaries as non-governing, non-Belgian white men. According to Dodds, Congolese people preferred to bring their complaints to the station than to the State officials at various courts along the river bank because a fee would be demanded before officials would hear their case (*The Wide World Magazine*, 1899: 202, vol. IV). He reassures the reader that they, as missionaries, do not overstep their mark; by recognising the lawful rights of the state, 'only advise, they do not authorise' (*The Wide World Magazine*, 1899: 202, vol. IV). This is a point reiterated by Smith in an entry from his memoirs:

> *'If the palavers can be arranged without State interference, so much the better for the natives. We therefore take a fatherly sort of interest in the people, and try to save them as much as possible from some of their foolish ways by judicious advice. We have, of course, no real authority to enforce any advice we give, and no real authority for judging palavers, but often our word is taken as final, and serious consequences averted.'* (Smith 2016: 39)

Conveyed in this account is the way in which Smith perceived their settlements as a means for minimising the need for state interventions which, he implies, could involve heavy-handed penalties. This could be read as veiled criticism of the state's handling of local Congolese complaints, which was not an opinion Upoto missionaries shared in *The Missionary Herald* in the 1890s. In Smith's version their authority as white men is taken as given and therefore paternalistic oversight was appropriate to the context in which 'foolish' Congolese people were implicitly incapable of such intellectual insight. In describing the political structures in existence at Upoto Smith gives a sense of the ways in which the mission strived to maintain a sense of superiority. In their interactions with local chiefs. He writes: 'Each village has a chief, and each line of villages its great chief, who, although treated with a certain amount of deference and respect, has in reality little authority or power' (Smith 2016: 33). Smith hinted that there was a performative aspect to the ways in which Congolese authorities were treated publicly by the BMS and that it was they who held a 'true' understanding of the local power dynamics. Although missionaries were condescending in their written portrayals of the meetings they held with local Congolese people, they appear to have had an important function in mediating local relationships with the state. That such 'palavers' came to be a frequent occurrence at Upoto suggests that Bapoto and other local authorities had

learned that threats towards the missionaries could mean severe retribution by state forces. Rather than risk imprisonment or worse, Congolese people engaged with missionaries peacefully on terms which they could not object to on moral grounds.

The dismissal of 'native palavers' by the missionaries in their writings was not exclusive to Upoto but conformed to a general attitude adopted by BMS missionaries in the Congo in the mid-1890s. In 1896 the Rev. Carson Graham, a missionary affiliated with the BMS station of San Salvador, bemoaned 'Congo Ideas of Justice' in an article under that title in *The Missionary Herald*:

> *'A Congo palaver is one of the things which have no known beginning and are likely to have no end. Missionaries have abundant evidence to justify this conclusion, for they are often asked by the natives for advice in their palavers… In a few cases we can get at the point of the thing, but most Congo palavers began in prehistoric times.'* (MH September 1896: 470-473)

The stance he takes is emblematic of BMS missionaries' cynical public responses to Congolese expressions of discontent in general during this period.

Echoing this sentiment that palavers were a vexing but inescapable feature of their daily work, Smith wrote: 'Glad I am that in my nine months of residence among these people I have acquired a good hold of the language, for now it falls to my lot to hear all the palavers, to give public addresses, to lead public prayers, and so on' (Smith 2016: 38). He describes how the time spent dealing with palavers detracted from the time in which they were able to hold school classes (Smith 2016: 38). On one occasion, Smith, on hearing drums which signalled the commencement of a town assembly at Upoto, went to negotiate the rescheduling of the 'palaver' so that that his church service would not be competing for an audience (2016: 42).

Missionary cynicism aside, the photograph combined with surviving textual accounts indicate that convening with the missionaries was felt to be worth doing for Congolese people in the districts around Upoto. If, as Dodds suggests, appeal to the mission was a means of circumventing the expensive State courts, it confirms that Congolese people frequently had cause to take up grievances during the 1890s. Although BMS accounts of 'palavers' at Upoto characterised the meetings as a result of 'native'-made problems, it is unlikely that this was the complete picture. Adopting such a stance was a means of down-playing the impact of Belgian administration in the area and allotted blame for disaffection with Congolese communities themselves. Another photograph in the Forfeitt's album is titled 'Chiefs of Bopoto district, assembled for conference' (Fig. 2.8). Mission records confirm that

male Congolese authorities did congregate regularly in councils and that this often involved large groups of men. As such, it is possible to read the first palaver-judging photograph as representing an event which took place on Congolese terms, however much the missionaries were keen to portray themselves as central to its orchestration. Extended council debates were customary for the people of Upoto and can be read as attempts to engage the mission staff in political life through forms of resolution that were familiar and valued as effective. Evidence that these meetings took place offer insight into one aspect of the Bapoto response to European occupation at this time.

Rubber Palavers in Peripheral View

Over time the nature of the 'palavers' documented in the mission's records evolved, reflecting increased frictions between the Congo Free State's armed forces operating locally and the inhabitants around Upoto. The issue of State representatives unleashing violence on Congolese people around Upoto was exacerbated when in 1898 a military training camp was built at Lisala. The year that the training camp was opened Forfeitt was forced to write a complaint to officers there about the conduct of soldiers in the nearby towns (Logbook September 28th 1898). Later, in March 1900 Forfeitt reported: 'A band of soldiers from the camp raid the front village armed with sticks, one child was killed and 15 squares on the upper side of the station were burnt to the ground. The raid commenced at sunset' (Logbook March 3rd 1900). In the Forfeitt photograph collection at the BMS archive are two photographs made at Lisala depicting *Force Public* drills (Fig. 2.9, 2.10).[18]

With the presence of soldiers in the district came a further development: Congolese people living in the vicinity of Lisala were taxed in foodstuffs to feed the troops stationed at the camp. Forfeitt reported on the negative impact of the military presence on local people, and this was one of the few public critiques of State operations by a member of the BMS published in *The Herald* before 1900:

> *'One great change that we notice is the establishment of military camps on either side of us. There is one large State camp below us with twelve Belgian officials and hundreds of native soldiers; and a little way above us a new camp has been formed, with six or seven white officers for the training of 'reserves'. With all these officials we are on good terms, and often have opportunities of putting in a good word on behalf of*

[18] One of these images, Figure 2.10, was reproduced in Edmund Morel's *Red Rubber* (1906).

the large populations around us. We suffer most - or rather, the natives do - from the soldiers themselves, who seem to delight in plunder, which, on the top of the official taxation, is sometimes more than the people can bear with equanimity. But talking with one of our senior boys one day, I was glad to hear one remark he made. He was deploring the troubles of State rule and treatment from soldiers, so I asked him if he would like to return to the old condition of things before the State came in force to this district. He emphatically said, 'No,' and I asked him, 'Why?' He replied 'We hardly dared sleep then, or go a mile from home, and cannibalism was the order of the day; but now things have changed'. We ourselves, too, feel much less than formerly the sense of insecurity, as the petty wars amongst the natives are much less frequent, and of course the presence of a superior force has a very great restraining influence on all crime, cruelty, and superstition. Native supplies of food are naturally much more difficult to obtain, owing to the increase in European staff, and also to the constant taxation in food-stuffs for the victualling of native troops. But in time we trust that this will tend to increase production, and teach the natives the 'dignity of labour'; unless, unfortunately, by undue taxation, the people should be driven from around us on account of the proximity of the camps - by no means an unknown event out here.' (MH May 1899: 265)

While Forfeitt seemed to cautiously express concern over soldiers terrorising local people, any critique was outweighed by the idea that their overall living conditions had improved from the earlier state of 'cannibalism' which had supposedly flourished prior to European 'civilisation'. In addition, although the degree of taxation was high and could lead to whole towns evacuating the area, he suggests that on balance Congolese people were learning a valuable lesson in developing a work ethic. Although the article offers a rare public account of the suffering of local people under colonisation, his commitment to the idea of benevolent European 'civilisation' meant that he could not be accused of criticising King Leopold's governance. BMS policy with regard to public propaganda throughout the 1890s and before 1903 was not to print information that would jeopardise their activity in the Congo Free State (Slade 1959: 242-244). Anne Marie Forfeitt took the same careful stance when she detailed the effects of taxation on local people:

'The people here, who have to take a weekly tax of food for the soldiers at the camp, often grumble about the trouble the white man is to them, but they would be sorry to have to do without his protection now. They have a very healthy fear of wrong-doing,

which they never had before… A matter that at one time would have been enough to rouse the whole town up in arms is now passed over with a few words, for the people are too busy getting in the tax to think of anything else.' (MH January 1901: 30)

Mrs. Forfeitt seemed to imply that the missionaries' lives had been made easier since Congolese people had less time for their 'palavers' and were consumed with the work required to meet the weekly tax quota. In her public opinion, the Belgian State had brought the Congolese population under control and this disciplinary force could only be welcomed.

Concurrent with reports of periodic conflict between Bapoto people and other polities, and their clashes with the State, from 1896 the mission's logbook began to reference atrocities committed in connection with the State-sanctioned concession companies Société Anversoise and A.B.I.R (Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company) operating to the north and south of Upoto respectively. After claiming sovereignty over the Congo in 1885, discrete territories referred to as 'concessions' were drawn up in King Leopold's name in areas termed 'vacant land', claiming a right to all their natural products (Hochschild 1998: 117). These vast regions were leased out to private companies that initially largely traded in ivory and later in rubber. The companies' shareholders and directors comprised Congo Free State officials (Hochschild 1998: 117-120). Information about atrocities in areas where people were forced to tap rubber from *landolphia* vines was rarely the result of first-hand experiences of the missionaries at Upoto. Instead it came in the form of rumours and second-hand reports. A sense of the tyrannical collection methods by State representatives operating to the north of Upoto crept into the logbook between school attendance notes and baptisms via cursory records of visits made by State officials gathering evidence. In December 1896, Governor General Wahis apparently came to tea at Upoto and enquired as to whether the missionaries were aware of any cases of hands or ears being cut off in their district (Logbook December 15th 1896). Forfeitt provided Wahis with a written declaration that he was unaware of such practices (Logbook December 15th 1896). No further detail is given but this likely referred to terrorising methods used by the State to enforce the collection of rubber, justified as a means of taxing Congolese populations (Hochschild 1998: 158-166).

Additional evidence of rubber-related violence inflicted on Congolese communities seems to have arrived as news through non-State Congolese sources when the missionaries were appealed to come and bear witness to the results of desolation in other regions. The logbook entries on these subjects are incredibly

perfunctory and provided the minimum amount of detail in order to log the incident. For example, on the 2nd June 1898 the entry reads: 'Rumour of war at Mika Ebongo, etc.' and the next day: 'Visit to Mika and Bosomokima. View mutilated bodies of slain and graves. Report to M. Leonard of Umangi' (Logbook June 3rd 1898). Following this visit, Forfeitt apparently made depositions to State officials alerting them to what he had seen (Logbook June 3rd 1898).

From the second half of the decade there are increased references in the mission logbook to rubber agents and outbreaks of violence associated with rubber tax collection. The rise in the number of reports in connection with the Belgian Anversoise company operating in the vast area north of Upoto can be linked to a particular policy of intensified oppression. In Europe the reputation of one agent in particular attracted public attention to the northern Congo Free State and the controversy drew comment from Forfeitt in *The Missionary Herald*. In 1897 the Anversoise concession company hired Hubert Lothaire, a disgraced former commander of the Free State administration, as its director at Mobeka, downriver and west of Upoto (Harms 2019: 689). In the time between his recruitment and departure around 1901 he unleashed what has been referred to as a 'reign of terror' on Congolese towns which resisted the rubber quota (Harms 2019: 689).[19] He was found to have been personally responsible for acts of mass murder and torture as well as for inciting the company's agents to maim and enslave those who would collect rubber, and massacre people who resisted (Harms 2019: 688-701). Robert Harms has detailed that while the Ngombe people living around the area of Ndobo in the concession submitted to the tax, the Buja (or Budja) peoples resisted and a revolt broke out in January 1900 (2019: 695). These events found their way into the mission's logbook as follows:

> *'May 11th Capt. Gilson calls and tells us of the rebellion at Boma and also of a serious rising behind Ndobo. The latter place he had just left.*
> *May 14th Hear more disturbing news of the native rising above and behind us.'*
> (Logbook May 1900)

It would appear that because the conduct of Anversoise agents had already made headlines in Europe, Forfeitt was permitted to make reference to it in a station update in *The Herald*: 'The whole year has been one of rumours of wars; the large

[19] Lothaire's tactics purportedly increased the company's rubber production, which rose 'from 93 tons in 1897 to 298 tons in 1898, to 641 tons for the eighteen-month period from January 1899 to July 1900' (Harms 2019: 690).

district lying to the north and east of us has been the scene of much strife owing to the troubles arising out of the Lothaire Rubber Palavers, to which European papers have of late been giving publicity' (MH May 1901: 267). This serves as an example of how the Upoto missionaries came to learn of atrocities towards people living in the rubber concessions but that *The Missionary Herald* was not used to detail the suffering they saw and heard about at this time. Nor do they appear to have systematically documented Congolese victims using photography as Alice Seeley and John Hobbis Harris, missionaries of the Congo Balolo Mission, famously did (Grant 2005; Twomey 2014). From the surviving archival evidence, it would seem that missionaries at Upoto were seldom witnesses to the actions of concession company agents directly, but did witness the traces of its aftermath and State representatives' arbitrary violence around Upoto.

That BMS personnel could not claim to be active in the rubber concession districts themselves but were instead operating next to Congolese towns along the length of the River Congo, came to be a key argument in their defence against offering evidence against King Leopold's governance (Slade 1959: 269-270). A geographic argument was made to maintain the Society's ignorance of the atrocities being committed elsewhere when Edmund Morel attempted to solicit evidence from non-governmental organisations in the Congo to expose misrule in the 1890s (Slade 1959: 260-273). Morel was a former employee of the British shipping company, Elder Dempster, which had contracts in the Congo, who had since turned his attention to soliciting and reporting first-hand evidence testifying to the corrupt systems of governance. He would go on to formally establish the CRA in Britain in 1904. Although individual BMS missionaries situated at stations below Upoto on the River Congo had alerted the Society's home secretary to State violence and population devastation during this period (Slade 1959: 277-278; Grant 2005: 45), the Society refrained from openly criticising the Belgian monarch because they depended on his permission to operate and grants of land to build new stations (Slade 1959: 277; Grant 2005: 46-47). This perceived predicament meant that the BMS administration ignored requests for information from Morel and his demands that they lobby the British government to investigate the humanitarian crisis in the Congo (Slade 1959: 282; 291).

When they did finally react to what became publicly known as 'the Congo question' in Britain, the BMS faced accusations of having put self-interest above the welfare of Congolese people and their long-term support of King Leopold was called

into question. The Society's first statements responding directly to the controversy of misrule in the Congo issued in *The Herald* from 1903 took the stance that King Leopold had been ignorant of the actions of his representatives, and continued to endorse the monarch who they reassured readers had only philanthropic intentions in Central Africa (MH April 1903: 187). Embedded in the defensive tone of their earliest statements was a question about authority: did missionaries not know better than most that the fruits of the European 'civilising' institutions in Central Africa would be slow to emerge and imperfect at first? However, after the publication of the *Casement Report* in 1904, the result of an independent investigation by the British consul in the Congo, Roger Casement, the evidence of systemic misrule was too great and the Society was forced to alter its public stance and risk repercussions in its relationship with the Free State. In addition, the BMS home committee had apparently been deluged by letters from supporters who called on them to desist their public championing of the Belgian monarch (Slade 1959: 268). They were also pressurised by other Baptist organisations in Britain to alter their position (Slade 1959: 269-270). Only after the Casement Report's publication in 1904 and the results of a separate commission of inquiry established by King Leopold in 1905 did the BMS actively speak out against the Free State's rule (Grant 2005: 70). With the facts of misrule in the Congo freely available by 1905 and fevered public interest in the issue, the BMS finally conceded to openly supporting the CRA (Slade 1959: 297-298).

With the change in the BMS's public stance towards Leopold's regime. Upoto missionaries began to openly detail the evidence of the State's violations in northern Congo, and even then it was only a few individuals. Kenred Smith provided Morel with written testimony for his publication *Red Rubber* in 1906 which suggests that by this time he was content for his experiences to go on record in support of the CRA:

> *'I thought that all evidence submitted to the members of the Commission would be given in due course to the public, and was not, therefore, too careful in risking manuscript notes of my remarks before it. Happily I have notes. I submitted them to them and now send you the substance of my remarks." Details. Expedition sent on June 2nd 1898, by local agent of the Anversoise, (vide Section I.V.), to punish people who sought to escape the rubber "tax." Villages of Mika and Bosomakuma attacked. Men, women and children killed and mutilated. Village of Bosolo then attacked and became, according to native evidence, "a veritable shambles." Visited Mika, and "saw mutilated bodies or parts of bodies representing some twenty people, and new-made graves bringing up the number to at least thirty." Native evidence placed before him*

showed two hundred people killed. "A cannibal feast followed the slaughter." Complained locally. So far as he knows no action taken.' (Morel 1906: 51)

The quote indicates that in 1898 Smith had been cautious about noting down information which could be interpreted as condemnation of the State, unless it was at the behest of representatives themselves.

The divisive internal politics of the BMS community during the period of Morel's petitioning in Britain and the years approaching the Free State's transferral to the Belgian government in 1908 have been covered in detail elsewhere (Slade 1959; Stanley 1992). It is, however, important to recognise the culture of appeasement and complicity that had been fostered within the BMS community in the Congo which meant that the older generation of Congo missionaries in particular were cautious of disrupting diplomatic relations with King Leopold, with whom some of them had interacted personally (Slade 1959: 273). Internal mission sources indicate that Forfeitt and Smith did attempt to intervene in the conduct of rubber agents by reporting incidents to district officials and that this continued well into the twentieth century.

In March 1907 news reached Smith of atrocities that had been carried out in the town of Ngale (or Ngali), directly north of Lisala where the mission ran a school (Logbook March 14th 1907). He received a report from Molema, possibly a Congolese evangelist who had been trained through the mission, that acts of violence had been committed by agents of the Société Anversoise (Logbook March 14th 1907). Smith appealed for more witnesses to the atrocities to come forward and when they did he sent them with a letter to Commandant Hutureau at Lisala (Logbook March 14th 1907). Not long after, Smith recorded evidence of another incident witnessed first-hand: 'Mbange chiefs Agamaka, Ndombo & Emene, who had been arrested and sent to Etebe, were carried here by their friends to be medically treated. All were in an exhausted state & bore many signs of ill-treatment' (Logbook March 26th 1907). Perhaps the most poignant entry in the mission logbook was made in May:

'A Mbange man brought in a human hand and the report that his father had been knocked down and killed by a soldier in the presence of a white man. Commissaire Gehol and Commandant Hutereau were here at the time. They saw the hand and took the man with them to the camp.' (Logbook May 16th 1907)

The violence towards people at Ngale continued and on June 12th the mission received news that Mopita, chief of Ngale had been arrested and imprisoned for accompanying Reverend Dodds to Upoto station (Logbook June 12th 1907). Further

details emerged in the next entry: 'M. Simon, *Chef de Secteur* of Ngale called with Mopita. Mopita was accused of saying that the people of his district get no payment for their rubber. We were asked if he had made this complaint to us, we said no but that we had heard that they do not pay enough…' (Logbook June 13th 1907). These archival traces of atrocity and the BMS' efforts to intervene locally are piecemeal and cursory. They do, however, indicate that Congolese people increasingly approached the Upoto missionaries with stories of misconduct or seeking representation in their appeals to the state. The fact that people travelled from districts north of Upoto to alert the mission to suffering suggests that with time the missionaries had gained a reputation as merciful mediators by people living outside of their immediate sphere of influence.

In Morel's *Red Rubber* another missionary from Upoto was quoted anonymously. The testimony that was provided stands in stark contrast to the dispassionate entries made in the mission's logbook:

> *'Who shall tell the tale of the miseries of the wretched Belgian clerk or artisan, ill-bred, ignorant, but with decent instincts, who has gone out to the Congo to the tune of the Brabançonne, filled with patriotic imaginings, only to find himself thrust into some out-station and told to get rubber, plunged suddenly into an earthly hell? Missionaries have had such men coming to them half-frantic after a few weeks' stay, begging and imploring their assistance; and a shot, self-inflicted, has often enough abruptly terminated a career which in Europe might at least have been respectable. No one who has probed deep, down into this cesspool of iniquity and naked human passions, or who understands the workings of the monstrous growth which civilisation has allowed to spring up in Central Africa, blames the agents of the system, but the system itself. The miserable tools are to be pitied – brutes as many of them are, the déclassés, the failures, the off-scourings of Europe. It is the beneficiaries that should be pilloried, the modern slavers of Africa who sit at home and pocket the dividends. Above all, that one Will – the will of a megalomaniac – which controls, rules, dominates every wheel and rivet of the Machine…'* (Morel 1906: 126-127)

Once again, a member of the BMS had cause to invoke the slave trade in order to convey a sense of depravity in the Congo, but this time it was in relation to his European contemporaries. The Belgian administrators were cast here as ignorant social inferiors who were innocent victims of a system and it was their (more relatable European) suffering which was dwelt upon. This account sheds a somewhat different light on the mission's logbook entries because of its suggestion

that State representatives, as well as Congolese people, came to the station to find sanctuary, desirous of their help amid the turmoil in surrounding regions. Although such events probably did occur at Upoto, the published account repeats the self-aggrandising trope of the missionaries as truth-bearers, occupying a position of moral righteousness and political immunity; they were exempt from the crises of conscience experienced by their lay European brethren.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the BMS' continuing struggle to intervene in Congolese practices perceived as immoral whilst also attempting to mediate in incidents where Europeans and state personnel subjected Congolese individuals to acts of brutality. Arbitrary violence enacted by state officers and their military forces produced conditions of uncertainty for Congolese and British people living at Upoto. The power vacuum created by the Belgian administration emerged as a significant factor in determining local Congolese responses to the missionaries over the long term, informing their efforts to gauge European intentions and adapt under external pressures. The analysis of sources revealed that the British staff at Upoto did gradually develop a role as arbitrators, intervening in local complaints, some of which were against the State's personnel. BMS missionaries frequently witnessed state violence and sought to resolve it in a peaceful manner, bribing individuals to avoid potential retribution for parties deemed innocent and to be seen as meddling in the State's governance. The erosion of established political authority, European and State-sanctioned violence, pressures of taxation and food insecurity faced by the Congolese inhabitants of Upoto during this period weave their way through internal mission records between the mission's internally focused concerns.

The chapter demonstrated the growing awareness of the BMS mission of reports of atrocity in rubber-producing districts beyond Upoto. In this discussion Congolese perceptions of the missionaries as useful mediators and representatives to the State were drawn out. The mission's public accounts, which stressed perceptions of Congolese immorality, were here inverted by the internal records which contain glimpses of European barbarity on an unprecedented scale. The documents which functioned as propaganda indicate the mission's insular focus on reforming Congolese culture and deliberate concealment of repeated instances of lethal violence by Europeans and State representatives in public portrayals of mission work. By attending to the 'archival grain' (Stoler 2009) of these public accounts it has

been possible to identify the narrative conventions and classifications which missionaries used to censor the complexity of their evolving relationships with the Congolese inhabitants of Upoto. It has also been shown how photographs were reproduced in missionary literature and enmeshed in the BMS' preferred narratives of mission work, where they were used to validate authoritative accounts for consumption in Britain. The Society's long-term censorship of the true conditions of work at Upoto suggest their desire to protect an image of white civility and moral superiority as well as an institutional reluctance to disturb the diplomatic terms on which they operated. Only when the British public became convinced of wrongdoing on the subject of 'the Congo question' did the BMS openly criticise King Leopold in its public propaganda.

Chapter Three
Picturing Transformation

'In thinking of the type of Christian manhood produced in Congoland by the introduction of Christianity, it is well to bear in mind the great disadvantages under which Congo converts are placed as compared with converts to Christianity in England. In Congoland the village converts have no protection from moral surroundings; there is no public opinion against sin; evil is always present before them; and there has been, in most cases, an early training in vice.'
(Kenred Smith, MH December 1899: 556)

'It is just an idle tale to tell them that man is meant to work - that work strengthens them in body and mind; they think, in their own minds, 'if the white man is so fond of work, let him work by all means. We say nothing against that, but we do object to his dragging us along with him.' However, in that way, also, things are moving in the right direction, and work is beginning to take a different place in their minds than formerly.'
(Anne Marie Forfeitt, MH January 1901: 30)

Materialising the Christian Family

This Chapter explores the creation of particular genres of photographs at Upoto by the BMS which were intended to offer visual evidence of the mission's progress. Photographs are analysed here for how they were 'placed' (Edwards 2012: 226-227) in relation to textual narratives communicating the changes in beliefs, lifestyle and social affiliations of Congolese people who engaged with the mission. As objects which were reproduced in various formats for BMS propaganda, photographs are considered for the ways in which they were intended to engender a sense of connection among an international Baptist community. The use of images within this dimension of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) served to confirm the shared identity of Baptist members who were responsible for materially supporting the BMS and sponsoring Congolese converts. Images were understood to provide proof of the results of evangelism and Christian charity in the form of visually-transformed Congolese people. By applying a 'forensic' mode of visual analysis to these images (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219), it is possible to identify the visual conventions that were used to symbolically convey the idealised Baptist family in

accordance with notions of civility and morality. The intended uses of photographs to communicate ideas about Congolese individual's harmonious integration into the Christian community are confirmed by attending to the captions and textual commentaries which accompanied images as they were reproduced. Images which were circulated in BMS contexts in Britain (printed in *The Missionary Herald* or displayed as lantern slides) functioned as authoritative documents within the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009), supporting forms of knowledge about the lives of Congolese people.

Alongside this broad perspective of the ideological currents that images contributed to as part of the 'photography complex' within the religious economy of the BMS, photographic content is also interrogated for what it can reveal about Congolese people's experiences of engaging with the mission. Photographs are conceptualised as historical moments which were lived through by their subjects (Edwards 2016a: 322), which reveals something of the material and social circumstances at the time of their creation. Importantly, in many instances, the photographic document is the only historical record of a Congolese individual's association with the mission station within the BMS archive. Throughout the chapter archival information from a range of different sources is brought to bear upon photographic content in order to unsettle the dominant missionary interpretations which latterly inscribed their images. Private and internal accounts produced by missionaries at Upoto offer alternate records of Congolese people's experiences and indicate the obstacles that accompanied affiliation with the mission station either as domestic staff or as students. Descriptions of specific incidents relating to local children who worked for the mission provide insight into how affiliation with the BMS was conceived from particular Congolese perspectives. These splinters of information sit in tension with visual records of an idealised social order that missionary photographs were used to convey, suggesting divergent cultural meanings that were not represented in public missionary narratives of events. Such archival frictions create analytical space to explore the possibility of alternate understandings of the lives of Congolese subjects who participated in missionary photography.

Figure 3.1 is a photograph that was likely made by William Forfeitt in a room of his house at Upoto, made around 1900. It depicts a smartly dressed Congolese man seated next to a wooden dresser which displays a careful arrangement of paraphernalia associated with a missionary household. The photographic print is

part of a collection of over 200 photographs housed in a tin box that once belonging to William Forfeitt and was donated by his descendants to the Angus Library in 2011. The image was also made into a lantern slide used by Forfeitt which was part of the same donation. Hand-written on the reverse of the photographic print is the description: 'Industrial Training. A Bopoto and his work.' This inscription indicates that the composition of the photograph was deliberate and made to frame the seated Congolese man and the piece of furniture. It attests to a desire that the scene should be understood as evidence of the good results of BMS industrial training on Congolese men. Just as the dresser could be seamlessly integrated into the respectable Christian household in Britain, the combined visual-textual message seems to suggest, so Congolese Christians could enter successfully into the Baptist 'family of man' (Hall 2002: 98). The dresser could pass as the work of a skilled, civilised individual among the Forfeitts' manufactured furnishings transported from England, and this was proof that Congolese men could be reformed. Photographs made to depict the industriousness of Congolese men in vocational training under the influence of Europeans constituted a genre made by the different international missions operating in the Congo in the late nineteenth century. BMS mission stations in other parts of the Congo devised similar photographic compositions with the final products of Congolese handiwork, as did Catholic missions (Fig. 3.2, 3.3). In such images the representation of contemporary European styles of furniture made by the hands of Congolese men was intended to demonstrate their capacity for 'practical Godliness' (Hunt 1999: 122), and by extension, their potential to contribute productively to civilised society.

The photograph of the Congolese man who had been technically trained made by Forfeitt reveals a number of the mission's concerns in their representation of the visible effects of evangelical work. A close 'reading' of the image indicates that the inclusion of certain objects was likely an attempt to symbolically communicate both the transformation of the Congolese man's character and the foundations of the Forfeitt household as an exemplary Baptist family. Anne Marie Forfeitt, daughter of another prominent Baptist family in Reading, joined her husband at Upoto in 1894 and was the first missionary wife to be based there. As the longest-standing founder of Upoto station and the first to be accompanied by a wife, William Forfeitt seems to have inhabited the role of the preeminent father of their mission community. This seniority also corresponded with administrative authority among the British staff at Upoto. The Forfeitts were the first family to give birth to a child at Upoto, their

daughter Gladys was born on 29th April 1895. The BMS missionary family in the Congo was a conceptual realm where two interrelated dimensions of missionary culture found expression: British 'civilisation' and evangelical Christianity. The rule-governed social roles prescribed in the maintenance of the ideal monogamous family unit supported the cultural identity of the mission family as 'civilised' and was in turn the nuclear organisation through which individual Christian piety could be fulfilled. Like earlier British Nonconformist missions to Africa, the BMS missionaries who went to the Congo prized the feminised domestic domain as a benchmark of their civility and this was realised in the manifestation of the family home (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 277). The material surroundings of the station were expected to reflect missionary families' sense of their own modernity and moral upstanding that would impress upon Congolese people the benefits of 'civilised' ways of life. In their analysis of the London Missionary Society's efforts to reform southern Tswana society in South Africa, Jean and John Comaroff have emphasised the demonstrative purpose with which missionaries committed themselves to maintaining comfortable bourgeois standards of living in the mission field (1997: 291). Similarly, missionary homes at Upoto were understood by their occupants as emblems of evangelical domesticity (Hunt 1999: 151) but also served as spaces for intimate religious and household instruction to select Congolese individuals.

This chapter addresses some of the imagery that the BMS missionaries at Upoto made to document the gradual progress of their evangelism and to communicate their perceived successes to British publics. Following the grain of the kinds of photographic evidence which predominates in the BMS archives, the experiences of Congolese children who entered missionary households to work and gain religious instruction are explored. Marianne Gullestad has used the concept of a 'visual rhetoric' to describe how Norwegian missionaries in Cameroon communicated ideas through photography for viewers in Norway and suggests that success of images in mission propaganda relied on their ability to implicitly conjure forms of cultural knowledge and confirm shared ideas (Gullestad 2007: 26). In the surviving photographic material from Upoto in the 1890s and early twentieth century, the visual rhetoric of family is pervasive in representations of the mission. Once again, the variations in the information which was presented publicly demonstrates the mission's concern to adhere to an archetypal narrative of evangelism. Thanks to the number of photographic images associated with the early history of Upoto it is possible to examine how certain kinds of imagery came to be

used to convey concepts of morality and how a visual aesthetic became associated with Congolese Christian identity.

In exploring the thematic styles of photographs which missionaries at Upoto created with the intention of showcasing their progress, this chapter approaches these images as evidence of Congolese experiences of encounter and sustained contact with the mission community. It argues that although this portion of the photographic archive appears (overwhelmingly) saturated with the missionary agenda, evidenced in the style of their visualising practices, such images are documents of Congolese individuals' historical experiences of events. By conceiving this collection of photographs not only in terms of their producers' intentions, but as evidence of Congolese subjects' presence, it is possible to consider the alternative ways in which those moments were lived through and related to. This exploration of the 'experience' and 'presence' of the Congolese participants who were involved in the photographic occasions is informed by the work of Baer (2002) and Edwards (2016).

In relation to the photography of trauma, Ulrich Baer has urged a reconsideration of the way in which photographs have been incorporated as evidence in the writing of history, seeking to offer a theoretical alternative to modes of analysis which have limited photographs' potential for understanding historical experiences (2002). Working with a collection of Nazi slides of scenes made within the Łódź Ghetto, Baer makes compelling arguments against theoretically reductive positions which privilege the stance of the photographer and the Nazi gaze which was the overt condition of their production and the focus of subsequent historiographic attention (2002: 136). He suggests that such emphasis occludes the experiences of Jewish people represented in the images: 'Jews in the slides are robbed of any interior life and self-directed means of expression, while the Nazi photographer is endowed by the historians with motives, feelings, and a rationale for his actions' (2002: 136). A further problematic dimension of this approach is what he terms 'a kind of retroactive foreshadowing', which occurs when photographs are interrogated from the perspective of the present, possessed with the knowledge of historical outcomes (2002: 137). The experiences of actors are interpreted through the lens of what is known to have subsequently occurred (in this instance, the fate of the Jewish people pictured in the Ghetto), as opposed to recognising that at the moment the photograph was made the future was uncertain, that history was not experienced as a given (2002: 137). In order to see past the photographer's intentions,

Baer recommends attending to indexical 'details that are contingent and extraneous [to such a perspective]' in order to critically unpack the photographic gaze and create space for the alternative ontological possibilities that were present in that moment (2002: 139). This approach informs the analysis of photographs made by the BMS at Upoto, to demonstrate that they are records of experiences which lay outside of the missionary's documentary agenda.

Following Baer (2002), Edwards has explored the concept of 'presence' as a means of evaluating the nature of the access to the past that photographs permit when they are employed as historical sources (2016). Taking up the idea of experience, she demonstrates how approaching historical photographs in terms of the presences they record can resist the colonial overtones of their production and expand interpretation of cultural encounter to accommodate coexistent concepts of time and space (2016: 313). The concept of presence offers a more expansive critical framework to that of agency because it acknowledges the co-presence, and therefore, experience, of photographed subjects even when these individuals were denied agency during the photographic event (Minkley 2019: 112). Employing what she terms a 'critical forensics' to interrogate photographic excess, Edwards has shown that visual traces of the contingent aspects of encounter can offer evidence of alternate subjectivities (2016: 318). Recovering such experiences is not a straightforward process (Edwards 2016a: 319). However, a position which focuses on the context within the image as opposed to one that is brought from elsewhere to the image (Edwards 2016a: 321) enables the possibility of shedding dominant narratives that images have been made to signify. The historical experiences of subjects are inferred from information contained within the indexical space of the photograph itself. In the context of photographs made at Upoto, this offers a means of extrication from the photographer's intentions at a photographic event, to consider how an experience was lived through by different Congolese individuals who were present (Edwards 2016a: 322).

Re-making Baptist Identity in the Congo

It has been observed that Baptist missionaries frequently harboured aspirations of upward social mobility when they relocated to the mission field and used their new occupations as an opportunity to reinvent themselves (Hunt 1992: 155, 1999: 128; Hall 2002: 177-178). Furthermore, when Baptist families arrived in their new spheres of work it was especially important for them to articulate the moral distinctions

between themselves and the 'uncivilised' 'heathen' people whom they had come to engage (Hall 2002: 93; Maxwell 2014: 453). It was critical that missionaries were seen in mission propaganda to uphold the moral integrity and standards of living which they had enjoyed in Britain and which guaranteed their membership in Christian communities at home. A failure among those stationed abroad to maintain the requisite standards of Christian respectability in a new setting might cast doubt on their ability to evangelise effectively.

The nineteenth century Protestant emphasis on the home as the locus for living according to Christian ideals can be interpreted as a further dimension that the Forfeitts sought to convey in the photograph of the man and dresser in their Upoto home (Maxwell 2014: 428). On the shelves of the dresser are what appear to be a number of glass and ceramic vases containing flowers, as well as a display of pressed flowers next to a clock. This resonates with the earlier missionary efforts of the LMS in South Africa who gifted a clock to their first station which served as a symbol of the value of time and an expression of how they sought to reorient Tswana society according to their own 'civilised' Nonconformist traditions (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: xi). On the dresser's surface in the centre are a number of serving trays and a tea set framed by what look like two soda syphons and a set of decanters on the left-hand side. This still-life seems to have comprised objects that were valued because they contributed to missionaries' sense of leading comfortable, respectable bourgeois lifestyles. References to tea-drinking and teatime could be used to convey missionary families' own adherence to rituals of civility and Britishness even whilst in the Congo. There are a number of surviving photographs from Upoto and other BMS stations which were composed in order to depict the activity of tea-drinking missionaries. Such photographed scenes sometimes included Congolese people pictured nearby the tea ceremony, presumably to provide the supposed counterpoint to British civility and for comic effect (Fig. 3.4-3.6). Nancy Hunt has described how during the twentieth century, BMS missionaries at the station of Yakusu, east of Upoto, invoked the antithesis between concepts of domesticity and cannibalism in order to define the competing moral codes that were seen to exist between themselves and Congolese people (1999: 118-119). Satirical narratives of the imaginary path that Congolese transformation would take from 'cannibalism' to 'knife and fork' under missionary influence were entertaining for readers of BMS literature but also speak to the way that Christian deliverance was ideologically linked to domestication among the British community (Hunt 1999:

119). The Yakusu missionaries were locally renowned for having created a 'little England' within their mission's grounds and such deliberate expressions of Britishness were also to be found at Upoto during the 1890s. In different periods at both Upoto and Yakusu, British civility would be encapsulated by BMS staff in the idioms of 'tea and cake' and 'roast beef' in tension with Congolese people who ate 'monkey stew' (Hunt 1999: 120) (MH February 1895: 46). As the imagined epitome of refined social behaviour, the tea set was a germane symbol at the centre of the dresser's altar-like display of civility.

There is a further level of interpretation which can be brought to bear upon the photograph's content to shed light on how it was likely intended to be received in a context of mission publicity. The Congolese man is well-dressed in a tailored shirt, shoes, tie and jacket, complete with a hat, pocket watch and walking stick beside him on the floor. His formal attire indicates that he was part of the Christian community at Upoto because the missionaries helped to clothe converts in clothing which was made at the station or received as charitable donations from supporters in Britain. All the Congolese people who were identified as Christians in visual and textual representations made by missionaries at Upoto were portrayed as being dressed in European-style clothing because this was seen as an important marker of their personal transformation and newfound respectability. The fact that the man was granted access to the Forfeitts' home, seated at the symbolic heart of the Upoto mission, could be seen to suggest that he himself was, in the missionaries' view, a trophy of successful evangelism and was photographed as having been received into the 'Baptist family'. In the context of BMS mission to Jamaica, Catherine Hall has described how the organisation of missionary life around the 'Baptist family' offered an important sense of community for individual households in the mission field (2002: 94). Kinship ties within the 'Baptist family' extended beyond blood relatives to incorporate other Baptists as religious kin who were referred to as 'brothers' and 'sisters' (Hall 2002: 94). Critically, for Baptist missionaries 'family' was 'a many-layered concept… there was the family of origin, the family of marriage, the family of the chapel, the mission family, the family of Baptists at home and the family-to-be in the sky - this last providing the key to the overarching spiritual nature of the Christian family' (Hall 2002: 94). Among the BMS missionaries in the Congo in the 1880s and 1890s there seems to have been a particular emphasis on the enterprise as a male endeavour and its success as reliant upon its fraternity. The earliest pioneering work in the Congo was credited to the men recruited by the BMS, many

of whom had been colleagues in Baptist training colleges such as Bristol or Regent's Park College prior to missionary service and who cherished this male solidarity in the Congo. Thomas Comber's *Manual for Missionaries to the Congo* (1885) is almost entirely silent on the role of women in the Congo mission, but recommended that a sense of cohesion made for effective working conditions:

> *'Hitherto, through God's goodness, there has always prevailed in the Congo Mission a spirit of brotherliness and affectionate co-operation, of cordial camaraderie, or clanship and of mutual consideration or sympathy, which has made arduous work pleasant and has bound all the brethren closely together… We want ever to be a united and happy brotherhood, and it should be the aim of each member of our Mission to do all possible to maintain our good-fellowship. This is all the more necessary as our stations are not isolated or independent.'* (Comber 1885: 77-78)

According to Comber, the BMS mission in the Congo was only as strong as its brotherhood.

The allusion to the Congolese man's assimilation into the BMS Christian family in the photograph is supported by the fact that he is seated beneath a framed photograph of John Forfeitt, William Forfeitt's missionary brother who served as the BMS Congo secretary in the lower Congo. John's role made him the administrative head of the BMS in the Congo and representative of the BMS in all dealings with the Congo Free State administration. The composition of the scene invited a reading of the different hierarchical strata occupied by members of the Baptist family in the Congo. The Congolese Christian's position beneath John Forfeitt appears to support the concept of John having been at one level, a senior patriarch of the BMS Congo mission, and at another, an honoured brother, both literally for the Forfeitts and in the sense of brotherhood that was seen to link adherents of Christianity. The compositional configuration of the photograph therefore visually enmeshes the sitter in a network of relations that were indexed through the symbolic potential of the material setting in which it was made.

A similar composition was employed in a portrait of the Upoto missionary Charles Dodds, made in a missionary house (possibly his own at Upoto), where he was stationed intermittently from 1895 (Fig. 3.7). Dodds was photographed seated on a cane chair and the room boasted a number of substantial pieces of furniture and technological artefacts connected to the work of the mission, such as the typewriter and the harmonium. Behind him can be seen over eighteen framed photographs on display, most of which appear to have been portraits. Like in the photograph

depicting the Bapoto man, Dodds was photographed from such a perspective that included the photographs on the walls behind him and created a sense of visual connectedness to the persons photographed. The portrait of Rev. Dodds can be understood as a visual construction of his identity in the Congo which drew on familiar conventions of photographic portraiture in Britain as it became more widely available in the second half of the nineteenth century. In his examination of the development and uses of photographic portraiture, Peter Hamilton has commented that '[t]he middle classes wanted to affirm their respectability, their material success, their distinctive values concerning marriage and the family, and saw in photography a means of displaying these assets' (2001: 10). BMS missionaries' uses of photography for portraiture can therefore be seen as a means through which they sought to represent themselves both in terms of their Baptist values and their identity as representatives of the respectable British middle class in the Congo.

That large collections of photographs came to adorn the walls of many BMS houses in the Congo is confirmed by a photograph of a mission house dining room at Lukolela station (Fig. 3.8). Here too, a number of photographic portraits were hung alongside illustrated biblical scenes and what appear to be images of mission activity. What these photographs illustrate is the extent to which familiar furnishings, including photographs, were used to create a sense of home for BMS missionaries. Hall has described how Baptist homes in England became spaces where engagement with the missionary cause and belonging in missionary circles could be communicated for visitors via the display of missionary portraits or collections of books (2002: 294). Another photograph of an interior likely at Lukolela (Fig. 3.9) appears to show an engraved portrait of the BMS missionary William Carey or perhaps one of the celebrated founders of the Baptist Missionary Society alongside a map of Central Africa and other mounted photographs. These photographs indicate that representations of distant loved ones, colleagues and historical Baptist forefathers reinforced a sense of shared purpose and identity as part of a community of Baptists dispersed across the Congo and different continents. Displayed photographs and other kinds of imagery comprised an important part of the material culture in missionary homes, serving as visual-material anchors which generated a sense of belonging and lineage within the Baptist family.

Disturbing Sights

As work began constructing a haven that would support the model Baptist families at Upoto, there were concurrent efforts to identify those aspects of Congolese culture that were perceived as disturbing and obstructive to Christianity. Such reports made for entertaining reading in *The Missionary Herald* and confirmed prejudices among the British readership about 'heathenism' and the 'uncivilised' nature of Congolese peoples that had fuelled the BMS mission to Central Africa. Negative characterisations of Congolese people in the Society's propaganda justified the need for a missionary presence at Upoto and demonstrated the importance of continued prayers and financial support from donors.

When missionaries arrived at Upoto the appearances of Bapoto and Ngombe people were felt to be disturbing and this visceral response to their personal aesthetics confirmed the need for Christian intervention for many. In descriptions of the people around Upoto missionary authors were knowingly hyperbolic about their revulsion towards styles of dress and bodily adornment.[20] The presentation of people at Upoto was ridiculed and the missionary critique often had a gendered bias, reported as the original sin recorded in a long list of complaints for readers of BMS literature. The perception of women's nudity at Upoto was widely remarked upon by Europeans visitors who sought to contrast it with what they saw as the more clothed (and therefore more civilised) state of cultures in other regions of the Congo. At the time of missionaries' arrival Bapoto women seem to have largely worn fine belts of beads around their waists and did not wear skirts made of raffia palm as was common downriver among Bangala women. In the ethnographic descriptions supplied in Harry H. Johnston's *George Grenfell and the Congo* it was explained that the peoples of 'the inner Congo Basin' had not the access to printed fabrics and calico available in the 'semi-civilised regions of the west', nor the 'graceful ample clothing' introduced by 'Arabs' in the eastern Congo (1908: 559). In this way Upoto was often construed in the European imagination as the very 'heart of darkness' of Central Africa. Smith echoed the trope when he wrote about 'native women in all their dress and undress and unloveliness' when he recalled witnessing market day at Upoto beach (Smith 2016: 28). In his monograph the BMS missionary William Holman Bentley wrote of Upoto:

[20] Among the earliest published descriptions of Bapoto people's appearance is Herbert Ward's account of a visit to Upoto (1890: 154-163) which was accompanied by watercolour illustrations of Bapoto 'types'. In their descriptions of cicatrisation at Upoto missionaries echoed Ward's language, indicating that he set something of a precedent for European's written appraisals of Bapoto people.

> *'The men are always decently dressed, the women never; they are satisfied with a string of beads, and very often not even that. They adorn their bodies with marks and patterns in cam-wood powder or pot-black and oil, and are perfectly unconscious of any impropriety. This undress of the women has not much improved even now in 1899; the ladies of the mission have tried their utmost to bring about a change.'* (Bentley 1900: 269, vol. 2)

Such descriptions illustrate missionaries' reactions to Congolese women at Upoto and the extent to which appearances had a moral dimension in their minds because of the 'impropriety' that different modes of dress and adornment signified. Bapoto and Ngombe men tended to wear loin cloths made of bark cloth or other textiles at the time of the BMS's arrival. In the eyes of the missionaries, their inadequate dress automatically made Bapoto and Ngombe women morally inferior to local men.

A further source of condemnation was the appearance of cicatrisation patterns on peoples' skin at Upoto, a custom that was seemingly practiced on the face from childhood and on other body parts for adult men and women. In this display of 'abhorrent appearance' Bapoto people were also seen to exceed beyond other people in northern Congo observed by Europeans. The preferred assessment of Bapoto styles of facial scarification in missionary commentary was 'hideous' (Johnston 1908: 123, vol. 1). Bentley wrote that 'at Bopoto it surpasses all in its elaborate character. Lines and curves of small cicatrices, each from one-sixth to a quarter of an inch in length, cover the entire face, rendering it very hideous' (Bentley 1900: 270, vol. 2). The missionary John Jeffery was temporarily resident at Upoto station and provided his impression of Bapoto peoples' appearance in the Annual Report for 1899:

> *'As a personal adornment, they all cut their faces in the most horrible manner, though the riverine peoples are decidedly the worst. They keep cutting until the flesh stands out in lumps the size of a pea… Until one becomes accustomed to the face it is not at all pleasant to look upon. The men alone wear any clothes of any kind.'* (BMS 107th Annual Report, 1899: 103).

However, there was not complete consensus in European responses to scarification. Johnston asserted that Bapoto designs were 'very far from ugly' and that 'a well-built, well "carved" Ngombe man or woman suggests great possibilities in artistic development' (1908: 564, vol. 2), going so far as to concede that some European explorers found cicatrisation marks attractive (Johnston 1908: 564-567, vol. 2). In European efforts to categorise and compare Congolese peoples in the late

nineteenth century, scarification patterns were used as a measure of civility and, in this instance, a proxy for creative capacity. The district commissioner of *Equateur* 1890-1893, Lieutenant Charles Lémaire wrote an article for the Belgian periodical *Le Congo Illustré* describing the different cicatrisation patterns in the area northern Congo under his jurisdiction which was illustrated with line drawings of Congolese 'types' (Fig. 3.10, 3.11) (1892: 154-155, vol. 1). Lémaire listed and compared the characteristic cicatrisation designs observed in different regions which corresponded with the schematic designs that had been mapped onto stereotyped cartoon representations of different peoples beside the text. He remarked that it required a duration of time living among Congolese people before one could effectively 'read' the place of origin on their faces (*Le Congo Illustré* 1892: 154, vol. 1). Thus, for Europeans in the Congo at this time, the purported ability to recognise cicatrisation designs and attribute a geographic category to them became a marker of qualified knowledge associated with the authority of rule and the experience of having lived in Central Africa. In 1894 *The Missionary Herald* printed an article with a similar taxonomic content titled 'Types of Natives on the Upper Congo River' which was illustrated with engraved drawings representing Congolese boys and men (Fig. 3.12, 3.13) (MH July 1894: 298-299). However, here the portrayal of 'clans' and 'tribes' was intended to illustrate the different peoples who were the contemporary targets of BMS evangelism. This is evidence of how the missionaries attributed different social categories to Congolese people according to concepts of the 'tribal' and the 'customary', a European colonial logic which was used to justify the appointment of local authorities in the implementation of indirect rule in newly-formed African countries (Mamdani 2018).

The descriptions of the printed illustrations reproduced the hierarchical tropes of 'petty chieftain', 'African patriarch', 'warrior', 'slave' and 'schoolboy' which conjured the binary moral classificatory sentiments cherished in BMS rhetoric: heathen/saved, foe/friend, adult/child, despot/victim (MH July 1894: 298-299). It was through these sorts of representations of Congolese people in *The Missionary Herald* that British readers were tutored in the social makeup of the un-saved Congolese population, which could be dismissed as superstitious, degraded and cruel (MH July 1894: 298).

At Upoto the cultural practice of cicatrisation was predominantly deplored on aesthetic grounds by BMS missionaries because it did not conform with British ideals of beauty and was thought of as bodily disfigurement (Smith 2016: 43). Such

responses to Bapoto, Ngombe and other Congolese people's appearances played into a discourse of Africa as exotic which confirmed prejudices at home about the supposed dearth of civilisation in northern Congo and created the imagined baseline from which missionary evangelism would proceed. As will be shown, the transformed appearance of Congolese men and women who were affiliated with the mission became a symbol of personal, social and spiritual improvements in the photographs which were made of the nascent Christian community.

Early on in the life of the mission BMS staff were unsettled when the communities living at Upoto congregated and took part in drumming, singing and dancing. On one occasion, Reverend Balfern was unnerved by 'the death dance' and 'muffled beats of the drum' in associated with a funeral which, he lamented, would continue for days (Smith 2016: 25). The performances witnessed were problematic on a number of levels. Such events involved uncivilised social interactions and alien cultural forms. Most commented on were the appearance of women's bodies, uncontrolled physical movements, unmusical sounds and palm wine drinking. Smith seemed to take his cue from Balfern when he wrote:

> *'Tonight as I look from the door of my home into the compound of the near village, how weird is the scene. A flickering log fire makes the surrounding darkness look ever blacker. By the fitful light of the fire are gathered men, women and children watching the dancing of some girls, smothered with red ngola and decorated with beads. Drums beat. To the solo of a singer the girls as they dance sing a suitable refrain. The skin of the natives, the glittering beads, the brass decorations, the eager lustful faces of the onlookers… !'*
>
> (Smith 2016: 29)

Here both the women's state of undress and the camwood powder used to cover their bodies was implicitly problematic for the lack of modesty and imagined sexual promiscuity it confirmed. In their appearance women were guilty of inciting lust in male spectators. In addition to customs not being understood, the theatricality of these occasions seems to have been an element in their resentment by the mission staff. Recalling another instance, Smith applauded the efforts of the 'quiet' young men who listened to Forfeitt speak about Jesus on a night when dancing was taking place in the town, having successfully resisted its 'attractions' (Smith 2016: 29).

In mission writing about Congolese dances at Upoto they were frequently characterised as either 'funeral dances' or 'war dances'. Smith explained that ceremonial funeral dances were propitiatory, carried out by relatives and friends of

the deceased so that the individual's spirit might be honoured (Smith 2016: 87). A common trope which emerged in connection with mission accounts of Congolese funerals was that of the 'superficial' displays of grief demonstrated, frequently assigned to women (Smith 2016: 90). Smith would conclude that '[t]heir grief is noisy, but does not seem very deep.' (2016: 116). After witnessing a number of funerary customs his perspective was resolutely cynical: relatives wanted only to be seen dancing and appeasing the spirit of the deceased in order not to be suspected of having played a part in their death (2016: 88). In their accounts of local traditions, missionary observers were particularly adept at exposing what they characterised as the selfish drives of the Congolese psyche. Egotistical explanations could be found for most dimensions of spiritual life and funerals were characterised as social facades which betrayed people's disingenuous character.

Dramatic, embodied displays of grief were written about as unnerving and unnatural: 'Women dance, contorting their bodies and beating their breasts whilst keeping up a continuous wailing' (Smith 2016: 88). Recording an incident in 1904, Smith apparently refused to witness a dance in the town of Bombilo when the people wanted to celebrate his arrival, citing 'the obscene character of some of their dances' (2016: 88). Emotional and expressive practices such as singing and dancing were unfamiliar and disturbing to the Baptists whose Calvinistic forms of devotion cherished emotional restraint and self-control (Hall 2002: 53). In reporting these events the male missionaries dedicated their energies to criticising women's appearance and expressing their disdain for their 'unfeminine' conduct. At a funeral in Bombilo Smith described how 'the village decorated themselves in a most hideous fashion and danced war and other dances, while the women besmirched themselves with mud and wailed incessantly all through the night' (2016: 88). The women's application of camwood powder to their bodies took on a moral dimension for Smith, their overall aesthetic apparently unvirtuous. The aspects of funerals that missionaries witnessed clearly offended their sensibilities and clashed with their own cultural understandings about appropriate response to death.

A relatively early photograph purporting to show a funeral dance at Upoto was engraved for the March 1892 issue of *The Missionary Herald* with an accompanying description provided by Rev. Oram (Fig. 3.14, 3.15). He wrote: 'Dancing is the chief amusement of the Congo people, and a funeral is always considered to be a very fit occasion for a big dance and plenty of palm wine. It is indeed a strange and sad sight' (MH March 1892: 90). This photograph seems

carefully constructed, as if people were actively participating by looking at the camera and maintaining their positions. Contrary to the image's caption representing it as a 'funeral dance', the people photographed do not appear to have been mid-performance but instead were stationary and acknowledging the photographic occasion. The context of dancing can only be gleaned from Oram's printed description, in which he was careful to spell-out the problematic dimensions of these social events and their unnerving aesthetics. He critiqued the unwelcome visceral impact of to the drumming and singing, which he described as 'deafening' (MH March 1892: 90).

Forfeitt made a few of photographs of so-called funeral dances which were subsequently reproduced in various early twentieth century publications where Upoto needed illustration (Fig. 3.16-3.18). Figures 3.16 and 3.17 were likely made at the same occasion but from slightly different angles. The men wearing monkey fur and feather hats were likely minor chiefs, who according to Smith would only attend the funeral ceremonies of a paramount chief (Smith 2016: 40). The images do not match the disdainful descriptions in mission reports because they mostly portray men participating in dances. From the photographs these appear to have been events involving hundreds of men, women and children from the town. People filled the central communal space between houses, sat on the ground or stools, some standing. A group of individuals watched the dancing from under a sun shelter at one end of the houses. Drums, iron bells and a variety of rattles were being played. Fig. 3.16 was captioned 'Praising the deceased, Bopoto' when it was reproduced in *Customs of the World* (1913, vol. 2). The published description identifies the 'chief mourner' on the right-hand-side of the image, apparently holding the important possessions of her husband. It is not easy to discern the identified widow amongst the central standing group, as most appear to be men. The image's caption resonates with another familiar trope in the mission attitudes towards Congolese people: that of their misplaced affection for material culture. The inference was that objects were valued as much, and sometimes more than human life. This was yet another example of a corrupted moral code in need of reconfiguration.

Forfeitt clearly took these images from the periphery of the scene but was apparently permitted to be present in order to photograph some of the action. His presence was obviously noted and a number of adults and children among the audience look at the camera instead of at the performers, suggesting that he was also a novelty for them during these occasions. It is difficult to assess how much

preparation and collaboration was involved in the making of these images to ensure Forfeitt achieved the perspective on the funeral dance he was looking for. He was clearly intent on capturing the movements of the headmen as they passed him in single file, dancing with palm leaves and various rattles. The images he made of these events share a sense of his being a voyeur on the edges of the performance. Unlike other types of photographs made by Forfeitt and Smith intended to operate within an ethnographic genre (discussed in Chapter 4), these seem relatively candid and do not appear to have been staged to the same degree. The dancers were wholly caught up in the performance and did not orient their bodies towards Forfeitt and his camera. These were not events that the missionary could orchestrate but instead unfolded according to their internal logics which did not account for his presence. Only later in the textual reconstruction of the published photograph would Forfeitt be intrinsic to the scene as cultural interpreter.

A further focal point for missionary critique at Upoto were the philosophical beliefs that were understood to make up what they saw as a 'heathen' religion. As readily visible traces of corrupted worldview, power objects worn by individuals were latched onto as symbolic of cultural practices in need of change. In the late nineteenth century, the term 'fetish' was applied freely by Europeans to the diverse types of personal objects they saw being worn about the body by people living along the River Congo. Its application by missionaries to the objects they saw around Upoto drew on an entrenched Enlightenment discourse of the 'fetish' which by the nineteenth century was defaulted to by Europeans as an explanation for African religion (MacGaffey 1977: 172). Pietz (1985, 1987, 1988) has traced the evolution of the concept of 'fetish' and the particular set of meanings it contained that emerged from the commercial encounters between Dutch traders and the societies of west Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1985: 5). This suggests that it was a longstanding response towards African cultures borne from within a Protestant worldview. Particular ideas accrued around the personal objects worn in the African societies with whom Europeans traded and around the allegedly misplaced cultural value invested in trifling objects, on which they were able to capitalise. According to that European worldview, Africans' apparent attribution of metaphysical agency to objects betrayed a false perception of physical causality (Pietz 1987: 42). Furthermore, the irrational fear induced by 'fetishism' was believed to evidence the corrupt institutions which worked to maintain and profit from this deception (Pietz 1988: 106). Perplexed by the social constructions of objects which

were so alien and incommensurate with their own 'rational' economic definitions for trade (Pietz 1987: 23), Europeans attributed to Africans a confused mentality (Pietz 1988: 109). These were societies that appeared to operate through mechanisms of chance, with tendencies to personify items of technology (Pietz 1987: 42) and anthropomorphise nature (Pietz 1988: 121). These conceptual dimensions of 'fetish' were abstracted from their historical conditions (emerging from the reactions of European merchants in trading encounters in West Africa) and served to crystallise Enlightenment theory in Europe, maintaining potency in popular and scientific discourses about Africa throughout the nineteenth century (Pietz 1985: 14).[21]

For the Baptists in northern Congo the term 'fetish' likely resonated on a number of levels. They themselves were proponents of rational commercial exchange as a means for social and spiritual 'improvement' of Congolese people, promised by the premise of legitimate free trade on which the Congo Free State had been established (Johnston 1908: 408, vol. 1). The principles by which Congolese societies were understood to operate represented, for Europeans, the inverse of fair exchange driven by objective economic values. Furthermore, their application of the term 'fetish' to Congolese traditions was doubly derisive through the evocation of their anti-Catholic sentiment. Not only did 'fetishism' not represent the supposedly enlightened European understandings of the laws of nature, nor Protestant conceptions of the relationship between the material and the divine; it conjured the corrupted relationship with sacramental objects possessed by adherents of Catholicism. In their assessment of local spirituality, missionaries recognised a familiar foe and, as such, the rhetorical force of 'fetish' was a double-edged critique. It was also poignant because the BMS saw themselves in competition with the state-sponsored Catholic missions in the Congo. It was suspected that Congolese people would be more inclined to identify with a form of Christianity which shared their mistaken investment in objects, which inspired a further sense of challenge for the Upoto mission.

In his memoirs Smith wrote about the types of personal 'fetishes', also described as 'amulets', which he had observed people wearing:

[21] Pietz has argued that European concepts of 'fetish' in an African context, popularised in the eighteenth century travel accounts of Dutch traders to West Africa, were taken up by Enlightenment intellectuals to develop a general theory of primitive religion (Pietz 1888). For example, Willem' Bosman's '*A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*' (1704) was received as an authoritative text on African people. In this account Bosman represented what he understood to be 'fetish worship' as a central organising institution within African society (Pietz 1988: 105). 'Fetishism' as it came to be understood in the eighteenth century, was integrated with contemporary ideas about human progress and was posited as the earliest form of religion (Cinnamon 2012: 111-112).

> *'Amongst fetishes owned by individuals I have noted the horns of antelopes, pieces of the skin of monkeys containing oddments and tied up into little bags or bundles, shells, forest nuts, grotesque wooden images, bones, pieces of stick artificially marked with coloured pigments, little bundles of stuff enclosed in pieces of snakeskin, a spent European cartridge, and other objects in great variety. Into the selected article the medicine man may put pieces of antelope or snakeskins, claws of birds, coloured clay or other oddments, according to his fancy or custom. The base of the weti may consists of the ashes of medicinal plants, pieces or calcined bones, gums, spices, resins, filth (human or otherwise), eyes, hearts, brains, gall bladders, etc. of humans and so on.'* (Smith 2016: 82)

Evidently Smith was keen to emphasise what he saw as the arbitrary character of the objects he had observed being used as power objects.

According to Smith, *weti* was the term used by the Bafoto/Bapoto people and *boli* by Ngombe people to describe 'fetishes, fetish medicines and the mysterious spirit-power within' (Smith 2016: 81). Although Smith's descriptions of the spiritual beliefs around Upoto are only cursory, it is possible to get a sense of a local philosophy which shares aspects of therapeutic institutions in other parts of the Congo (Mack 2011). In the Upoto area communities sought help from so-called 'fetish priests', known as *nganga*, to defend against malign acts of witchcraft and 'evil spirits' associated with the forest (Smith 2016: 86, 81). In this way, individuals were able to protect themselves from the malevolent intentions of others, manifested as accidents, disease or death (Smith 2016: 81). The material object supplied by the 'fetish priest' became the container for the spirit power invested within it (Smith 2016: 81). In an effort to historicise Congolese therapeutic institutions in the nineteenth century, Kajsa Ekholm Friedman has argued convincingly that the dissolution of Kongo political hierarchies precipitated by the European colonisation of the Lower Congo led to the increased specialisation by *nganga* in response to new threats at a time of social crisis (1991: 140-144). Likewise, it is important to consider missionaries' ethnographic vignettes from Upoto as historically contingent artefacts generated from specific cultural encounters during the European colonisation of northern Congo.

In the collection of material culture donated by Smith to Bristol Museum are a number of small wooden objects labelled with the term 'fetish' which take the form of carved beads strung together (Fig. 3.19), and tapered, tubular whistle-like pendants (Fig 3.20-3.25). These types of *weti* or *boli* were worn in photographs made

by Smith and donated to the Museum of Archaeology, Cambridge (which are the focus of Chapter 4). One photograph (Fig. 3.26), labelled as 'Family Life at Bopoto' on the reverse, shows two generations wearing similar necklaces with various objects strung on them. The older of the two has a variety of carved tubular pendants strung together with an antelope horn. From the photographic sources it does not appear that women wore the same style of necklaces containing *weti* or *boli*, and there were variations in the type worn, some being smaller. The existing archival sources authored by missionaries do not provide more detailed accounts of power objects that were made and worn by people at Upoto. It is important, however, to acknowledge their existence and relationship to the political authority of the *nganga* at Upoto as dimensions of Bapoto and Ngombe social life that were targeted in BMS efforts to reshape people's beliefs.

The voluntary gifting of 'fetishes' to the missionaries was, in their minds, an important demonstration of an individual's spiritual awakening and often described as the point from which an individual was open to receiving Christianity. Power objects worn on the body had come to be conceptualised by the mission as both agents in and emblems of a pagan spirituality. Smith saw the local use of 'fetishes' as a social practice which stood in opposition to their evangelical work. In his book *Congoland* (1913), apparently quoting the words of Ngbangba, a Congolese Christian, he wrote of the Bodala people:

> *'They believe in fetishes, and witchcraft, and spirit-worship. Even the boys who come to the school wear all sorts of 'medicine' and fetishes. On Sundays or when the people are called to service they refuse to come, but they go to the witch-doctor for 'medicine' and fetishes. They worship their fetishes as the Israelites worshipped the golden calf.'* (Smith 1913: 44-45)

From Smith's account there is the sense that local people who were attending church services were disqualified as inauthentic Christians by mission staff if they were also drawing on a *nganga*'s expertise. In practice, individuals' engagement with Christianity was evidently not a strictly linear progression or the total replacement of pre-existing beliefs that the mission desired. This *ad hoc* approach to Christianity seems to have been tolerated by the mission as a necessary strategy for maintaining engaged audiences on a trajectory towards the total rejection of pre-existing beliefs, culminating in baptism.

The public stripping of personal power objects worn on the body was interpreted by missionaries at Upoto as a dramatic rejection of traditional 'religious'

beliefs and became cherished anecdotes used as markers of their own successful evangelism. In his memoirs Smith recounted his tortured mission to successfully convert Ebaka, a Bapoto minor chief and blacksmith at Upoto (Fig. 3.27). Ebaka had met the explorer Henry Morton Stanley in 1876 when his expedition stopped at Upoto (Smith 2016: 60). Smith described asking Ebaka if he would put his faith in God as opposed to the charms (described here as *sepu*) he was wearing (2016: 56). According to Smith, Ebaka maintained that giving up his polygamous relations was the main impediment to him denouncing his Bapoto beliefs (Smith 2016: 56-7). He appealed to Smith as to how he could maintain influence among people with only one wife, which is indicative of how the condition of monogamy in Christianity was seen as a major obstacle to men (Smith 2016: 56). Smith thought he had finally succeeded when he allowed his 'fetishes' to be taken from his body and denounced his indigenous beliefs (Smith 2016: 57). This event was recorded in the station logbook as having taking place on 2nd June 1901, and Ebaka's 'fetishes' were apparently given to Forfeitt as a 'memento of the occasion'. Once in missionary possession, 'fetishes' were categories of object which were considered 'trophies' of successful conversion (Jacobs, Knowles & Wingfield 2015: 12). Ebaka's revelation was only short-lived, however, when according to Smith 'the old superstitions claimed him, and again openly he sought the help of native fetishes' (Smith 2016: 57).

'Boys' and Fathers

Before the arrival of women and the birth of British children in the Congo, the Baptist families that would serve as the models for Congolese Christians were incomplete. BMS missionary wives only arrived when stations were more established and living conditions favourable for women to maintain respectable households. In the years before women were there to oversee the domestic sphere of station activity, the responsibility for this supporting role in Baptist mission work was transferred to the children adopted into missionary communities. Early on in a BMS missionary's career in the Congo he would acquire one or two African 'boys'. Regulations from 1885 indicate that children incorporated in this way did not receive formal wages but received food and shelter, and as the BMS saw it, beneficial domestic and industrial training (Comber 1885: 92-93). However, the Upoto mission did not formally adopt the boarding school system in place at other BMS stations until 1904, presumably because of their proximity to Bapoto neighbourhoods

(Logbook January 1904). Surviving accounts concerning missionaries' personal 'boys' and their prescribed conduct towards them are replete with tensions and contradictions concerning the perceived power in these relationships. Whilst many conceived their relationship to their adopted Congolese 'children' as that of surrogate parents, in day-to-day life, members of the BMS depended on their 'boys' significantly as translators and cultural brokers. The cultural knowledge and language skills possessed by Congolese children gave them agency in the relationship with their new masters that was played down in BMS accounts. The preferred self-image was expressed as a straightforward hierarchy whereby missionary men were the commanders and independent pioneers of mission.

Male missionaries tended to acquire 'boys' and missionary wives 'girls'. This was in part a practice inherited from other Europeans in the Congo such as traders operating factories in the Lower Congo (Friedman 1991: 54-56). Boys were seen as more useful because of their capacity for physical labour, contracted as porters during journeys over land and crew and engineers on steamships. As a rule, in the nineteenth century BMS men in the Congo did not direct their efforts towards Congolese women and girls (Hunt 1990: 396). There were 'sexual anxieties' (Hunt 1999: 144) which underscored the gendered divisions of Protestant work meaning that Congolese women tended not to be engaged in mission education until there were sufficient numbers of female staff to instruct them. Hunt has unpacked the intricate symbolic significance of BMS missionaries calling their male employees 'boys', a term which simultaneously conjured immaturity, hierarchical sub-ordinance and effectively tamed any sense of individual agency or sexuality through their designation to a feminised domestic sphere (1999: 121). It has been shown in the context of BMS mission to Jamaica that missionaries' use of the parental idiom encoded and naturalised a racial hierarchy in the relations between white and black which severely undermined the evangelical premise of human equality before God in the 'family of man' (Hall 2002: 98). The BMS Congo mission justified the domestic duties given to their 'boys' and 'girls' on the basis of the importance of a Protestant work ethic and the belief that Congolese people needed to be taught the 'dignity of labour' (MH May 1899: 265). Comber rehearsed the entrenched European trope that equated Africans with laziness when he asserted that in Congo indolence was 'a national curse' (Comber 1885: 94).

As was the case at other foreign missions in the Congo, the 'boys' who became employed as the domestic servants of Oram and Forfeitt were described as

having originated as socially marginalised children who had been sold into slavery (Gordon 2017). This was an emotive narrative trope favoured by BMS missionaries in their public literature because it enabled them to cast themselves as saviours intervening in savage African practices. 'Boys'' entrance into the service of a missionary was often recorded in parabolic tales of salvation which prefigured a moment of future Christian conversion and spiritual salvation. The house-boy-turned-evangelist was a time-honoured vocational trajectory for Congolese boys who entered into the service of the BMS missionaries in the 1890s (Hunt 1999: 125-130). As a model for evangelism it ensured that early mission stations had a captive audience in their first years when, typically, missionaries struggled to engage local populations who were frequently indifferent or hostile towards them (Yates 1971: 158).

Forfeitt was in charge of two personal 'boys' within his first year at Upoto. Nzanzala, readers of the *Herald* were informed, was acquired at the BMS station of Bolobo, where Forfeitt had spent time training before heading upriver to establish Upoto (MH February 1893: 46). Not originally from Bolobo, Nzanzala had apparently been sold as part payment for some ivory and was still enslaved under four masters whilst working for BMS Bolobo (MH February 1893: 46). He was estimated to have been eleven years old at the time. Nzanzala was reportedly unhappy in those circumstances and had attempted to escape on passing steamers on multiple occasions (MH February 1893: 46). Upon Forfeitt's invitation to come and work for him personally, Nzanzala readily agreed and supposedly began sweeping the floor (MH February 1893: 46). Forfeitt then described the arduous negotiations with a chief of Bolobo and Nzanzala's four masters from the town, eventually redeeming him for a 'bargain' 950 brass rods (MH February 1893: 46). Reflecting upon the events of Nzanzala's material redemption, Forfeitt remarked that he was hopeful for the boy's future at Upoto (MH February 1893: 47). It was mentioned in passing that Nzanzala spent some time attending school in England whilst Forfeitt was on furlough, but no further details of his experience were provided (MH February 1893: 45). It indicates that the Forfeitts had made a spectacle of Nzanzala and that he had publicly performed his Christian identity in mission circles in Britain. The other 'boy' who was acquired later was named Baluti and was described as having come from near the Aruwimi River, having been captured by Arab slave raiders who took him to Stanley Falls where he was subsequently sold to a European trader (MH February 1893: 45). This trader was Mr Reichlin who came to

be based at the Dutch trading house near Upoto. Mr Reichlin was recorded as having begged Forfeitt to take Baluti into his care in April 1891 when he was leaving the district (Logbook April 3rd 1891). These accounts, whilst steeped in the rhetoric of the missionary-as-saviour, accord with the ways in which the earliest Christian communities were formed by freed slaves' entrance into European missions in other parts of Congo (Wright 1993; Maxwell 2013). It tended to be those children and adults who were already disassociated from their homes and sold into slavery who came into contact with traders and missionaries. Marcia Wright has asserted that for children who had been sold into slavery and were then 'redeemed' by European missionaries in Central Africa, the ideological distinction between being purchased and being ransomed was often indiscernible for them, resulting in the perception that they had merely become 'a slave of the white man' (Wright 1993: 2). In the archives pertaining to the early history of Upoto it is difficult to consistently trace the lives of the children who entered mission households as 'boys' and even more so those who became 'girls'. They might be celebrated one month in a report in *The Missionary Herald* not to be referred to ever again or appear in a few undated mission photographs as young children but not as adolescents. The surviving evidence is extremely piecemeal and, in most instances, the only documentation of the Congolese children and adults associated with the mission is in the form of photographic images made at the station. David Maxwell has commented on the 'porosity' of the missionary households of those working for the Congo Evangelistic Mission in Katanga from 1915 and a similar turnover of individuals affiliated with the BMS mission is reflected in the archives pertaining to Upoto (Maxwell 2014: 431-432).

Photographic portraits[22] of missionary men and their 'boys' seem to have comprised a popular genre of images made by the BMS in the Congo (Fig. 3.28-3.34).

[22] The term 'portrait' is used here to describe the probable missionary intentions in the creation of these images, as opposed to how photographic occasions were understood by the Congolese individuals who participated in them. Missionaries at Upoto likely understood the production of and participation in portrait photography as a means of visually linking individual identity to a wider international community of Baptists who were perceived to be connected through their shared beliefs and values. The practice of photographic portraiture evolved out of the Western art-historical category associated with the naturalistic depiction of physiognomic likeness, understood to represent the identity of an individual, which has its roots in antiquity and early Christian artistic traditions (Woodall 1996: 1). Like earlier art-historical expectations of the genre, from the nineteenth century the photographic portrait was socially valued for its assumed capacity to objectively portray a likeness and communicate the subject's individual personality and social status (Woodall 1996: 6; Hargreaves 2001: 21). Roger Hargreaves has explored the technological evolution and social applications of portrait photography in the nineteenth century, describing how the studio portraits favoured by Western elites from the 1840s were informed by the contemporary pseudo-sciences of physiognomy and phrenology (2001: 29-35). The portrait photography of the later nineteenth century retained this

Such images had compositional conventions that were intended to express the hierarchical structure of these relationships in which missionary men 'fathered' their imagined orphan boys. Accompanying Forfeitt's account of Nzanzala and Baluti's entrance into his service was an engraving made from a photographic portrait of the three (Fig. 3.28, 3.29). Nzanzala and Baluti were pictured standing symmetrically either side of Forfeitt who was seated between them on a chair, holding what appears to be a carved ivory tusk.[23] The children were wearing striped uniforms but went barefoot whilst Forfeitt was fully dressed in a pale suit complete with a mariner's hat. Forfeitt seems to have been intent on presenting himself as a pioneering missionary, benevolent father and Christian role model for his two Congolese charges.

A similar surviving postcard depicts an image of Oram and his two boys, named Kiyedi and Nkindu, in a corresponding composition (Fig. 3.31). On the reverse Oram provided the note: 'Self and my two personal boys Kiyedi and Nkindu, both from Wathen Station, Lower Congo River.' Kiyedi and Nkindu were also photographed in the position of subordinates, occupying the space traditionally reserved for biological children in familial portraits. In the portrait of Oram, as with other missionary and 'boy' portraits composed in the late nineteenth century, missionary men adopted positions in which they touched or embraced the Congolese children. This physical gesture was presumably designed to convey a sense of the idealised paternal intimacy and protection bestowed upon the Congolese children in the hands of 'civilised' Christian men. In the absence of women during men's early years of mission, dedicated to pioneering and station-building, expressions of platonic intimacy towards 'boys' provided an acceptable outlet and reassuring symbolic paternalism. Male Congolese domestic staff symbolically fulfilled the domestic and infantile spheres of the incomplete Baptist family and could counterbalance images of virile Christian masculinity which might otherwise have been troubling in connection with British prejudices about African

perceived association between the sitter's countenance and the communication of individual character and morality, with increasing belief in the truth of the camera and photography's ability to represent likeness and identity (Hargreaves 2001: 51-54).

[23] The ivory artefact is a somewhat ambiguous symbol in the image. In the context of the European occupation of the Congo, ivory was associated at this time with the accrual of wealth by male European traders and the Congolese authorities who sold it to them. Ivory was the primary export from the Congo Free State prior to the discovery of rubber-producing vines. Although the British missionaries professed their belief in the civilising force of legitimate trade, their relationship with traders was sometimes conceived as competitive when it meant Congolese boys and men left the mission for employment in European factories (see below, this chapter).

women's promiscuity. Recognising that images constructed as 'boy portraits' are documents of Congolese children's lived experiences of encounter (Edwards 2016a) makes it possible to understand them as traces of alternative ontological perspectives of the photographic event (Baer 2002: 139). Such a position enables them to be understood not only as documents of the missionaries' performances of Baptist identity, relationships and aspirations, but as traces of Congolese presence, of standpoints (Baer 2002: 1) which comprised different conceptions of the missionary-'boy' relationship.

As mission work got underway, the mission's founders acquired additional local children and adolescents to work as 'boys' to join the household alongside those who had travelled upriver with them. By May 1892 Oram recorded that he had a local child named Liminamnina working for him and accompanying him on his 'itineration' tours to surrounding towns' (BMS archive A/35/15/iv). Liminamina's parents came from nearby Likasa and he accompanied Oram on a visit there on at least one occasion (BMS archive A/35/15/iv). He was likely an important asset in early evangelising work, with his ability to help translate the missionaries' message for people at Likasa and to make introductions. Oram seems to have developed a fondness for Liminamina. During a period when he was being nursed with a fever he wrote to his parents: 'The natives have shown the deepest sympathy and kindness, and my own little boy Liminamina has been as attentive and watchful as though he had been a little brother' (BMS archive A/35/15/vi). In this paternalistic representation of their relationship, Oram constructed Liminamina as both a little son and a younger brother.

Individuals such as Liminamina, Baluti and Nzanzala occupied intermediate positions with paradoxical status at Upoto. Though their selection and incorporation into the Baptist workforce would be represented as quasi-miraculous occurrences in BMS literature, their day-to-day existence was in service to the men, carrying out mundane domestic chores in the absence of women or other servants. Describing Nzanzala's duties at Upoto, Forfeitt stated: 'he looks after my room, sweeps it and keeps it tidy, prepares [the] table for meals, &c' but was keen to remind readers that Nzanzala was no 'angel' (MH February 1893: 45). A snippet in a letter home written by the missionary Harry White made reference to Baluti's duties: 'Now there is that solemn Aruwhimi boy of Forfeitt's in his dragging white cloth and shirt gone to ring the dinner-bell, and one must eat' (Roberts 1901: 71). Such descriptions suggest that the majority of 'boys'' work comprised the upkeep of the missionaries' homes and

preparation of their meals both in their houses, on steamboats and whilst camping during itineration tours. Surviving textual accounts from Upoto bear no trace of the ways in which 'boys' were trained to carry out such duties. The mixture of kindness and trust, defiance, confusion and conflict which was potentially bred in the intercultural and intergenerational dependencies of missionary-'boy' relationships at Upoto can only be hypothesised. Through autobiographies documented with former Congolese staff members at BMS Yakusu from the 1920s onwards, Nancy Rose Hunt has recounted the cruelty and degradation commonly experienced by those engaged in domestic service to missionary households whose white members were paradoxically absorbed with stories of their own moral superiority and benevolence (1999: 136-158). She has also illustrated that memories of being 'boys' and 'girls' were not homogenous but individual and filled with ambivalence; sometimes recounted through sarcasm and parody, they differed according to gender and the changing colonial culture of north-eastern Congo (Hunt 1999: 136-158). So, whilst it is tempting to draw generalities about the lives of the children employed at Upoto through the mission's printed rhetoric, their individual experiences would have been various and multifaceted.

An undated early photograph made at Upoto station after Anne Marie Forfeitt's arrival in 1894 appears to show four mission 'boys' in a yard between the missionary houses with a number of younger children, Mrs. Forfeitt and a dog (Fig. 3.35). The Congolese staff of the station are recognisable from their pale uniforms, in contrast to the loin cloths of the boys crowded on the steps. The 'boys' were evidently asked to pose for a photograph because they can be seen grouped together, facing the camera, each holding a prop which appears to correspond to a particular category of housework. Held up in demonstration for the camera are what appears to be a sheet of paper and pencil; a saucepan and utensil; an axe and log for splitting and a dishcloth or garment. Together these props were likely intended to communicate the scope of the domestic chores that Upoto boys had been taught to dutifully carry out; with the expectation that the display of the civilising process in action would make a pleasing scene to British audiences who were ideologically and financially invested in the Congo mission. Mrs. Forfeitt's inclusion in the scene evokes her role as that of superintendent of domestic chores as Upoto's first resident missionary wife and maternal influence.

Recent work by Gary Minkley (2019) illustrates that approaching historical photographs in terms of the construction of a genre and the photographer's intent

cannot fully account for the subjective meanings experienced by those present for the occasion. He has explored how individuals have retrospectively articulated their experience of being present when participating in making pass photographs for identity cards in apartheid South Africa (Minkley 2019). Discussions with individuals in the Eastern Cape Province revealed that, despite their instrumental and administrative function, pass photographs bore 'a range of intimate attachments between public and private that resonated with unpredictable forms of citizenship' (Minkley 2019: 106). Personal narratives attested to the diverse associations that the photographic occasion had held and multi-layered ways in which the pass photograph was subsequently related to (Minkley 2019: 114). Viewed from a position which takes into account the Congolese children's 'presence' (Edwards 2016a) it becomes possible to acknowledge that the photograph is a document of Congolese individuals' experiences at a historical moment which were different from the photographer's representational agenda (Baer 2002). Although they may have had little agency in how the photograph was composed, the event would have been experienced from their own cultural standpoints, and engaged with in ways which may have deliberately resisted or parodied the Forfeitts' attempts to portray them in a servile role.

Living in such close proximity with missionaries, however, meant that 'boys' were among the first Congolese individuals who learned to read and write. This afforded them special status when they travelled to areas with no European presence because they were educated and accustomed to the practices of their British missionaries. The local 'boys' who came to work for Upoto mission were critical in helping the BMS men learn the Lingombe and Lifoto languages. In addition, those individuals who had been taught to read and write carried out translation work, helping to produce dictionaries, school texts and Bible stories for BMS classes. Writing at the beginning of 1894, Oram described the work of one of his 'boys' to his sister Nellie:

> *'A San Salvador boy… has been acting as school assistant for me for the last few months. I only taught him the type writer… at the beginning of December last, and he has given his mind to it and learned to write with it very fairly correctly and fast. This is an immense blessing to me, as it has saved me not only time but eyesight'* (A/35/15/vii Angus).

He went on to list the gospels that this unnamed school assistant had translated, work completed in the afternoons after he had taught in morning school classes

(A/35/15/vii Angus). While BMS missionaries are credited with producing and distributing some of the earliest printed texts in vernacular languages in the Congo (Yates 1987), the hours of labour by Congolese translators is seldom acknowledged.

Contrary to public portrayals of the ease with which they acquired Congolese children and their harmonious integration into the BMS family at Upoto, there is further archival evidence to suggest that the movement between cultures was not without negotiation and in some cases was determined by Bapoto authorities. Sources indicate that early on in the Society's work in the Congo, missionaries obtained child workers and school attendees by entering into gift exchanges with Congolese authorities. In his *Manual for Missionaries to the Congo* (1885) Reverend Comber instructed recruits on their method of obtaining children to work with:

> *'It is pretty generally admitted that no department of our work is so important and likely to be productive of the results specially aimed at - conversion and godliness - as the training of the young. We have from the first made this such a foremost branch of our work that in some places the natives fancy us a little crazed and mentally unsound on the subject, so constantly do we urge and persuade them to let us have boys to teach and train. This (except at San Salvador) they have been very loth to do without "making it pay."'* (Comber 1885: 92)

Comber was writing five years before the mission at Upoto was established and from an entirely different region, but it is possible to infer that local Bapoto and Ngombe children only came to work at the station after persuasion by the missionaries and with the approval of their parents. He went on to detail the way in which exchange relationships were carefully entered into:

> *'As a rule, we have not only to board, lodge, and clothe these young scholars, but also to give little presents very occasionally to their friends. We have done this only to a small extent, and we hope to give it up altogether very soon… It has not been done on an understanding with the chiefs or parents that they were to receive gifts in return for sending their children to school, but out of regard for them as our friends. It has also usually taken the less objectionable form of a return present for a goat, or something else given… Without a little liberality of this kind we should not have been able to obtain boys to train… As the benefits of education are understood and recognised the need for this will cease'* (Comber 1885: 92-93)

Comber was clearly at pains to stress the propriety of BMS conduct in managing relationships with Congolese communities. Couched in the language of 'presents' and 'gifts' between 'friends', station staff could not be accused of buying Congolese

children to fill the attendance registers of their classes. It is not clear if the policy of 'liberality' advocated by Comber was adopted by the first generation of missionaries at Upoto. The first school children were rewarded with small gifts and their parents may well have been given items in return for their time (MH November 1890: 405). Comber's account is insightful as to the sorts of tensions and expectations that were created when BMS missionaries began to recruit Congolese children and unsettle their existing social roles.

A few photographs made at Upoto corroborate the hypothesis that some of the first 'boys' recruited by the mission staff were the sons of local Congolese authorities. Forfeitt made photographs of a man he described as 'Mangidi (Chief of Bopoto)' and his family (Fig. 3.36-3.44). In the photograph purporting to be of the 'family', Mangidi was depicted alongside three women and three children, with a fourth child just visible in the doorway of the house (Fig. 3.36). Mangidi was wearing a sash made of striped antelope skin, possibly that of the okapi, which was symbolic of authority at Upoto (Smith 2016: 56). In the photograph he can also be seen carrying a knife with a fur pommel, a spear is propped beside him and there is a wicker shield positioned at his feet. Mangidi's status can also be interpreted from other photographs when he posed for the missionaries in the station grounds (Fig. 3.38-3.39). In these images he can be seen wearing numerous metal ornaments, likely of brass or copper, and carrying a fly-whisk which was associated with male authority in the Congo. One of Mangidi's sons, photographed in the group photo wearing a loose European-style uniform became a 'boy' to Reverend Dodds and was referred to as 'Lonjiku' (Fig. 3.40, 3.41). Lonjiku's integration into the Upoto Baptist family was documented photographically in numerous surviving images made of the mission's work and he was the 'boy' posing with a cloth in the yard photograph discussed above (Fig. 3.35). An image of Lonjiku exists in the Forfeitt's album and is compositionally akin to one representing a child referred to as 'Monkiki' who is described as having been Kenred Smith's 'boy' (Fig. 3.42). The photograph of Mangidi and his family can therefore be seen to commemorate the new relationships which were forming between Bapoto families and the missionaries. It is possible to infer that this was considered a mutually beneficial relationship in which Lonjiku received an education and religious training with the mission's goal of his becoming a Congolese evangelist. Mangidi entered into a relationship with the Upoto missionaries which may have given him access to trade goods, forms of cultural knowledge and the political power that the BMS were believed to wield via State

representatives. Friedman has suggested that Kongo authorities sent young boys who were their relatives to the factories of European traders in the Lower Congo in the 1870s and 1880s because they perceived it as a diplomatic exchange that would help them integrate into the 'courts' of the foreigners who were associated with supernatural access to wealth (1991: 54-55).

A further photograph of a Congolese official posing with his son who was dressed in a mission uniform at the station indicates the existence of other relationships that enabled the BMS staff to acquire 'boys' for training (Fig. 3.43). The son was pictured wearing a clean pale uniform and belt which was typical of the children employed at Upoto in the 1890s. These types of photographs were presumably made as valuable documents of the progress the missionaries were making in attracting local people to the station and the visible effects of that affiliation. It is impossible to know how this transition to the lifestyle of 'boy' was experienced by the Congolese child but the clothing provided by the mission visually communicated his connection to the missionaries and was likely interpreted as a symbol of his father's relationship to the British men at Upoto. It may well be the case that the child Liminamina who became Oram's 'boy' at Upoto, originally from Likasa, was the son of an authority there (Fig. 3.44). There is evidence that both Oram and Forfeitt visited the town of Likasa and during one visit which was reported in *The Missionary Herald* Forfeitt was apparently pressed by the 'chief' to settle among them after medicines were administered to people (MH September 1891: 375). These surviving accounts indicate that the earliest cohort of children working at Upoto originated from disparate social backgrounds: some were descended from powerful elite families while others had been bought out of slavery. How these differences were experienced and whether they were renegotiated in the formation of new social roles at the station can only be hypothesised. As historical source, such accounts resist the mission's style of photographic representation of Congolese children working for them, which, through compositional styles, symbolic references and textual narratives, sought to portray homogenous and harmonious experiences of life within the mission community.

Photographs made at Upoto could perpetuate a narrative of Congolese 'boys' maintaining a childlike respect and obedience in the relationships with BMS staff for audiences in Britain but certain textual sources disclose tensions that existed in the reconfigured Baptist family. Accounts of events recorded in the mission logbook indicate that in the first six months there was dissatisfaction among the personal

'boys' at Upoto which led them to attempt to change the terms of their employment. Forfeitt's entries at the beginning of November 1890 read:

> *'November 5th Our houseboys strike for wages.*
> *November 6th These young gents intimidate town boys not to come to school.*
> *November 8th School reopens at the request of scholars.'* (Logbook November 1890)

The disruption of school classes by the 'boys' seems to have been part of their protest in their petition to secure wages from the BMS. It is possible that on witnessing wages being paid to the new workmen employed for construction and the gifts made as rewards to school attendees that there was an increasing sense of injustice among Nzanzala, Baluti, Kiyedi, Nkindu and others. The fact that these 'boys' successfully dissuaded local people from attending school indicates the agency of those Congolese boys who had been incorporated into the inner fold of the 'mission family' (Hall 2002: 93-95). It demonstrates a consciousness on their part of Oram and Forfeitt's dependence on them and the paralysing effect that their withdrawal from work could have. Strikes among Congolese pupils at BMS stations in the 1880s and 1890s were widespread, which Barbara Yates suggests reflected Congolese rejections of BMS schooling before the value of a European education was recognised with increased urbanisation and economic development under colonialism (Yates 1971: 158-160).

Incidents recorded by Oram in his letters home offer insight into the difficulties experienced by some Bapoto and Ngombe children who left their families to enter into the service of the mission. Writing in January 1893, Oram described how two brothers had been working for them, one as a 'dish-washer' and the other as a 'goat-boy' (A/35/15/iv Angus). When the brothers received their payment they pooled their money and bought a canoe for their mother, which apparently drew criticism from people in their town who were surprised that two young boys should be able to afford a canoe (A/35/15/iv Angus). Oram continued:

> *'So one of the brothers… came and told me, through a friend, that he was afraid to again become a work boy, until his brother (who is my personal boy) had left; lest the people, seeing two brothers working on a white man's station, say 'Those brothers must be making riches between them!' and should kill one of them. They tell us very frankly that if a native were in their town as clever and rich as a white man he would soon be killed'* (A/35/15/iv Angus).

This suggests that it was conspicuous for children to engage with the foreigners and be able to acquire wealth through employment with the BMS. It seems to have

created tensions within communities because it was perceived to change the social status of children and circumvent traditional sources of familial income. The reaction of Bapoto authorities corresponds with incidents in other parts of the Congo where older generations expressed opposition towards children attending mission schools, with rumours emerging about the malevolence of western teaching and accusations of witchcraft against youths who were seen to excel under the missionaries' influence (Yates 1971: 167-170).

A further account by Oram indicates that local children who worked for the mission were in danger of becoming socially ostracised:

> *'Last Sunday whilst we were at dinner our boys came up with their 'books' (i.e. written contracts given to work boys) to say they were afraid to work for us any longer as there were men in the town who in the public council had threatened to poison them because they were suspected of being spies and of reporting bad deeds to us.'* (A/35/15/vi Angus)

In response Oram and Forfeitt called the chiefs to assemble and interrogated them on the subject, apparently making clear that the punishment of a fine would not exonerate them if poisonings were to be carried out (A/35/15/vi Angus). The missionaries then threatened that if any of their 'boys' were missing from work a letter would be sent to the district *commissaire* (A/35/15/vi Angus). According to Oram, this prompted denials of wrongdoing from the chiefs and assurances that their station employees were safe (A/35/15/vi Angus). This description illuminates the sense of distrust among Ngombe and Bapoto communities towards the missionaries and the belief that allowing children to engage with them could have potentially dangerous outcomes.

Friedman suggests that with European colonisation of the Lower Congo, internal accusations of witchcraft were increasingly directed at individuals who occupied subordinate positions within a kin group who might have been seen as trying to usurp 'traditional' hierarchies and disrupt social solidarity (Friedman 1991: 204). In tracing European accounts of 'witchcraft' from the 17th century onwards she concludes that whereas the institution of the poison ordeal had once been used as a means of mass social control in precolonial society by Kongo chiefs, political decentralisation after colonisation lead to accusations of witchcraft in competitive relationships and within kin groups, directed at ambitious individuals (1991: 192-213). She interprets the shifting agents and targets of the poison ordeal as Congolese attempts to reconcile the social reorganisation and loss of chiefly power, with people

who offered their services to Europeans often being singled-out to undertake it (1991: 212-213). As individuals who were moving between their homes and Upoto station, the Bapoto and Ngombe children who worked for the mission were liminal figures who had privileged insight into both worlds. It is impossible to ascertain from the archive the sorts of negotiations that took place when the first generations of local children went into the service of the Upoto mission. However, these accounts offer some sense that there were perceived risks to the structure of society as a whole when individuals aligned themselves with the foreign missionaries. When brought to bear upon the photographic archive of the Upoto mission, this information complicates straightforward 'readings' of Congolese children's experiences of working at the station. Photographic portraits that were intended to portray idealised relationships and straightforward hierarchies within the nascent evangelical community are disrupted when Congolese individuals' myriad backgrounds, worldviews and experiences with Europeans are taken into account. Such images can begin to be understood as records of historical encounters which comprised multiple ontologies and that were the result of complex cultural negotiations (Baer 2002: 139).

Family Reconfigured

The arrival of women at stations in the Congo was believed to be a necessary step for the completion of Baptist family units; but a female presence was also understood to have civilising powers of its own. The white femininity supposedly embodied in British 'ladies' was articulated in opposition to constructions of the Congo as the 'Dark Continent' in the rhetoric employed in *The Missionary Herald* (MH January 1893: 18). In a letter penned to a friend in July 1895 White reported on the changed conditions that had been brought about since the advent of missionary wives at BMS stations:

> *'All the ladies who have had such bad times I found bright and happy, enjoying life at home as I never saw ladies before, having mastered their surroundings right nobly, transformed the Congo mess-table, transformed the atmosphere of the stations, and not a little altered the gentlemen to whom they are linked in some cases'* (Roberts 1901: 92-93).

The inference was that missionary wives had the capacity to breathe new life into station living in intangible and tangible ways. The necessary domestication of rugged Christian manliness by missionaries' wives was a sentiment that had

precedent in other mission fields (Hall 2002: 91). In their supporting roles, women could uplift the (perhaps waning) spirits of hardened veteran missionaries and at the same time tidy up the 'mess-table' thereby improving the sense of domestic order in Congo mission households. White suggested that transforming the missionary home was an equally noble calling and invested women with responsibilities so that they too could be 'masters' of their more modest domains. In this view of the idealised social order of Baptist stations, the civilised spaces of the house and the gardens were where women were granted agency and where they were considered most useful in the material and social reproduction of Christian ways of life. The irony of this construct of a missionary wife's role was that the mundane domestic chores were believed to be beneath them and would be carried out by Congolese children who fulfilled the role of a servant class.

Following those who had come to the Congo to furnish missionary households before them, the women at Upoto obtained Congolese girls as 'house girls'. Missionary wives' hopes were pinned on girls as protégés but on account of their gender they were primed for a life of Christian marriage and motherhood as opposed to the occupation of 'native evangelist'. The aim of the BMS mission in the Congo was to create self-supporting, self-propagating African churches, for which it needed an army of trained Christian Congolese men (Smith 2016: 173). The creation of male evangelists was a power granted only to male missionaries at this time in the nineteenth century. As has been shown, the status of the Congolese children admitted into Baptist households was complex and contradictory: they were domestic staff used for menial tasks but gained literacy skills and received religious instruction; as the 'infants' of the mission they were construed as dependents but conversely were depended upon by the British adults for the day-to-day upkeep of the station. As not-yet-Christians and 'civilised subjects'-in-training (Hall 2002) they were represented as more civilised than the other inhabitants of Upoto but less civilised than the missionaries themselves. The ideological tensions in how BMS missionaries conceived of their relationships with Congolese staff in writing has been addressed elsewhere (Hunt 1999) but the ways in which these relationships were portrayed through the medium of photography has not received attention. As potential converts whose service to the missionaries' meant that they lived intimately alongside them, Congolese 'boys' and 'girls' were photographed in ways that expressed the missionaries' aspirations for their future social identities.

Images made to represent the 'after' view of Congolese children and adolescents who had joined missionary households conveyed reconfigured familial groupings next to the British staff in which visible traces of their Congolese culture were removed from view (Fig. 3.45-3.52). The appearance of European-style clothing and the photographic settings of the station gardens and missionaries' houses were dimensions which could visually confirm a narrative of trust, intimacy and gradual 'civilisation'. Many of the portrait photographs which sought to represent Congolese domestic workers' contribution to missionary households at Upoto used compositions which conveyed a sense of familial closeness. Most of the surviving photographs of the women who followed their husbands to Upoto are portraits depicting them in the guise of the Christian mother with their Congolese domestic staff positioned nearby as if to suggest the effective social influence of feminine virtues embodied by missionary wives. One such portrait of Anne Marie Forfeitt seems to connote motherhood and intimacy with the symbolic 'children' of the mission (Fig. 3.45) and corresponds closely with portraits made of other BMS women working in the Congo at this time (Fig. 3.49). In this image (Fig. 3.45), probably made in the gardens of the station, Anne Marie is seated surrounded by three Congolese girls and four boys who are standing behind her. The spatial configuration invites a reading of the different relationships and nuances of status between the Congolese staff and the preeminent Christian mother of Upoto. The female children are closest to her, two older girls kneel either side so that visually they are below her and not obscuring the 'boys' behind. Some of the 'boys' standing behind are recognisable from the photograph in the yard where they posed with props, one of whom is Lonjiku on the far right. All of the children wear European-style uniforms and the older ones wear striped belts with metal clasps that were often worn by Congolese children employed by the mission. The centralised composition seems to present Anne Marie in a protective and influential role in relation to the Congolese children. Following the conventions of family portraiture it suggests maternal closeness but could also convey her seniority and cultural, moral and spiritual authority over the girls in a mission context. At her feet stands a much younger Congolese girl whose hand she can be seen to grasp in her lap. Again, representations of physical touch were reserved for the few Congolese children who had been singled-out for service in the missionary household and could be represented as adopted children when it suited a particular narrative of transforming identities. As if to complete the scene of an ideal Baptist household

with its social hierarchies ordered along lines of ethnicity, age and gender, there are two dogs lying on the ground near to the group. A photograph was made using a similar composition to create a portrait of Ethel Smith, Kenred Smith's second wife, where she was surrounded by Congolese girls (Fig. 3.48). As Hamilton (2001) has remarked, the use of photography by the newly emerged middle classes in Britain facilitated the idealisation and memorialisation of the nuclear family as a social institution and in turn perpetuated the idea of the family as emotionally linked entity (2001: 11-12). In BMS staff members' presentation of themselves with Congolese children at Upoto through photography, it was the emotional links they had fostered with individuals which were emphasised to convey familial unity, which took the place of biological relatives.

Baptist family portraits in the Congo were commonly made in the gardens of BMS stations and in front of missionaries' houses. This was probably in part for practical reasons of space and light. However, missionary houses and gardens in the Congo provided meaningful backdrops which could be interpreted as evocative of the supposed civility and harmonious relations of the Baptist families who occupied those spaces. Harry White had joked in a letter home before any women had arrived at the station that they were engaged in building the 'Family Mansion, Bopoto… for the first man who comes here married' (Roberts 1901: 57). Individual family and mission household portraits on the porches and verandas of Congo houses were also conventional among the BMS in the late nineteenth century (Fig. 3.50, 3.51). Their wooden houses raised on piles with verandas, when photographed against the (often forested) Congolese landscape, were testament to their sense of elevated living standards compared with Congolese people and could be seen as material expressions of their resolve to transform their surroundings. Not only were European modes of living in raised houses believed to be healthier in the equatorial climate (MH May 1895: 226) but they were ideologically opposed to the low thatched styles of housing on the upper Congo seen as undesirable for the degraded communality and polygamous relations they were seen to facilitate. White referred to Congolese styles of housing around Upoto as 'higgeldy piggledy' (Roberts 1901: 71) and on more than one occasion, 'rabbit hutches' (Roberts 1901: 48, 52), perhaps deliberately to connote the perceived moral transgressions of polygamy and sexual promiscuity of missionary caricatures of African lifestyles (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 286). European missionaries elsewhere in the Congo and across Africa were inclined to see the rectilinear houses they constructed as beacons of civility and

healthy living and, like those at Upoto, made photographs of their houses and pristine cultivated gardens as evidence of their labours (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 287-288; Gullestad 2007: 146-147; Maxwell 2014: 438).

One formal group portrait of BMS staff was edited before its reproduction in *The Missionary Herald* to crop out the four Congolese children sat in the corner who had been present at the time of its production (Fig. 3.53, 3.54) (MH October 1902: 473). Their situation away from the neatly arranged sitters suggests that they were not meant to be the primary subjects of the portrait. It may well have been a member of Congolese staff who made the photograph and potentially other surviving group portraits of Upoto missionaries. The Forfeitts and Kenred Smith were photographed alongside other Congo missionaries and all were smartly dressed. The article into which the image was inserted gave an account of the occasion as having been a reunion of missionaries from different stations and a meeting of three 'Regent's Park College men' (MH October 1902: 469). To the far right, Mr. Bell can be seen to rest his arm on what appears to be a box camera, as if to draw attention to it as one of the accoutrements of the modern missionary. By contrast, the somewhat candid expressions of the Congolese children who were included within the frame of the original print was probably perceived as an undesirable view of their 'boys' and 'girls' for public consumption. Their relaxed body language could be seen to undermine the composed appearance of the missionaries (presumably intended to convey a sense of gravitas for the occasion) and make them seem comical. The Congolese staff who worked at Upoto could be selectively slotted into position to enhance photographic portraits or removed from view entirely according to the desired view of the missionary family that BMS missionaries sought to present.

Of the comparatively few photographs of the first women living and working at BMS Upoto which survive in the BMS archives, the majority were posed in the gardens within the station complex. The mission gardens afforded some privacy and this probably determined the fact that some of the more intimate scenes of daily life among women and children were made there. Figure 3.55 shows Mrs. Kirby and her young daughter, born in 1894, seated in the lap of a Congolese nurse, possibly a woman referred to by the missionaries as Luuka, who became one of the first Congolese women to convert to Christianity at Upoto in March 1903. It exists in Kenred Smith's photo album in the BMS archives. The photograph is one of very few which appears to show a more candid representation of the relationships between British women and the Congolese women who worked for them at Upoto. Unlike

the formal posed portraits that comprise most of the surviving images of missionary wives - and indeed, Congolese women - no one in this photograph looks towards the camera and their expressions appear less self-conscious. The photograph indicates the role of the Congolese woman in this photographic setting as the nurse or playmate of the British child, which may have reflected her actual duties in relation to the Kirby family. It is a rare surviving image in which a Congolese woman is depicted touching a British child as opposed to the construction of missionary wives as the archetypal maternal guardian. It offers an image that off-sets the other kinds of photographs because it hints at the other sorts of nuanced relationships, intimacies and levels of trust that existed between certain Congolese individuals and BMS staff.

Alongside utopian social expectations that equated missionary wives with Christian home-building, many BMS women became teachers in the Congo and Anne Marie Forfeitt established the first girls' school at Upoto in 1894. The girls' school was only in operation when there were 'ladies' present at Upoto to run it, ceasing when all the British women were on furlough (MH May 1898: 257). The education of Congolese people by BMS staff was implemented along lines of gender, with separate classes taught in tandem by male missionaries and their wives. When classes began Mrs. Forfeitt was strict about propriety: twenty women and girls attended but many others had been excluded 'for want of a dress or fringe' (Logbook January 15th 1894). School photographs of Congolese women and girls that were made later indicate that the classes could not be maintained on those terms and that many people attended without the clothing that Mrs Forfeitt had deemed essential from the beginning (Fig. 3.56-3.59). For example, a lantern slide that was part of the Forfeitt collection depicts Anne Marie standing on some steps with a large group mostly comprising Congolese women and girls and it has the appearance of a school photograph (Fig. 3.56). The majority of women who participated in making the photograph wore wrapped cloth or tailored dresses, but a few did not, indicating that in practice women who did not rigorously follow mission standards of decorum were able to attend. By 1897 it was reported that the girls' school had over 100 pupils attending daily, except during the fishing season (MH January 1897: 71). Towards the end of 1900 Mrs. Forfeitt found reason to believe that change was afoot at Upoto, evidenced by differences in clothing and housing locally. She announced: 'things are not what they were: the people are beginning to improve their houses, all or many of the younger women and girls are

wearing clothes, and the young people especially seem to be moved with a desire for a more decent and civilised way of life' (MH January 1901: 29). Quite what the supposed improvements were she did not specify. What is revealing is the extent to which she conceived evidence of 'civilisation' as being intimately bound to material factors such as dress and surroundings.

Accompanying the report in *The Herald*, Mrs. Forfeitt provided a class photograph of the girls' school, including herself and Mrs. Kirkland (Fig. 3.59). The printed image appears to have been made from a photograph similar to another one made on the same occasion which survived in the Forfeitt's collection (Fig. 3.58). A comparison of the two images indicates the way in which the latter published version was touched-up to highlight the existing clothing worn by the students or to give the impression of 'appropriate' levels of clothing where it had not been worn. A young girl seated third from the left in the front row was provided with a wrap made from European textiles, though she had only been wearing a skirt, and a boy included in the frame at the far left of the image was also covered up. The doctoring of photographs of Congolese people when they were published in the *Missionary Herald* was common practice at this time, usually carried out to censor female nudity to accord with the Society's standards around propriety. Later in 1901 Mrs. Forfeitt remarked that more women were coming to the mission wanting to learn to sew and make clothes in European styles: 'Now they are bringing their own material, which we cut for them, and they, with a little help, manage to make very useful dresses. Friends who have seen photographs of Bopoto and its most uncivilised-looking people, will understand that this is really a big step towards better things' (MH May 1901: 269). Importantly, she clarified for readers, the dresses were not frivolous or attractive, but 'useful'. Mrs. Forfeitt went on to reiterate that their classes struggled to attract the interests of older generations of women at Upoto: 'The work with the girls is much more encouraging than anything we have been able to do for the older women, though they have more confidence in us than they had, and do not hesitate to come and ask our help in times of sickness' (MH May 1901: 269). There is a hint of cynicism in this comment that gives the impression of her frustration at being unable to engage older women unless it was in the context of medical treatment.

Representing Congolese Christianity

Professions of faith and baptisms at Upoto afforded different kinds of photographic occasions as Congolese subjectivities were seen to align with the British Baptists

through their entrance into the Christian community. The Upoto mission was able to report its 'first fruits' on December 13th 1896. Liminamina and Likundu, two young men who held the title of 'boys' at Upoto, were the first to be baptised and gain entry into the church. In reporting Liminamina's baptism, Forfeitt provided a parable of his achievements: 'Since Mr. Oram died Liminamina has been attached to our household, also doing excellent work in the school. He is a free-born lad, belonging to this place, and consequently has not taken this step without much opposition from his parents' (MH May 1897: 274). Mrs. Forfeitt remarked upon his diligence, having worked his way through various positions in their service: 'laundryman, pundit, and assistant teacher in the station school' (MH March 1906: 101). In subsequent retellings of Liminamina's entry into the church fellowship, his spiritual journey would be explicitly linked to the death of his former master, Reverend Oram. Smith conceived the events as connected, when in the *Herald* he wrote: 'He who was baptised was he who wept, and who living and serving Christ at Bopoto today, is not ashamed to testify that by the bedside of the dying missionary he received his first great impulse towards the Life which is found in Jesus Christ the Lord' (MH April 1899: 140; MH March 1906: 101). The account Forfeitt provided of Likundu's Baptism made reference to his having sought refuge on board the BMS steamer, *The Peace*, prefiguring his second salvation at the hands of missionaries at Upoto (MH May 1897: 275). Reflecting on the momentous occasion Forfeitt wrote: 'At 5pm, under the shadow of the *Goodwill*, and surrounded by a good company of natives, I had the joy of immersing the first converts from heathenism from this perhaps darkest centre of 'Darkest Africa'' (MH May 1897: 275).

Congolese individuals' acceptance of Christianity and formal entrance into the church at Upoto were momentous milestones for the BMS that were commemorated through the creation of photographic portraits. A photograph of Liminamina and Likundu which was made of them after their Baptism depicted them both seated wearing matching striped uniforms, and versions of this image were possessed by William Forfeitt and Kenred Smith in their personal albums (Fig. 3.60). A later photograph of Liminamina and Likundu was made by Forfeitt when more 'boys' were subsequently admitted into the church and this image was reproduced in *The Missionary Herald* in November 1899 (Fig. 3.61, 3.62). The first Upoto converts were photographed seated alongside young men referred to as Malembi, Elombola and Ngbangba who were standing behind them. Critically, in

these photographs individuals were represented without the BMS staff which in other photographic portraits had linked them to the mission family and sought to portray them as students. In their portraits as initiated Christians, the presence of the missionaries was less visible but remained implicit through the existence of European-style clothing and in the making of the photograph. In this way the young men remained ideologically connected to the influence of the mission that had been responsible for their spiritual and social transformation. The composition might be considered a pictorial realisation of Forfeitt's parabolic narrative in which Liminana was seen to replace his master, Oram, and therefore took his seat, his position in relation to the other 'boys' signifying his status as a more senior member of the Christian brotherhood. Photographs such as this might be understood as 'trophies' of successful evangelism that commemorated Congolese individual's spiritual rebirth. In the text provided to accompany the printed photograph in *The Herald* Forfeitt stated 'The various schools etc., interested in these lads will, I'm sure, like to possess this picture of them' (MH November 1899: 521). It is clear that Forfeitt sought to make public the success of the converts at Upoto not only to demonstrate his own hard work and investment in the individuals but because he conceived the photograph as evidence of the good use to which donations to the mission had been put. Individual Baptist congregations and Sunday schools in Britain often sponsored promising Congolese children, so when photographs evidencing individuals' transformation were published in BMS literature it was partially for the benefit of subscribers to *The Herald* at home. The published photograph offered a sense of tangible reward for Christian charity directed toward the Upoto mission.

A photograph that was reproduced in *The Missionary Herald* offers some insight into how the advent of Baptised Congolese men and women was publicly narrated and how photographs were translated for audiences in Britain (Fig. 3.63). The image that was printed was a photographic portrait of recent converts at Upoto, whose names were listed below. Balombe, Lofiku, Anjolo, Besumo, and Baifo were men who were stood in a row and before them seated centrally were Lifilo and Bolombo (MH October 1902: 42). Interestingly, the image was reproduced directly opposite a missionary portrait from Upoto, the one discussed earlier in this chapter (Fig. 3.54), which invited a visual comparison between images of Congolese and British Christians at Upoto. In the accompanying article Forfeitt provided the conventional account of Lifolo's changing relationship with the missionaries at Upoto:

> *'The two sitting are husband and wife. This is our first convert from the ranks of the women of Bopoto, and theirs is the first native Christian home in this dark centre of heathendom. Lifilo was nurse to our little daughter seven years ago; gentle and faithful she always was; and an invaluable help to my wife. We believe she has long been a Christian, but her husband proved a stumbling-block to her. Now that he is converted we hope for a happy and useful future for them both. Their home is half-an-hour away from this town and it is in their own village we hope they will let their light shine.'* (MH October 1902: 42-43)

The information provided by Forfeitt gives a sense of how the identity of the first converts at Upoto was often constructed with reference to their previous roles within the missionary household and missionary assessments of their good character. As was the evangelical tradition, church leaders required proof of individual's voluntary change of heart in order to verify the truth their spiritual awakening. Evidence from those who had witnessed the transformation was seen to provide valuable confirmation of their sincerity and commitment to a new way of life. Forfeitt's printed narrative therefore offered his testimony about Lifilo for readers of *The Herald* in order to shape interpretation of her portrait as being of an 'authentic' Christian. This textual framing of the convert group portrait offers a means of understanding how other photographs of Congolese Christians were likely conceived by the missionaries (Fig. 3.64-3.66).

Photographs of the first generation of Congolese evangelists and schoolteachers at Upoto represented a symbolic accomplishment of the mission's initial aims. It meant that in practical terms evangelising and teaching could be carried out by Congolese Christians themselves and was a step towards a 'native church' which it was hoped would eventually have administrative and financial independence from the BMS mission. The mission logbook records the fact that in February 1898 some Congolese Christians of the mission began regular 'itineration' work on Sundays. This meant that they were given the responsibility of visiting communities to convey the mission's message in the way that the British missionaries had done since their arrival at Upoto. There is some evidence that these evangelists may have gone to work in the towns where they had familial connections. An entry for August 1898 reads simply 'Likunudu visits his people' (Logbook August 22nd 1898). There is little detailed information recorded about the men and women who graduated from their roles as 'boys' and 'girls', but marital

status was a rite-of-passage that signalled co-habitation and the building of a Christian life outside of the mission station.

There is a surviving series of other 'convert portraits' that were made of some of the first Congolese Christians at Upoto, many of whom were also evangelists, that were composed in the grounds of the station (Fig. 3.67-3.73). They exist as loose prints in the Forfeitt collection but some were also made into lantern slides and reproduced in BMS publications. Four of the images depict couples who were married and many of the men depicted are recognisable as having been 'boys' who had worked for the mission. This series takes the form of half-length landscape portraits portraying the subjects in pairs, with views of the mission garden and built structures behind them. All of the individuals were wearing European-style clothing for the photographs. Critically, the photographs represent some of the few images of the first Congolese women who converted to Christianity at Upoto. There are not equivalent group portraits of Congolese women made to mark their Church membership that there were of the 'boys' who were baptised in the BMS archives. Figure 3.70 was reproduced in the volume *George Grenfell and the Congo* (1908: 253, vol. 1) where it was given the caption 'Man and woman of the Ngombe tribe, adherents of the Baptist mission, Bopoto'. Here the textual framing of the image confirmed how their smart European clothing should be interpreted by the reader: they were Congolese adherents of Christianity. The caption provided the external authority which validated their identity as 'true' Christians and reinforced a reading of the image's content in relation to preconceived ideas about how Congolese Christians might look. The fairly formal composition could itself be seen as a sign that the photographer had made aesthetic choices which reflected their status, demanding the photographic conventions of Victorian or Edwardian portraiture used to portray British subjects. This mode of representation might have been significant for British readers who could interpret the portrait conventions as recognition of their moral equality as Christians. It can be inferred that such compositions were designed to evoke the model of the 'nuclear family' cherished among the middle classes in Britain at this time (Hamilton 2001: 11). Other photographs which belonged to Forfeitt and Smith appear to have been designed to commemorate reconfigured Congolese families who were adherents of Christianity (Fig. 3.64-3.66). In the publication the image stands in contrast with other representations of Congolese people intended to convey ethnographic information (Fig. 3.74). Those images used to represent Congolese 'types' employed different

visual conventions and were accompanied by interpretation which encouraged the person(s) photographed to be thought of not as an individual but as a visual summation of ethnic traits.

Two group portraits of Congolese evangelists and teachers exist as prints in the Angus Library Forfeitt collection and as lantern slides and were made to document the individuals who attained this status at Upoto (Fig. 3.75-3.76). Many of those who were photographed in the paired portraits in the station garden are also pictured in one of these images wearing the same clothing, which might indicate that they were made on the same occasion. The other image features Mrs and Mr Forfeitt stood to the left of the main group which is arranged in three rows, a composition which might have reflected the differences in status of the Congolese men and women who had received different levels of training from the mission. The same image was reproduced in *The Missionary Herald* in 1906 where it was given the caption 'Mr and Mrs Forfeitt and a group of out-school workers at Upoto' (MH March 1906: 101).

The visual grouping of Congolese Christians through photography seems to have been important as a means of communicating the BMS mission's continuing progress. These were images which attested to the changed beliefs of local people who now devoted their lives to spreading the gospel. They were conceived as triumphant scenes to be celebrated within the BMS community and by British Christians at home who had supported the mission spiritually and financially. What visually distinguished them from non-Christian people Upoto was their appearances. By and large the men and boys wore various kinds of uniform which consisted of buttoned shirts and jackets. The women were photographed wearing high-collared, ankle-length dresses with belts and beaded necklaces. If British missionaries were held up as the exemplar Christians, then the Congolese evangelists and teachers were to be understood as reflections of missionaries' transformative energies at Upoto in BMS propaganda. The act of posing for a photographic portrait and the knowledge of how to perform one's identity in appropriate ways was testament to the Congolese Christians' participation within a ritual of 'modern' bourgeois culture in the Baptist mission enclave that would likely have been interpreted as confirmation of their 'civilised' status by audiences in Britain. However, viewed in terms of the Congolese presences they inscribe, these images can be understood as records of alternate ontological viewpoints and cultural narratives to those that were ascribed to them as photographic portraits by the BMS

(Edwards 2016a: 319). While missionaries' intentions in creating and using these photographs can be more easily inferred from the images' social activation in contexts of circulation (namely reproduced for publications and as lantern slides), the experiences of the Congolese subjects who participated in their making are not as readily accessible. In assessing the photographic portraits of Congolese converts at Upoto, it is important to acknowledge that analysis of the photographer's intentionality and the British missionaries' understandings and expectations of the genre are only some of the perspectives through which they can be understood. They are records of historical experiences that held specific individual and cultural meanings for the Congolese members of the Christian community that were independent of the photographer's aspirations. The photographic occasions which are documented in these images likely held divergent and unpredictable associations for the individuals who were present for them (Minkley 2019: 106).

In the group photograph featuring the Forfeitts alongside the evangelists and teachers, the husband and wife, Liminamina and Luuka, were positioned between the British couple (also Fig. 3.68). Their proximity to the Forfeitts might have been designed to convey their celebrated position as having been the first married Congolese Christians at Upoto. Liminamina and Luuka went to work as teachers at an out-school established at Bodala, a rubber-producing district. Liminamina's relationship to the Forfeitts was also an intimate one because he had been a nurse to their daughter Gladys. The fact that Liminamina, in addition to the woman Lifilo, was seen by the Forfeitts an appropriate nurse for Gladys went against the conventional gender roles that might have been expected for middle class families in Britain. It also indicates that he had developed a closeness with the Forfeitt family and earned their trust through his years of service to the Upoto mission which enabled him to transcend traditional British social norms. Liminamina accompanied the Forfeitts to England in 1897, reportedly as their daughter's 'nurse and playfellow' (MH March 1906: 101). This was the year after Liminamina's Baptism and his trip to England was therefore also conceived as an opportunity to showcase the 'fruits' of BMS evangelism at Upoto to Baptist communities at home. In Chapter 5 it is detailed how Liminamina participated in official BMS presentations given by the Forfeitts to local congregations and on one occasion how he sang to an audience in Wantage. This performance constituted one part of the spectacle created at the event and was preceded by a lantern slide lecture. The little surviving

documentation about Liminamina's visit to England suggests that he was publicly paraded because he was living proof of a Congolese Christian.

One interesting artefact relating to his stay in England is a portrait of him with Gladys Forfeitt that was made in a photography studio in Watford (Fig. 3.77, 3.78). Liminamina was pictured wearing a dark suit and seated on a bench clutching the hand of the young Gladys who would have been between two and three years old. The composition of the two, in which Liminamina is seated above Gladys and draws her physically close to him, gives the impression of a familial connection of the sort shared between siblings. The gesture maintained for the photograph may have been chosen deliberately to evoke an affinity between the two who were linked to Mrs and Mr Forfeitt: one as a biological child and the other as a Congolese 'child' of the BMS mission. The studio portrait was cropped to an oval shape and reproduced in *The Herald* in 1906. As an image in which Limininamina and Gladys' relationship was performed for the photograph, the pair were probably seen as an embodiment of the sorts of bonds that were possible within the Baptist 'family of man' (Hall 2002: 98). While Liminamina was Gladys' temporary guardian and employee of the Forfeitt's during their visit to England, the absent William Forfeitt was the father of them both in terms of seniority and Christian authority. The allusion to Liminamina as a child of the Forfeitts meant that he remained ideologically subordinate to them, whilst he was paradoxically understood as an equal in the eyes of God. He was also presumably quite dependent on them during his first visit to Europe. The allusion of a sibling relationship in the portrait may have encouraged readers of *The Herald* to ascribe further meanings to this symbolic equivalence, constructing Liminamina as having been in the infancy of his Christian life and more paternalistically, as one whose development of civility was incomplete, rendering him childlike. There may well have been other portraits made on this occasion in Watford, but it is telling that this was the image chosen to be used in BMS propaganda. This photograph could sustain a narrative of the extended, porous Christian family whilst evoking the idea of Congolese Christians' intellectual and spiritual immaturity.

Although the missionaries sought to stress the harmonious conditions in the Christian community at Upoto through official BMS media, relationships between the British staff and their new Congolese colleagues were not without tensions. According to the findings of a BMS Special Committee documented in the minutes on 19th November 1901, there had been an incident concerning Mr. Kirkland and

Liminamina. Referencing letters received by different missionaries, the Committee had been informed of charges made against Liminamina by Kirkland. Liminamina had apparently used words during prayer which were 'insulting' to Kirkland and it was documented that he 'questioned the lad as to presumed evil practices' (WSC Minutes, 1901 No.11: 175-176). This appears to have coincided with other disagreements by Kirkland with his British colleagues which culminated in his leaving the station without permission from the Home Committee (WSC Minutes, 1901 No.11: 175-176). He took further offence to Liminamina having been allowed work after the incident and accused Forfeitt of having sided with the Congolese evangelist (WSC Minutes, 1901 No.11: 176-178). In the minutes the Committee expressed their regret about Kirkland's behaviour and felt it important to reprimand him because his conduct was seen to endanger the work of the Congo mission and the 'brotherhood' (WSC Minutes, 1901 No.11: 179). Although this account is relatively coded and brief, it does suggest that Congolese evangelists faced accusations of 'backsliding' from British missionaries and that they were required to defend the authenticity of their Christian identity after baptism. The possibility of Congolese evangelists returning to imagined 'evil practices' or, perhaps more dangerously, preaching something other than the gospel, were ideas that threatened to unravel the Christian brotherhood between Congolese and British Christians in the Congo.

At Upoto there were additional factors which had the capacity to disrupt Congolese Christians' anticipated trajectories towards becoming or remaining evangelists. As early as 1894 Oram provided a station update in *The Herald*:

> *'[But] we have to make the most of our opportunities, for boys are coming and going. There is a great demand for workmen and work-boys in these parts, and high wages tempt the elder boys to leave their towns and go to work at factories or on steamers. We cannot help losing some of our most promising lads in this way.'* (MH May 1894: 220)

The loss of educated and religiously trained men and boys to employment with trading companies was experienced across BMS stations in the Congo from the beginning of mission activity and into the twentieth century. Skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as engineering learned by those who staffed European steamboats opened up numerous opportunities for employment in European industries for Congolese youths (Yates 1971: 164-167). As such, there was no guarantee of mission-trained Christians staying to work for the Upoto mission long-term. George Grenfell,

reporting in *The Herald* in 1890, wrote that one of his 'boys', 'John', had taken up employment with a Dutch trading company, helping them to construct their steamboat, the Holland (MH January 1890: 24). Grenfell's comments echo a BMS rhetoric at this time that the choice of Congolese men to work for trading companies was morally dubious and undermined their religious project, by writing: 'You will be glad to know that amid all the temptations of the free and easy trading life he has maintained his position as a consistent Christian' (MH January 1890: 24) He was anxious that John might be lured away from the mission altogether: 'He could find employment at any time, either with the State, or with any of the trading houses; but I am hoping he will return to us, though I can't see how he can do so without sacrifice, for we can't pay him what I know others are ready to give' (MH January 1890: 24). The Upoto mission faced the same struggles as Lisala grew as a town and became a centre for employment. In the mission's annual report for 1913, Forfeitt wrote:

> *'More attention has been given to Teacher Training this year, and we are looking for encouraging results in due time. The march of civilisation, the establishment of the 'Chef Lieu' of the district, with its wireless telegraphy installation, within half an hour's walk of our Mission, and the consequent increasing number of European traders near, needing native labour, constitute a real temptation to our young people to obtain a much higher wage than we can possibly give. Needless to say, they are eagerly engaged by the traders, who already know the value of Mission training, and thus are often lost to us just when we hoped they would be fitted for out-school work.'* (BMS 121st Annual Report, 1913: 82)

Such reports indicate that although BMS staff hoped that Congolese people's Christianisation and 'civilisation' was conceived as a one-way trajectory which would lead to the creation of a 'native church', in reality, individuals trained through the mission chose varied careers within colonial society. Forfeitt's remarks reveal a tension that was the outcome of their work since 1890: though they had been invested in the conversion and improvement of Congolese people, the European 'march of civilisation' that had been so eagerly anticipated by the missionaries was the very force that was luring mission-educated Christians away. An entry in the mission's logbook for that year reads 'Trying to get back boys who are leaving us without finishing their term in order to get high wages offered by traders at Lisala' (Logbook January 2nd 1913). Such accounts are a reminder that missionary aspirations for Congolese Christians were insular, and although they repeatedly

penned their hopes for individual converts in mission propaganda, the increased number of urbanised towns with European employers meant that for some, a BMS education was valuable for different reasons.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on exploring the integration of certain Congolese people into missionary households and how the intercultural relationships which developed at Upoto were represented through photography. Photographs have been analysed for their portrayal of Congolese people who entered into the 'mission family' and close 'forensic' 'readings' of visual content were used alongside written sources to draw conclusions about their experiences among the British staff (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219). Some Congolese children's presence in photographs linked them to elite families living locally and contributed to the hypothesis that their time spent at the mission station was conceived of as a mutually advantageous exchange. Other archival sources indicated that children's movement between cultures was not straightforward and risked suspicion from Congolese kin. The chapter was able to build a picture of how certain children remained affiliated with the mission over the long term, converting to Christianity and achieving the status of evangelists. The details of their livelihoods as members of a Christian community at Upoto are not documented in the archives, but the photographs provide evidence of their presence at the station as they built Christian identities which afforded intimate and trusting relations with British missionaries.

Following the 'grain' of archival evidence where photographs were reproduced in BMS literature has enabled a perspective on how images' interpretation was framed by particular authoritative narratives of Congolese individuals' social integration and conversion for British publics (Stoler 2009). Accounts published in *The Missionary Herald* dwelled upon the perceived successes of the mission, representing idealised relationships with a hierarchical organisation and obscured the extent of Congolese agency. The material settings where images were reproduced alongside captions and written interpretation have been analysed in order to understand how and why certain images were given new forms of significance for particular audiences. It has been demonstrated how photographic practices at Upoto, particularly the conventions of portrait photography, were employed in order to represent the re-ordered allegiances and perceived visual traces of newfound morality and respectability among Congolese Christians.

Portraits of the fluid 'mission family' were used to convey Congolese people's perceived transformation towards a supposedly civilised Christian appearance. Photographs of 'transformed' Congolese individuals were ideologically charged and circulated by the BMS among their supporters in Britain in order to visually evidence the triumphs of evangelism and to communicate religious and material connections across continents.

Chapter Four
Curating Ethnography

'At some future time I shall hope to write concerning some of the manners and customs of the natives; for native life is in many ways interesting, although at the same time it is frequently deplorable.' (Kenred Smith, MH October 1896: 522)

Ethnographic Visions

This chapter addresses a particular section of the photographic archive of the Upoto mission and through it explores one realm of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) in which BMS missionary photographs were operating at the turn of the twentieth century. Here the focus is a collection of anthropological images made by Rev. Kenred Smith that were acquired by the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge from 1904. When considered as part of the photography complex, this collection offers evidence of how photographs were activated in the creation of anthropological knowledge in academic settings in Britain. This was a connected but distinct sphere for the circulation and consumption of photographs from the Society's deployment of images, which has been explored in the preceding chapters. Analysis of this collection addresses the network of actors and processes through which photographs were produced and exchanged between the Congo and Britain, as well as the choices which led to their eventual material formation in the collection of MAA. Close 'readings' of photographic content in conjunction with the physical qualities of images (Edwards and Hart 2004a: 5-6) reveal how Smith's photographs were materially constituted to inhabit an archive for specific contexts of viewing.

Alongside this exploration of the historical trajectories and social activation of photographic objects at MAA, their content is considered for what it can reveal about the historical relationships at Upoto which enabled their inception. The 'forensic' study (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219) of the content of specific images and across the collection as a whole is used to ascertain who the individuals were who participated in Smith's photographic project, the locations and circumstances of the photographic event, and to evaluate the possible experiences of those Congolese people who were photographic subjects. This analysis, centred at the level of the level of the photographic event, facilitates a consideration of the forms of Congolese

'presence' and subjective experience that the photographs document (Edwards 2016a: 318). The 'incidental details' (Edwards 2001a: 20) caught in the moment of photographic inscription are here shown to be forms of evidence which grant access to the 'minor histories' (Stoler 2009: 51) of cultural encounter not recorded in the mission's textual sources.

Object 'N.35242.VH' is a glass negative belonging to the 'Unmounted Haddon Collection' of the photographic archives of MAA, Cambridge (Fig. 4.1). It was once kept enclosed in an enveloped labelled 'C106/10/: "Afr.C.10."' with the accompanying description: 'Natives. N. Congo. Rev. Smith.' It belongs to a set of 252 images made by Smith which he sent to the Museum between 1904 and 1906. The Museum has incorporated a range of photographic material alongside its ethnographic object collection since its foundation in 1884. A donation by the Museum's first curator, Baron Anatole von Hügel[24], helped to form the basis of the original photographic archive which grew through subsequent acquisitions from diverse sources (Boast *et al.* 2001: 3). The material housed at the Museum was not conceived of as a unified collection until 1935 when thousands of photographs were catalogued, mounted and presented as a gift to Dr. A. C. Haddon, the first lecturer in Ethnology at Cambridge, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday (Boast *et al.* 2001: 3). Haddon was a leading exponent of visual data collection within anthropological research and advocated for cultivating rigorous photographic strategies to attain observable scientific truths (Edwards 1998: 119). His pioneering use of photography for the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition of the Torres Strait (1898) shaped intellectual expectations for its application in anthropology at this time.

[24] Baron Anatole von Hügel (1854-1928) was the first curator of the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), a post which he was appointed to in 1884 (Roth & Hooper 1990: xi). In the course of his lifetime he received recognition as a preeminent scholar on the ethnology of Fiji, having resided there between 1875 and 1877 (Roth & Hooper 1990: xi). Born in Florence to his Scottish mother and Austrian nobleman father, von Hügel's early education took him around Europe and he developed interests in botany, ornithology, taxidermy, and later ethnology (Roth & Hooper 1990: xi-xiii). A voyage to the South Seas, recommended on the basis of his poor health, led to an extended stay in Fiji where he kept journals documenting everyday life and collected specimens (Roth & Hooper 1990: xiii-xv). His own collections and those of individuals he met during his travels later formed the basis of the extensive ethnographic collection of Fijian material acquired by MAA (Roth & Hooper 1990: xv). As the first curator of the Museum of General and Local Antiquities (which later became MAA) from 1884, he was responsible for greatly increasing the Museum's acquisitions and oversaw the construction of a new Museum building on Downing Street to accommodate the growing collection, completed in 1912 (Roth & Hooper 1990: xvii-xix). Von Hügel was also a devout Catholic, and during his time in Cambridge was actively involved in establishing opportunities for Catholic students to study at the university, namely the founding of the residency and chaplaincy, St. Edmund's House (Roth & Hooper 1990: xix). Von Hügel eventually retired from his position as the Museum's curator in 1921.

It was in the context of this contemporary academic investment in improving photographic evidence within British anthropology that von Hügel sourced images for the Museum's collection. Mitman and Wilder have asserted that during the last decades of the nineteenth century 'the ontological faith in photography… became a compelling reason for its incorporation into the methods and exposition of emerging human sciences (history, anthropology, archaeology, geography, art history) seeking scientific authority and legitimacy' (2016: 7). Smith's collection of photographs, and the affiliated written correspondence between himself and the Museum's curator, offer detailed insight into how photographic methods and artefacts were subject to forms of disciplinary regulation with the growing professionalisation of anthropology during the late nineteenth century (Edwards 2016b: 94). Smith's photographs can be understood as part of the 'serendipitous accumulation of images from travellers, scientists, explorers and missionaries… [that] transformed into a collection through the "visual economy" in which the photographs operated' (Edwards 2002: 70). As will be shown, it was von Hügel's exercise of his professional 'disciplined eye' within the institutional context of the museum (Edwards 2016b: 90; Zimmerman 2001: 172-178), and the collection's incorporation within a photographic archive, that granted it coherence and authority as an epistemic object of anthropology (Mitman and Wilder 2016: 7). The negative 'N.35242.VH', alongside traces of its documentation and storage history, are evidence of how Smith's images were afforded new social value and materially transformed into objects of ethnography at the Museum (Edwards 2002: 67). This chapter explores Smith's project of making and sending images to the Museum and the particular demands of the then-curator, von Hügel, in his desire to acquire views of the Congo which held anthropological value. What is demonstrated, however, is that the conceptual anthropological value of the photographic archive as documentary resource was not inherent in the nature of photographic style or intention, but rather, was constituted through the contexts of circulation and consumption within a scientific community (Mitman and Wilder 2016: 14; Edwards 2016b: 92).

In constructing particular views of life in and around Upoto, Smith ventured to create photographs for von Hügel quite unlike the kinds of images which were published in BMS printed media. The subjects of many of the images portray aspects of the religious encounter which were neither detailed nor pictured in official accounts from the station. As a result, they provide alternative views of Congolese people to the kinds of sanctioned scenes of mission endeavour that regularly

illustrated *The Missionary Herald*. However, careful analysis of the images alongside surviving correspondence exposes how image content was intended to be evaluated at the Museum. The chapter highlights the ways in which specific details may have been deliberately overlooked in Smith's images to enable their operation in a scientific context. The deciphering of the institutional and intellectual intentions behind some of the images makes possible alternative 'readings' of their content. These same details, often unintentionally included within the photographic frame, communicate information about how Smith's photography was carried out. As will be demonstrated, the images produced by Smith did not always correspond with the images which von Hügel had in mind. By attending to the details of photographic content, this chapter considers the multiple overlapping motivations which may have coexisted in the processes of the images' conception, both from the perspective of the photographer and the Congolese participants. The practice of photography is brought to the fore as a social engagement which took place in and around Upoto station and these occasions are conceptualised in terms of the relationships that made them possible and the experiences of Congolese people who were present.

The glass negative 'N.35242.VH' (Fig. 4.1) is a good starting point for interrogating the classifications that were accorded to Smith's images which enabled their entry into the Museum collection. In order to convincingly operate as images with the capacity to signify anthropological information there were particular conditions as to the kind of content desired by von Hügel. The current description affiliated with the negative at MAA is 'Natives, N. Congo' but a near-identical image made by Smith which also entered into the collection as a print (P.57236.RDG) has the caption 'Widows Mourning' written in pencil (Fig. 4.2). Both images depict four Congolese women sat on the ground in profile, whilst another woman and a girl appear to apply pigment to the women's backs over their cicatrised designs. Both the individuals involved in the activity who touch the seated women are simultaneously turned to face the photographer. The print depicts a cropped version of the scene in which the group of female bystanders visible behind the seated group has been cut-off so that only the lower portions of their bodies were included. The girl pictured administering pigment, who wears a striped pinafore dress and is holding what looks like a broken pot containing dark substance such as charcoal, was also mostly cropped out of the printed photograph. Both the images made by Smith share some of the hallmarks of other images that were accepted by von Hügel into the Museum's collection. The photograph was composed in such a way that it produced

an unobstructed view of the activity that the Congolese people were engaged in. Those who participated in making the image were aware of Smith's presence because across the two representations of the scene different people look towards the camera. In other examples where Smith made photographs to document people engaged in a particular activity he was similarly often positioned on the same horizontal plane as the main actors who were composed centrally within the frame, with tools or items of material culture held in view of the camera. Such compositions indicate that there was a high degree of coordination and collaboration between Smith and his participants in the making of the images to achieve the desired view. In the two images, which look as if they may have been made only moments apart, the various glances of the girl and women towards the camera indicate that they were conscious of performing for the photographic occasion and aware of Smith's observational 'performance' as he moved around the scene in order to frame the optimum view of their activity (Edwards 2001a: 25-26).

As will be explored in the sections that follow, von Hügel was inclined to reject images made by Smith which did not conform to his notions of what 'authentic' Congolese culture looked like. For the curator, details in the photographs which indicated the European presence and missionary context had the capacity to disqualify certain views of Upoto from being useful ethnographic documents. It is somewhat surprising then, that the negative was selected to be incorporated into the Museum's collection. Presumably it was seen to contain enough content deemed authentically Congolese, and therefore of ethnographic value, that the European clothing of the young girl in the foreground and one behind could be overlooked. The fact that in the printed iteration of the scene the bystanders were cropped at torso height and the girl applying pigment was heavily cropped out of the frame indicate that these were choices made either in the moment of Smith's photographing the mourning scene or when the image was developed as a smaller view of an original larger image. Whether the print represents the photograph as it was composed or the print as it was developed, it is suggestive of the choices that were made that ultimately shaped the reception of its content and lead to its qualifying for the photographic archive at MAA.

There is a further aspect of the printed image's content which complicates a singular reading of its journey towards becoming an ethnographic object. Visible on the represented bodies of the girls and women standing in a row behind the main scene, vertical lines have been scratched as if to give the impression of a raffia skirt

fringe hanging from the thin belts they wear below the waist. This was probably done to conceal their perceived nudity, although intriguingly the chests of the women seated in profile were not also amended to achieve the same level of propriety. BMS missionary photograph albums occasionally featured photographs of Congolese women that had been edited to give the impression of clothing on their bodies, and can therefore be understood as a deliberate practice in the creation of visual media for a mission context to make images less risqué. The print of the mourning women therefore contains traces of information which indicate that at some point this version of the image was censored because of its anticipated function in a public mission-related context.

As was detailed in the previous chapter, the wearing of European-style clothing by Congolese people at Upoto came to signify their affiliation with the mission and relationships to members of British staff. The fact that at the photographic occasion, among many adult Congolese women, a young girl who was wearing a dress was a principal actor in the performance of the scene, is a feature which is charged with meaning in ways which might not have been apparent to the museum's curator. On the basis of the girl's appearance it seems that she was in fact a 'girl' associated with the Upoto mission because she was photographed kneeling to the right of Mrs. Forfeitt in a portrait previously analysed for its portrayal of Congolese children as dependents (Fig. 4.3). If it is accepted that these are probably representations of same child, it raises numerous questions about the event in which the 'ethnographic' photographs were made: what was the girl's relationship to the seated women? Was she also in mourning at the time? What was her role in communicating between the other female participants and Smith? How was it that Smith's presence with a camera was negotiated? To what extent was the entire scene staged in order to represent mourning customs at Upoto? As someone who was a middle-figure living between two different cultures, how did the child mediate between the women in mourning and Smith's desire to make it a photographic event? These questions are difficult to answer but the knowledge that the Congolese girl had been accepted into the mission community opens up alternative readings of Smith's photographic practice and the agency of those people he photographed.

For von Hügel the existence of European clothing in the images were likely evaluated as redundant inclusions which could be overlooked (or cropped out) in favour of more significant content. Edwards (2016) has argued that the history of anthropology's engagement with photography in the second half of the nineteenth

century can in part be understood as a re-negotiation of visual excess in relation to the changing criteria of the authoritative anthropological document (2016: 92). The discipline's turn towards the epistemic potential of visual 'abundance' produced by photography represented a shift from anthropology's earlier priorities in the construction of visual evidence, characterised by a methodological concern with the isolation of the scientific object and its legibility (Edwards 2016b: 91-92). As will be explored, von Hügel's assessment of Smith's photographs for their anthropological significance seems to reflect anthropology's intellectualisation of 'reading' photographic excess for empirical data through a process of 'attentive looking' (Edwards 2016b: 107). How Smith and von Hügel negotiated images' successful qualification as forms of photographic anthropological evidence is the focus of this chapter (Mitman and Wilder 2016: 12). By unpacking the processes which went into making authoritative ethnographic images of Upoto, ironically, it is possible to ascertain something about the social relations between Congolese people and missionaries which enabled the co-creation of photographs.

Smith's photographs were initially brought to the attention of von Hügel, in November 1904 via John E. Foster, Secretary of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Correspondence concerning photographs made at Upoto began in November 1904 when Foster forwarded a set of seven photographs made by Smith to von Hügel 'for the museum'.[25] There is unfortunately no surviving correspondence between Foster and Smith which would give a sense of how information was being intermediated between the Congo and Cambridge. Only one photograph from the original forwarded set survives (Dudding 2015: 176). Von Hugel responded positively:

> *'What an interesting set of Congo photographs. I have made a selection. I think one or two of the photos have been touched up or cut smaller (? For decency's sake). It would be wise for anthropological purposes to have them as taken if possible.'*[26]

That Smith's photographs had been edited suggests they were being made to operate as multivalent objects. As noted, it was common for photographs intended for BMS audiences to be doctored. Smith may have had multiple audiences in mind and have wanted to ensure the images were sufficiently tasteful to be published in Baptist literature. On this occasion it seems as if doctored versions of Smith's photographs were sent to the Museum, indicating that prints of the same photographs were intended simultaneously for more prudish audiences.

[25] Foster to von Hügel, 13.11.904, uncatalogued incoming correspondence, MAA Archives.
[26] Von Hügel to Foster, 6.12.1904, Museum letter book, MAA Archives.

The following month Foster forwarded a further 73 prints and invited von Hügel to make a selection for reproduction.[27] In February 1905 Foster sent another collection of photographs to the Museum, which was gratefully received. In his response to Foster, von Hügel stipulated his desire for photographs which 'show the physique and development of the people as well as illustrations of their way of wearing ornaments etc., scarifications…'.[28] He also went on to give precise instruction for the sorts of visual records of people he was keen to acquire:

> *'Several views (from side, back, etc.) of the same individual are very useful and photos of people of various ages (infants to old age) also tattooed (cicatricised) regions of the body in larger scale, mutilation, etc.'*[29]

Von Hügel was evidently responding to current anthropological theory which was determining collecting and display strategies in Britain at the turn of the century. Later that year, von Hügel forwarded Smith a copy of *Anthropological Notes & Queries* (Garson and Read 1899)[30] which Smith had requested, believing it would 'assist me in the future in securing some ethnographical information of real interest'.[31] The Anthropological Institute, in association with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, published *Notes & Queries* from 1874 onwards (Edwards 2016b: 94). It was a small book intended for amateur enthusiasts to encourage the collection of ethnographic and anthropological information in the form of a categorised questionnaire (Edwards 2016b: 94). The circulation of anthropological surveys, and in particular *Notes & Queries*, among missionaries and administrators in colonial locations with access to 'primitive' peoples in unindustrialised societies had become common practice towards the end of the nineteenth century (Urry 1972: 49). As people who spent years living among and learning the indigenous languages of the communities with whom they worked, the privileged position missionaries occupied for the collection of data was realised. Urry has shown how the succession of editions of *Notes and Queries* published prior to 1900 reflected the evolution of ideas of those individuals developing the science of anthropology at the time, in response to the influx of ethnographic information which was being returned to the metropole (1972: 49). It was designed to promote a standardised approach to field

[27] Foster to von Hügel, 5.12.1904, uncatalogued incoming correspondence, MAA Archives.
[28] Von Hügel to Foster, 4.2.1905, Museum letter book, MAA Archives.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Von Hügel to Kenred Smith, 9.12.1905, Museum letter book, MAA Archives.
[31] Kenred Smith to Von Hügel, 6.12.1905, uncatalogued incoming correspondence, MAA Archives.

methods as a scientific mode of enquiry, in a format which could be easily applied by non-expert audiences (Urry 1972: 47).

Elizabeth Edwards has examined the publication's emergent recommendations on photography as a methodological tool in the field, which was the subject of extended technical and intellectual discussion from the third edition (1899) onwards (Edwards 2016b: 95-96). This edition, which Smith used to inform his photography, contained a section on photography in two parts, authored by the physical anthropologist J. G. Garson, and separately, the cultural anthropologist A. C. Haddon (Edwards 2016b: 105). The directions on photography provided in this edition demonstrate something of the emergent perspectives concerning the use of photography within anthropology at this time, reflective of how dedicated professional fieldwork was informing understandings of knowledge production and changing expectations of visual documentation (Edwards 2016b: 95-96, 105-107). The instruction offered by Garson can be seen to characterise older theoretical and methodological interests within anthropology such as the categorisation of tangible features like material culture and physical attributes; whereas the statements from Haddon demonstrate his attention to the dynamic relations of fieldwork and how immersive experiences of cultural life might be represented photographically (Edwards 2016b: 95-96, 105).

The 1899 edition of *Notes & Queries* which Smith received contained questions under topics which related to observable features of the body such as 'Abnormalities' and 'Deformations', as well as 'Clothing', 'Personal Ornaments', 'Painting and Tattooing' and 'Tribal Marks'(Garson and Read 1899: X-XI). Many of the photographs that he sent to MAA seem to accord with these categories, together with von Hügel's concern with the documentation of forms of body decoration and styles of dress. The curator's impulse towards creating an encyclopaedic catalogue of representations of Congolese bodies is suggestive of an intellectual project which would incorporate them into a wider taxonomy of different peoples documented at the Museum.

The edition of *Notes & Queries* which Smith received emphasised the desirability of drawings or better, photographs, in recording native tattooing and cicatrisation and informs readers that attention should be paid to 'a few characteristic designs' (Garson and Read 1899: 93). It is possible to see how his photographs operated in the Museum in accordance with this logic of 'characteristic' cultural qualities which constructed visual referents of different cultures to enable

their identification and classification. Some of the glass teaching slides made from Smith's images which depict Congolese people's scarification patterns were labelled simply with the tribal names or place names, indicating that they were being used to convey generalities about scarification practices attributed to different cultures and regions. One such lantern slide depicts a close-up of a man's face in profile which contains the inscription 'NGOMBE (typical). N. Forest' on its border (Fig. 4.4). The replication of some of Smith's images in the media of magic lantern slides indicates their use in academic lectures at Cambridge, integrated into what Edwards terms the 'performative space' affiliated with the evolution of university based anthropological teaching in the early twentieth century (Edwards 2000: 11).

In the letter von Hügel wrote to Foster in February 1905 he made reference to a second letter intended for Smith personally, likely with the purpose of reiterating his requests directly:

> *'I have written enclosed letter with a view to your perhaps being able to perhaps forward it to Rev. Smith. I did not like to say anything as to our desires in the line of objects, but as you know we have practically nothing from those regions & in spite of the scanty attire of the people, the sights of these photographs, makes me long to pull the little they wear off & so fill our cases!'*[32]

The possibility of collecting objects via Smith was clearly a tantalising prospect for von Hügel. His emphasis on filling perceived gaps in the collection further speaks to the desire for a comprehensive catalogue of material culture. Smith received the letter and replied via his two brothers in February 1905 (Dudding 2015: 176). Oswin Smith, who lived in Cambridge, contacted von Hügel to say that 90 negatives had been delivered to their brother, Harold Smith, who ran Pearce & Smith Photographic Studio in Stamford Hill, London.[33] Harold developed and printed Smith's negatives and possibly also gave him instruction in photography (Dudding 2015: 176). Von Hügel made a visit to Harold's Stamford Hill studio to view the negatives and subsequently purchased 72 more prints from him.[34] In response to receiving this set, in April 1905 von Hügel wrote to Harold and reiterated the request that his requirements be passed on to his brother.[35]

[32] Von Hügel to Foster, 4.2.1905, (Von Hügel's emphasis), Museum letter book, MAA Archives.
[33] Oswin Smith to Von Hügel, 17.2.1905, uncatalogued incoming correspondence, MAA Archives.
[34] Harrold Smith to Von Hügel, 25.3.1905, uncatalogued incoming correspondence, MAA Archives.
[35] Von Hügel to Harrold Smith, 8.4.1905, Museum letter Book, MAA Archives.

In May 1905 von Hügel again wrote to Harold Smith lamenting the unsuitability of the images which he had supplied:

> *'Some are of considerable interest to us, but the majority are not serviceable for our purposes as the natives are dressed in European cloth etc. As you know I want to show their characteristic, physical development, or mutilation of the body – scars etc. or their occupation.'*[36]

Von Hügel was evidently keen to acquire images which depicted Congolese people in a way which foregrounded forms of 'traditional' dress and body modification in order to evidence their 'characteristic' cultural traits. Photographs of clothed subjects were of no use in this respect; nor did he want to collect images which might be seen to communicate missionary themes and sentiment. Over the course of the following year von Hügel continued to press Smith for photographs showing views of Congolese individuals' bodies and close-ups of scarification. Despite this, Smith does not appear to have made close-ups of bodily features of the kind von Hügel requested, cropping details to result in abstracted, disembodied images of scarification. Even where designs on the body or hair were the focus, he largely framed the photographs so as to include faces, which could be read as an attempt to not dehumanise his subjects completely. Jocelyne Dudding suggests that Smith's resistance to photographing people in the mission community without their clothes on was at once a reluctance to 'undo' the work of conversion but also a concern with betraying the trust of those with whom he worked day to day (2015: 177). As will be discussed, Smith's ethnographic photographs relied on an understanding between himself and those whom he photographed. Such images were made possible by predetermined relationships and on the basis of trust that developed over the course of his work.

Alternate Iterations: Kenred Smith's Photograph Album

In the BMS archives is an album of photographs which once belonged to Smith (A/B 5). As has been seen in the previous chapters, the album contains diverse kinds of image which appear to have been made for different purposes: photographs of family and fellow missionaries, portraits of Congolese colleagues, prints of the ethnographic images in Cambridge and photographs of State activity. There are also collages of Congolese individuals cut out from larger photographs, originally used

[36] Von Hügel to Harrold Smith, 27.5.1905, Museum letter book, MAA Archives.

to illustrate issues of the children's magazine 'Wonderlands' and subsequently Smith's own book '*Congoland: A Book for Young People*' (1913), which is covered in detail in Chapter 5. Smith's album also contains prints of photographs made by Forfeitt interspersed among his own. The fact that the two men made and exchanged photographs makes distinguishing their surviving output a difficult task and one beyond the scope of the present chapter. Importantly, the album was at some point annotated by Smith, with captions inscribed over the surface of the photographs or in the borders after they were affixed. There is no obvious chronology to the album's progression nor any consistent logic to the ways in which images are assembled within a page. Economising on space for different sized images seems to have directed the album's arrangement more than considered thematic curation. As a whole the album resembles something of a scrapbook. Photographic captions seem to function as personal *aide-mémoire* as opposed to explanatory titles for an outside audience. Individuals are occasionally identified with their names given beside or above their image, sometimes scored through or with question marks, indicative of a time lapse between the creation of the photographs and the album's assembly and inscription.

The majority of the images can be considered as having had ethnographic potential, in the sense that they portray certain subjects and share particular conventions, indicating that they were made with their anthropological value in mind. At least one third of the album consists of duplicates of the printed photographs and prints made from the glass negatives acquired by von Hügel. As an assemblage of photographic objects, the album is suggestive of the relationships Smith had with the subjects of his images, but also the other photographers whose prints he included. When analysed alongside the collection at MAA, the particular framings of the album make it possible to detect relationships and sentiments not available in the prints of 'natives' collected by von Hügel. Geary (1991) has explored the tension between 'public' and 'private' photographs created by missionaries in Africa, in particular how the character of an image was as much determined by the viewer's relationship to its subject, as by institutional framings or contexts of reproduction. The viewer's ability to recognise the subject of an image transforms that representation into 'a sign that stands for itself' (Geary 1991:49). The process of perceiving a familiar individual is accompanied by personal associations and the image is therefore understood according to that relationship. In contrast, an image's metaphoric potential is predicated on its lack of specificity: the loss of the individual

conditions of its production release the image's representational capacity for deployment in public contexts (Geary 1991:49). A consideration of the relational aspect of photographic meanings makes it possible to interpret Smith's annotations as a process of re-inscribing the personal into images which in another iteration were given an institutional and perhaps a public function.

While some of the annotations in the album supplied by Smith echo those descriptive titles given to the photographs in the collection at the Museum, referencing the name of a cultural group or the activity in which individuals are engaged, a number of the captions name persons and places. For examples, Figures 4.5-4.13 demonstrate image duplicates between the MAA collection and those in Smith's album: the latter have annotations around the figures. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 show the same image of three seated men and four children with parcels of food. The lantern slide (Fig. 4.5) contains a title designating the district, 'Ngwenzali' and tribal attribution, 'Ngombe'. The equivalent photograph in the album has undergone a series of annotations in which different names have been added, some later crossed out. From left to right the names read 'Emboli, Motengo' and 'Bokutu'. Though the annotations have undergone some revision, Smith's inclination to name the people he photographed suggests that he knew them as individuals. For von Hügel, the images he acquired could operate as examples of 'types' or 'natives' precisely because the people represented were anonymous, whereas for Smith they were portraits of people he knew and perhaps encountered regularly in his work.

Certain individuals appear across different photographs within Smith's album and throughout the collection at MAA. This supports the idea that Smith photographed people who he knew, who were perhaps familiar with the process and more willing to cooperate in his documentary projects. The multiple contexts in which individuals appear make it possible to understand their participation in and experience of photographic occasions on different terms. That some people were content to be photographed on more than one occasion suggests that their images were not the product of an isolated chance encounter but entered into on the basis of familiarity.

Figures 4.11 and 4.12 in the MAA collection show the same man posed leaning on a tree stump with other adults and children: the male standing on his left side is his son. Both photographs were given the caption 'Natives' which is the only description associated with the negatives in the original documentation. A print of one of these images is duplicated in the album, where Smith's inscriptions name the

man as 'Likala' and attribute him to the district of 'Boela' (Fig. 4.13). Likala appears again in the album alongside Smith's second wife, Ethel, where he is simply described as a 'Boela Chief' (Fig. 4.14). The dissonant framings of the photographs in von Hügel's collection and the album make apparent the way in which Smith was photographing people with whom he had a relationship. Likala's cooperation in making a few photographs with Smith raises the question of the nature of that process as a collaborative effort.

Christophe Rippe has employed the term 'photographic occasion' as an aspect of the 'mission encounter' to describe 'a multi-layered social phenomenon with many realities, performances, representational intentions and afterlives' (Rippe 2015: 40). This is useful for considering the multiple concurrent agendas and sets of relations that went into the making of a photograph. Participating in photography with Smith would have carried its own meanings for Likala, in terms of his Congolese world view, prior experiences and relationships with with Europeans. If, as described, Likala was a man of some authority in Boela, it is possible that the photographic occasion entailed a performative dimension for him, as an opportunity to demonstrate his status to the missionary. He may even have played a part in directing who or what Smith should include in his images. Viewed in terms of Likala's 'presence' (Edwards 2016a), the ethnographic images acquired by the Museum can be interpreted as documents of his experience of cooperating with Smith for the purpose of photography. The fact that the two men knew one another and encountered each other in the context of the mission work around Upoto meant that the 'photographic occasion' was entered into on the basis of a specific relationship; and understandings of it were rooted within each of their personal perspectives.

Forfeitt also made photographs of Likala with his son and congregations of people (Fig. 4.15, 4.16), now in the Forfeitt Collection at the Angus Library. This reinforces the fact that Likala had ongoing contact with the BMS and was willing to be photographed. One is less formally arranged, and some figures are obscured in the background (Fig. 4.15), whilst the other (Fig. 4.16) was composed so that 34 or so people are crammed into the scene, seated or standing in rows, with Likala prominent in the centre. Smith makes a reference to Likala in his memoirs as 'one of the most powerful chiefs of the district, a man who is blind by day but who can see a little in the dark' (Smith 2016: 122). This explains Likala's demeanour in all of the images, where he appears somewhat disengaged with the camera, eyes closed. In

Figure 4.15 Likala can be seen grasping his son's hand as if to steady himself whilst standing. The fact that Likala would not have been able to view the resulting photographs he made with Smith suggests that there was a further degree of trust involved, as well as a shared belief that the photographic event would serve some purpose. That is, Likala participated in these occasions because of his ongoing relationship with the missionaries at Upoto. Posing for a photograph may well have been perceived as beneficial because it demonstrated a recognition of his political status by the missionaries.

Described as 'chief' of Boela, a town apparently home to 6,000 people, the images Smith made of Likala can be interpreted as attempts to create portraits of a local authority figure.[37] His brief description of a visit to see Likala suggests these encounters were accompanied by customary displays of deference.

> *'During my brief visit someone prepared a native pipe for him. Directly he commenced to smoke, the people round clapped their hands as a sign of respect until he put the pipe down.'* (Smith 2016: 122)

The process of making a photograph of Likala and his entourage would therefore have been a carefully orchestrated event, in which the BMS missionaries were sensitive to his status and wants. It seems likely that these images were a result of Smith and Forfeitt negotiating their position in relation to Likala, necessarily appeasing him whilst satisfying their own photographic agendas.

It is difficult to ascertain precisely what those agendas were. Smith made almost no reference to his practice of photography in written accounts. The fact that some of the images were incorporated into the collections at MAA does not imply that they were made for precisely that purpose. Although, we can infer that Smith selectively responded to von Hügel's suggestions and continued to forward images which he believed were suitable for inclusion in the collection. Smith's request for a copy of *Notes & Queries* suggests that he aspired to making images which could be used to convey ethnographic facts and make a contribution to anthropological knowledge. Smith also supplied some contextualising ethnographic information with the images now at MAA, most frequently the names of towns or cultural affiliation of people depicted. This demonstrates that he was conceptualising the

[37] The term 'portrait' is used here to convey the intentions that Kenred Smith may have had when documenting the Congolese authority, Likala, and the significance which he attributed to the resulting images. That Smith may have approached these photographic events as the creation of portraits of a Congolese man he felt he personally knew (and could authoritatively represent), does not mean that Likala related to or experienced being photographed in these terms.

images he created in terms of place and may well have sought to create sets of images that were comparable.

In gauging Smith's intentions when making photographs it seems that he was attuned to their capacity for social reactivation, and perhaps strove for images which would be multivalent. Although many images adhere to particular conventions of ethnographic photography, this did not prevent their potential inclusion in missionary periodicals (appropriately framed within an evangelical civilising discourse and often touched-up for reasons of propriety). It seems unlikely that Smith had discrete categories of image held in mind on every photographic occasion, which may have incorporated moments of opportunism as well as carefully rehearsed social exchanges. His memoirs indicate that he often carried a camera with him when 'itinerating' in case he happened upon a scene worth photographing. He refers to having been shown an elephant trap positioned high in some forest foliage, which he successfully photographed despite the poor light (Smith 2016: 75). Also apparent is that not all of the people Smith tried to photograph were willing to participate:

> *'I attempted to take a photo of these men at work on the canoe, but even as I adjusted the camera three of them fled, afraid that in some mysterious way their spirits will be taken from them. I persuaded three younger men to take their places. When the photo had been taken the three older inhabitants emerged from their hiding-place and resumed their work.'* (Smith 2016: 147).

Such accounts suggest that photographing people sometimes required a degree of persuasion.

So-called 'itineration' work presented opportunities to make photographs further afield from Upoto and enabled him to document people living in different towns. These were people with whom he likely had a different relationship than those living in close proximity to the station. He recorded one occasion when visiting the Bombange villages about 110 miles north of Upoto:

> *In the afternoon, when a crowd of natives had gathered, standing on a big wooden drum as a platform-pulpit, I delivered my message. The people heard for the first time of God and His wonderful love in Christ. After the service I showed some photographs of natives, and took two or three photos.* (Smith 2016: 131)

The account also demonstrates the way in which he was using photographs as props in the spectacle of evangelising. Having claimed that missionary influence had not yet extended to the towns (Smith 2016: 129), his Bombange audience may never have

seen a photograph before. It suggests that Smith knowingly employed photographs, unfamiliar objects, as tools of enchantment which might hold his audience's attention. Mack (2012a) has questioned the supposed universality of graphic representation and our inherent ability to 'read' and comprehend graphic media cross-culturally. Instead, he makes the case for culturally-informed modes of seeing, considering how this might have affected the reception of two-dimensional representations, such as photographs, in the historical encounters between anthropologists and indigenous people (Mack 2012a: 97; 2012b: 17). Recognition that 'the rendering of three dimensions in two is a culturally-specific conceit and may not be immediately recognised to be representational at all' (Mack 2012a: 97) has implications for understanding how Smith's photographs were perceived by Bombange people. The magic lantern was by this time an established part of the evangelical toolkit employed by missionaries in Africa, including the BMS in Congo, and the potential for this form of spectacle to impress African audiences has been documented (Thompson 2015: 96). Knowing that photographs had the capacity to confound, such presentations by Smith might have been a rehearsed technique. The display of photographs may also have made it easier for him to engage willing photographic participants after the service.

It is likely that Smith carried photographs with him when evangelising, and that the towns which he visited regularly were accustomed to him showing and making photographs on these visits. It is also possible that he was distributing photographs to some individuals with whom he had made images, and that photographic occasions were understood as being reciprocal exchanges. In his memoirs he made reference to showing a photograph to a visiting 'minor chief' whilst at the station:

> *'While typing this I have been interrupted by the coming of a minor chief with whom I have had a conversation. I showed him the photo of his son taken five years ago. A word here and there all makes for the Kingdom of God.'* (Smith 2016: 150-151)

This reinforces the idea that he photographed people known to him, making use of his pre-existing social networks around Upoto Station and those generated through evangelisation work. It also points to that fact that Smith's photographs had a social value for the communities with which he worked in Congo. The image of the chief's son could have been among the sets of images sent to von Hügel, but in this instance of its viewing in Smith's house at Upoto, it was socially reactivated and, from Smith's perspective, had value as a family portrait. It suggests Smith was aware of

the latent possibilities of the photographs he made and kept. The use of the term 'ethnographic' in relation to the photographs is useful in so far as it describes one eventual use of Smith's images but obscures the fact that such images meant different things to different people concurrently.

Containing a Genre

It is unclear the extent to which Smith oversaw the forwarding of negatives and prints to Cambridge, but the evidence suggests that exchange of images and information between himself and the Museum were mediated by a number of actors. If he was periodically sending large batches of negatives home to be developed by his brother in London, it may be that images were forwarded in bulk to the Museum. Smith's photo album contains the kinds of photographs which von Hügel would have rejected on the basis of the presence of missionaries or European-style clothing. These images may comprise the remainders of the sets which von Hügel deemed unsuitable and returned. Given that von Hügel rejected images sent to him on a number of occasions implies that Smith was not being particularly discriminating in his selection process. He may have looked to von Hügel as having more authority in the matter, sending him a broad array of images in order to offer the fullest range of subjects; only later adapting his selection criteria and photographic practice to meet demands. Smith would likely have sifted through his existing personal archive of photographs made in northern Congo and evaluated them retrospectively in light of von Hügel's requests. He may only have recognised the evidential value of his images after subsequent considered analysis, meaning that he sent images to the curator which had initially been made without anthropological intention (Wingfield 2012b: 66-73). The gathering of worthy images to satisfy von Hügel probably also involved the collective pooling of negatives and prints already made by the missionaries at Upoto or acquired through other photographers and collectors.

Despite von Hügel's apparently discerning approach to Smith's output, he selected a number of images which featured European actors. In these images, Smith made no attempt to create the impression of an 'ethnographic present' (Clifford 1988: 29). In the collection at MAA there are recurring patterns which speak to the ways in which different genres of photographs were composed. A surprising factor is that many of the images were clearly taken in the grounds of the mission station. Figures 4.17-4.19 appear to have been made on the wooden verandas of mission

houses or possibly aboard a BMS steamboat, which does not seem to have deterred von Hügel, though the context of the figures pictured overwhelmingly points to European presence. Andrew Zimmerman (2001) has employed the concept of the 'anthropological gaze' to convey how professional anthropologists distinguished their ability to scientifically interpret the masses of curiosities which were transported from colonies to European metropoles in the late nineteenth century (2001: 173-174). Zimmerman has described this as a 'transformative' gaze which, as understood by its German practitioners, could elicit scientific evidence from commodities and curiosities (2001: 174). Their self-proclaimed skills of discernment also extended to anthropological readings of popular forms of entertainment such as panopticon displays and exotic shows attended by the general public (Zimmerman 2001: 173-174). Through this visualising strategy, anthropologists hoped to develop a 'natural system' which would enable the classification of anthropological objects based on their 'true nature', akin to methodologies in the natural sciences (Zimmerman 2001: 175). Their aim was to be able to visually examine objects in order to distinguish 'natural' data from historical factors, because at this time 'One of the most important practical tasks within anthropology was creating a mode of vision that posited the objects of the colonised as natural rather than historical' (Zimmerman 2001: 176). Von Hügel's evaluation of Smith's images can therefore be understood in the context of a professional culture whose members prized themselves on their ability to discern scientific evidence in artefacts made or collected by amateurs in the field. It was the exercise of his trained 'anthropological gaze' (Zimmerman 2001: 174), or what Edwards has termed, 'the disciplined eye' (Edwards 2016b: 90), that enabled von Hügel to see past inclusions which signified the European presence at Upoto and locate in Smith's photographs anthropological objects.

In the case of Figure 4.17, made at Yakusu, stacks of slate boards were included in the right-hand side of the frame. This appears to situate the man in the context of a mission house or the deck of a boat. The slate boards, used in school work, are an irrevocable index of missionary activity. Individuals also posed for Smith in the grounds of Upoto station, where neat stone borders lining manicured gardens visibly dissect the surroundings (Fig. 4.20, 4.21). The persistent presence of wooden European chairs further indicates that the images were taken within the station enclosure. The polished curved backrest is a feature of many of the photographs where Smith was framing headshots or close up images of scarification

(Fig. 4.21, 4.22). These factors, which so obviously betray a missionary setting, seem not to have affected von Hügel's perception of them as useful portrayals of Congolese people. Where sufficient views of bodily scarification had been achieved, it seems that the surrounding missionary presence could be overlooked.

Occasionally the MAA photographs contain peripheral figures in the background behind the principal subject whose presence does not appear to have been intended. The 'random inclusivity' inherent in photography as a medium of inscription and resulting 'visual excess' here provides clues as to some of the contexts in which Smith was making photographs (Morton and Edwards 2009a: 4). The position of these onlookers suggests that Smith did not plan for them to be the focus of the image, (Fig. 4.20, 4.23, 4.24), but that they strayed into the photographic frame. Some of the peripheral figures included appear to be either mission employees or 'boys' based on their uniforms (Fig. 4.20) and European-style clothes (Fig. 4.23). Smith would have had an entourage consisting of 'boys' and trainee evangelists when visiting towns and therefore would often have been accompanied while he was making photographs. The lower half of a woman infiltrates the carefully framed head and shoulders of the male in Figure 4.24, suggesting the presence of a missionary's wife when the image was created. These traces of missionary work do not seem to have detracted from their ethnographic value when von Hügel was selecting for the Museum. Furthermore, despite his apparent rejection of some images on the basis of European clothing, it is not totally absent from the collection. If not for the semi-nudity it contains, Figure 4.25 could easily have been reproduced in BMS propaganda in the 'before-and-after' genre of images. The couple clothed in European dress standing in row directly next to the women in beaded outfits (to whom the clothed woman bears some resemblance) could be read as a visual metaphor of progress (Geary 1991: 49). The linearity of their arrangement, read from left to right, invites comparison of the figures and a temporal narrative. Contrary to von Hügel's comments, the image was deemed adequate. Taken together, these random inclusions suggest that meticulous censorship of European presence was not the priority. Smith did not try particularly hard to conceal evidence of his work or signs of cultural exchange happening in the communities with whom he made photographs. Nor was von Hügel steadfast in his commitment to scenes of the Congo which cleansed the European presence, admitting some on the basis that valuable ethnographic content could override redundant inclusions in the same image.

A recurrent genre in the images in the MAA collection is the portrayal of Congolese occupations and aspects of daily life which correspond to the criteria set out in the 1899 edition of *Notes & Queries*. Many of the photographs which von Hügel selected from Smith correspond with the publication's sections on 'Weaving', 'Basketwork', 'Pottery', 'Metallurgy', 'Food', 'Music' and 'Hunting' in which forms of production appear to have been demonstrated for the camera. These include scenes where individuals demonstrate food preparation (Fig. 4.26), bodily adornment (Fig. 4.27), the production of material culture (Figure 4.9, 4.28) and use of traditional technologies. The themes are echoed in the nature of the artefacts donated to the Museum by both Smith and the Forfeitts[38]. Both collections are primarily composed of objects relating to aspects of day-to-day life such as utensils for food preparation; storage vessels including woven baskets; tools for personal grooming such as combs, razors and hairpins; stools, instruments and knives.

Many of the photographs belonging to the 'occupation' genre have a performative quality to them in that the activity was being laid bare by Congolese individuals for the camera. *Notes & Queries* contained practical instructions on photography from Professor Haddon. Haddon's cautionary remarks for making this kind of photography were: 'be very careful that the subject is, or appears to be, actually performing the action; many photographs are spoiled by the subject looking at the photographer, or being in an obviously erroneous position or location' (Garson and Read 1899: 93). Edwards has asserted that the instructions authored by Haddon were reflective of his field experience gained in the Torres Strait (1888-89) and were informed by an understanding of the relational process of carrying out

[38] There is no evidence to suggest that the BMS ever established a museum at their Mission House premises on Furnival Street in Holborn, London. I have been unable to find evidence of the BMS having had a policy instructing their missionaries to collect items of material culture from the mission field, although evidently many individual missionaries did collect artefacts and donate them to museums during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are indications that BMS missionaries participated in regional interdenominational missionary exhibitions and created displays using artefacts collected in the field, such as the printed advertisements which appeared in *The Missionary Herald*. A small number of the labels attached to artefacts donated by the Forfeitts at MAA indicate that prior to their acquisition by the Museum they had circulated in other contexts of public display. (For example, MAA E 1911.552, a raffia fibre cap donated by the Forfeitts has attached to it an old printed label which reads: 'London Missionary Society Exhibition. Music Hall, Edinburgh. 10th-20th April 1907.' MAA E 1908.254 A-C, a collection of brass rod currency, also has an affiliated BMS label which indicates that it was loaned by the Society at some point for an exhibition). It is not possible to state with any certainty whether Smith and Forfeitt collected artefacts at Upoto on instruction from BMS headquarters or if these collections were solely the result of personal interest, but there were probably multiple motivating factors.

The section 'Graphic Descriptions' in Chapter 4 of this thesis examines how Smith and Forfeitt employed photographs and items of material culture alongside lantern slide exhibitions in their public talks given in England while on furlough. It would appear that the display of objects in missionary talks had become standard practice for BMS personnel by the 1890s.

field photography (2016: 105-107). In the occupational photographs made by Smith, Congolese subjects were composed as if undertaking an activity and were likely informed by Haddon's guidance recognising the interactive nature of documenting cultural life in action. Figure 4.29 in the collection shows two seated men, one giving the other a haircut, the associated Museum caption is simply 'Hair cutting, Upoto'. The same image appears in Smith's album with the annotation: 'Bopoto. Hair cut with European Scissors' (Fig. 4.30). The use of European scissors is fairly discrete and not immediately evident, suggesting the image could have been made to function as a representation of a supposedly authentic, traditional custom. Another very similar version of this image was also acquired by the Museum in which the use of scissors is more apparent (Fig. 4.31). Here women and children feature as onlookers in the background whilst another seated person is poised centrally between the two men involved in the hair cutting. Taken in conjunction, the two images suggest that the hair cutting scene was rehearsed in different variations until Smith was satisfied with the composition. The inclusion of the third figure, placed centrally to retain the overall symmetry of the image, demonstrates that he was thinking about the ethnographic value of the image and how its illustrative potential might be enriched. Not involved in the action of haircutting, the third figure has been placed with their back towards the camera, it would seem, to fully exhibit their braided portion of hair. Closer inspection of the two images reveals that the hairdresser is focusing his attention on the same section of hair, which remains uncut in both images. These two iterations clearly required a degree of planning and the willing participation of different Congolese actors in the photographic occasion. It suggests that Smith had an image in mind when creating the photographs and that he experimented with how best to represent the subject. The approach advocated by Haddon that '[e]very photograph should be taken for a definite purpose, and it is generally possible to secure views that illustrate several points' is encapsulated by these choreographed images (Garson and Read 1899: 238). The process of making such a photograph seems to have been farcical, involving the Congolese men re-enacting or inventing a haircut for Smith. Such an image, as a record of an historical encounter, suggests degrees of collaboration, creativity and even humour that are not apparent in written narratives of mission work at Upoto in the BMS archives.

Other images in the collection have the appearance of carefully assembled compositions. These images were planned in such a way as to demonstrate details of personal adornment and allow for comparison between different individuals. In

Figures 4.32 and 4.33 individuals have been arranged at different angles in order to clearly present their various hairstyles. In the latter, the men's bodies are rotated and staggered according to height so that different perspectives of their heads offer optimal views of their coiffure. In this image the individual men have been reduced to types, disembodied, each one an example of a hairstyle. The sense that Smith dictated the physical posture of his photographic participants is evident in many of the photographs. In Figure 4.34 it appears that two men were made to stand beside one another facing in opposite directions in order to demonstrate the manner of wearing a particular loin cloth from both front and back. Here the focus becomes the cloth itself, seen from two angles as if to make it comprehensible in its entirety. The implication is that the reverse of one takes the same form as the front of the other, and in a sense, one can stand for the other. In this way the man in reverse is made invisible and anonymous, merely a model illustrating a style of clothing. A substantial proportion of the collected artefacts donated to MAA by Smith and Forfeitt are made up of items of everyday dress, particularly metal ornaments (Fig. 4.35, 4.37) and types of belts made from woven plant fibre or incorporating brass beads (Fig. 4.36, 4.38) and raffia skirts worn by women (Fig. 4.39). There are also examples of woven cloth (Fig. 4.40) and Smith's collection at BMAG contains samples of barkcloth in various stages of production (Fig. 4.41). The emphasis on styles of dress and body ornaments reflected in all three of the collections corresponds with von Hügel's requests with regard to photographic records but may also indicate that these were categories of material culture which were easily attainable by the missionaries.

A number of photographs made in the grounds of Upoto, for example Figures 4.20, 4.21, 4.24 and 4.42-4.46 seem to have been made opportunistically. The people in them have been arranged in deliberate postures and often an attempt has been made to isolate them from surroundings figures. The majority are situated directly on the garden path; the bleached orthogonal lines where it meets the garden border are a common compositional feature. The station garden can be interpreted as a liminal space which outsiders could enter. It was at once inside the borders of the station but not within the protected nucleus of the mission family, a place where interactions between various 'insiders' and 'others' could occur. There is the sense that many of these people were visiting the station, particularly in Figures 4.42-4.44 and 4.50 where women wear basket carriers which are (or were) filled with bread and other foodstuffs. They were likely bringing food to the mission community,

possibly as part of the State tax collection, and Smith decided that they would make worthy photographic subjects. They could be lined up in profile in order to demonstrate the method of wearing the carriers, or if their scarification was of ethnographic interest, photographed frontally (Fig. 4.42). Other women seem to have been asked to sit on a stool to make the photograph, for example, Figures 4.45 and 4.46, where they adopted similar poses. They were photographed from angles which offer views of the scarification on their arms and face, as well as to highlight details of personal ornamentation. The extent to which Smith was able to control the conditions of the photographic occasion seems to have depended upon where the event was taking place and who was participating. Those images made on the station grounds have a repetitive configuration which give the sense that the individuals complied with Smith's instructions to achieve certain aesthetic results. As will be seen, these photographs have a markedly different character to Smith's photographs of local Congolese political figures which were not conceived on the station premises.

It is possible to take this further and suggest that the transitory space of the garden permitted opportunities for Smith to make photographs on his terms, which may not have been possible elsewhere when he was a guest in a town. A photograph which appears to accord with von Hügel's request for 'tattooed (cicatricised) regions of the body in larger scale' is Figure 4.47. The four women, who are arranged in order of height, sit frontally and close to the camera, on the garden path. Smith's intention seems to have been to display the abdominal cicatrisation of each woman, all of whom wear European cloth from the waist down. Their identical poses are evidently intended to offer a clear and comparable view of their cicatrisation designs. Similarly, the lantern slides in Figures 4.48-4.49 have been choreographed to show different views of upper body patterns. It is impossible to understand fully the terms on which such images were made, but it is tempting to conclude that the women in these images were not Christian converts who Smith had instructed to undress in the garden for the occasion. William Forfeitt also made photographs on the garden path, for example, in Figure 4.50, where it appears that the women have brought pots in carriers to the station. This reinforces the concept that photography became part of other exchanges that were taking place when people visited the station.

There are similarities in the kind of ethnographic style of images that Smith was making and those made by Forfeitt, although there is no evidence of Forfeitt

having made photographs as part of a commission by a museum. As has been established in the preceding chapters, there was an appetite for imagery purporting to show dimensions of Congolese cultures in BMS publications, albeit within a heavily moralistic framework. A consideration of some of the images which Forfeitt made and collected further complicates attempts to disentangle the production of ethnographic images from other photographic practices at Upoto. Like Smith, Forfeitt drew upon existing relationships and used the mission station as an established site of exchange in order to make photographs of Congolese people.

A series of photographs of partially undressed Congolese people was made by Forfeitt at Upoto in order to document the different scarification designs of individual men and women. The series was made on some steps on the station grounds (Fig. 4.51-4.56). Though largely identical in composition, there is variation between the images in that different individuals were arranged in the foreground on each occasion and their poses vary from frontal torso views to those where their heads are in profile. The close correlation between the subject and arrangement indicates that the sequence of images was conceived as a set which would allow for visual comparisons between bodies whilst the background remained unaltered. Two of the men who sat for these photographs are those who were also photographed for their scarification patterns by Smith (Fig. 4.56, 4.57). Forfeitt's image of the two men on the steps was later reproduced in the religious and scientific magazine *The Open Court* in 1918 in Chicago, with the caption 'Upoto 'Keloids' on face and chest' (vol. 32 no.11: 672). In all of the images the photographed individuals have their partially or fully removed clothes from their chests in their lap. It is impossible to 'read' the expressions of the sitters with any certainty but one interpretation would be that these individuals were not totally at ease during this photographic occasion. I am inclined to interpret the sitters' expressions as evidence of their resignation or despondence while others appear to frown or grimace. In my own view, from the facial expressions, more than one of the individuals felt uncomfortable during the process of being photographed.

There is no real context available in order to explain how and why these images of personal scarification were made, however some information may be inferred. Another pair of identical photographs belonging to the Forfeitt collection appears to depict some of the same women who sat on the steps to be photographed (Fig. 4.58, 4.59). In this image they are standing fully dressed in a large group alongside some of the men also photographed on the steps. On the reverse of one of

these images is written 'Soldier's Wives from Lisala Camp.' Here the women are all wearing long cloths which cover their bodies. The fact that these women were the wives of a soldier or soldiers in the *Force Publique* suggests that they may not have been local to the Upoto area but instead were relocated with their husbands to the military camp. None of the individuals photographed have the style of facial scarification made of concentric lines which was associated with the Upoto region when the missionaries were there. Forfeitt may therefore have been keen to document styles of personal scarification from other regions of the Congo that he had not had the opportunity to see before. The fact that these individuals were in some way marginal to the Christian community at Upoto and were likely visitors to the region may have meant that Forfeitt felt more able to photograph their nudity. That is, for reasons of propriety, it seems improbable that he would have asked local Christians to undress at the mission station in order to photograph their bodies. What can be said is that Forfeitt shared an interest in documenting forms of body modification and, like Smith, made close-up photographs of individual's bodies who had undressed for the occasion.

Both Forfeitt and Smith came into contact with the American anthropologist Frederick Starr when he visited Upoto as part of his scientific expedition to the Congo between 1905 and 1906. One aspect of this endeavour was to make a photographic survey of Congolese peoples, alongside documenting the physical appearance of people, collecting accounts of 'customs', samples of language, music and material culture (Starr 1912: 8). The majority of the photographs were actually made by a man named Manuel Gonzalez who accompanied Starr as his personal photographer (Starr 1912: 9). In conducting his research Starr visited a number of State posts and used men serving in the *Force Publique* as his subjects. In his own words 'Measurements and personal observations of cicatrisation, tooth-chipping, hair-dressing, etc.) were made upon almost one thousand men serving as soldiers in the Congo Free State service' (Starr 1912: 8). Given that Starr's expedition was facilitated by administrative officials of the State (Schildkrout 2018: 75), the men serving in the *Force Publique* at military camps provided him with easy access to large numbers of potential research subjects for documenting physical anthropology, despite not living in their 'native' condition. Starr recorded having met Forfeitt on a steamer *en route* up the river Congo when he purchased a number of books from him and the two men discussed collecting objects (Schildkrout 2018: 75-6). Forfeitt also spoke of the potential items which he hoped to help Starr to procure up-river

(Schildkrout 2018: 76). According to the mission logbook he arrived at Upoto on 17th August 1906. With this information it is tempting to hypothesise that the photographs made of soldiers' wives at Upoto were either made by Gonzalez, or by Forfeitt on the occasion of Starr's visit. It is possible that once men and women had been procured from Lisala for Starr to document, both Forfeitt and Smith used the opportunity to make photographs of the same individuals while they hosted the expedition party at the station.

One of the resulting products of the expedition's research was the publication *Congo Natives: An Ethnographic Album* (1912), in which Starr acknowledged a number of BMS missionaries who had assisted the research and whose earlier writings he drew upon (Starr 1912: 9). Starr even reproduced in the album some photographs made by missionaries, including twelve by Forfeitt which make up the majority of the images used to illustrate Upoto (Fig. 4.60-4.67). This suggests that Forfeitt's images were deemed to have been good enough to supplement those made by Gonzalez for conveying ethnographic information. It may also have been necessary to fill certain 'gaps' in the photographic record as a result of damage to their own negatives made during the expedition. Many of the photographs which Starr chose to include are recognisable as images which had been made earlier in Forfeitt's time at Upoto and which came to circulate in different formats. Forfeitt's photograph of the so-called 'funeral dance' at Upoto, discussed in Chapter 3 (Fig. 4.62), was reproduced in Starr's album alongside one captioned 'Girl's Festival' (Fig. 4.60). Images depicting fishing activity and one showing pottery drying were included and these were also made into lantern slides for Forfeitt's public lectures. In terms of subject matter, there is a strong correlation between the photographs which Forfeitt, Smith and Gonzalez made, and which Starr collected and which were able to function as credible ethnographic documents. It appears that no photographic collection representing local culture at Upoto was complete without scenes showing fishing, pottery drying, wrestling matches, close-ups of facial scarification and women wearing heavy necklaces made of pipe beads. Clearly Starr had been primed as to the kinds of cultural artefacts he could expect to be able to collect at Upoto and Forfeitt played a key role in determining the kinds of ethnographic views which were collected by the anthropologist.

Documents of Power

Forfeitt and Smith may well have acted as mediators among the Upoto people whom Starr and Gonzalez photographed during their stay, particularly in translating Starr's intentions to his participants. The two images chosen to represent facial scarification on a man from Upoto in Starr's *Ethnographic Album* were of a man who also participated in photography on other occasions with the missionaries (Fig. 4.67). In the collection made by Smith for Cambridge he was represented in three separate images (Fig. 4.68, 4.70, 4.71). Two photographs of this individual are also in the Forfeitt collection, made on a separate occasion (Fig. 4.69). Rather than see the existence of multiple photographs of this individual between personal and institutional collections as coincidental, it is possible to infer that it was the man's status and relationship to the missionaries which enabled the production of such photographs.

In Starr's album the images of the individual are captioned 'Upoto' (Fig. 4.67) and the accompanying description of the plate reads 'Foto. Upoto. Characteristic face-marking and bead neck-ring; a line of beads is strung upon the beard' (Starr 1912: 31). The two images depict the upper half of the man's body facing forward and again in profile against a white background. Like his female counterpart, who appears in a pair of images on the preceding page, the pictures were intended to be read for their representation of scarification patterns and physical attributes which Starr described as 'characteristic' of Upoto people. In this context, as in the making of ethnographic documents for MAA's collection, the individuals photographed were constructed in the album as types. The images' successful function as illustrations of types depended not on personal attributes linked to individual identity but instead rested on the anonymity of the subjects in order that generalities could be extrapolated (Edwards 1990: 241). In these images the man and woman were made to operate as objectifications of Upoto and their appearance meant to be understood not as singular but examples of identifiable commonalities. Schildkrout has noted how Starr's ethnographic writing on the Congo was formed predominantly through observation and that his insights rarely went beyond a surface-level of description to explain cultural meaning (2018: 81). This mode of writing can be seen in his commentary to the images in the album where he essentially describes the photographs, listing visible features and highlighting aspects of material culture which he deemed interesting. The information mostly remains at the level of descriptive summary, giving the sense that the analysis

originated with the photographs themselves and was occasionally supplemented with facts he had read. Here Forfeitt and his photographs had a degree of agency in Starr's construction of ethnographic knowledge about northern Congo whereby images served as both product and process in stages of anthropological meaning-making (Wingfield 2012b: 71-75).

In the collection of images which Smith gave to Cambridge Museum there are two photographs which depict this same man, with duplicates (Fig. 4.68, 4.69). The description provided for them both is 'Coronation of Ikite'. In these images the man featured in Starr's album appears seated centrally next to three women wearing heavily beaded necklaces and girdles. Behind them are standing an entourage of men holding weapons and shields. There are a number of large concave wickerwork shields in the collections donated to MAA and BMAG by Smith (Fig. 4.72-4.74). Many of these shields have bold geometric designs in red and black pigment on their inner and outer surfaces. The presentation of shields in these photographs suggests their role as prestigious objects at Upoto but the increased import of guns into the Congo by Europeans at this time was changing warfare and would likely have altered how shields were being used.[39]

Research carried out with members of a Congolese diaspora community as part of the Congo Great Lakes Initiative Project at the Museum in 2016 led to the interpretation of the term *Ikite* as a title meaning the 'high chief of an area'.[40] These photographs therefore seem to have been made on the occasion marking the individual's transition to the rank of *Ikite*. The man is wearing a number of pipe bead and metal ornaments, including necklaces featuring leopard claws. He is seated on a brass nail-studded stool, holds a fly whisk in one hand and a large bell is positioned at his feet. The possessions which were symbolic of authority, ornaments signifying wealth, and the presence of the other people organised in relation to him further indicate that this was a man of high status. It is worth noting that neither Smith nor Forfeitt collected examples of the white beaded outfits for the Museum, or any of the striped sashes made of forest antelope skin seen pictured here, or curved wooden stools that were heavily decorated with brass nails from around Upoto. It is possible that as prestige items they were not readily exchanged by Congolese people. Forfeitt

[39] The shields collected by Frederick Starr at Upoto, now in the American Museum of Natural History, correspond closely in style to those at MAA (for example: AMNH 90.0/5853, 90.0/5851, 90.0/5855 and 90.0/5857).

[40] Comments provided by the Great Lakes Initiative project team, MAA object database, entries for objects P.7125.ACH1 and P.7126.ACH1.

made two other photographs of this *Ikite* at a separate event, where he was also framed in the centre of the image and photographed surrounded by a large group of people (Fig. 4.69). These images do not depict men in body paint carrying weapons, but the composition still suggests a sense of occasion because of the number of people seated surrounding the central men. A similar image of Forfeitt's entitled 'Coronation of Chiefs, Upoto' made its way into Starr's *Ethnographic Album*, this time made further away from the prominent group of men (Fig. 4.62). The existence of the four further photographs made of the Upoto man pictured in Starr's album shed a different light on his participation in photography for the Starr expedition. This was a man who was used to being photographed by the missionaries at Upoto, and such events were probably conceived by them as opportunities to make portraits of a local authority figure. Posing for photographs may have been, for the Congolese authority, experienced as a public display of respect and recognition by the European mission community. Although there is no surviving information about the ceremonies described by the missionaries as coronations, it is interesting that these events created forms of spectacle felt to be worth photographing by Forfeitt and Smith. The photographs testify that the formal occasions recognising the *Ikite* were visually compelling and also that the missionaries were permitted to be present for some of the proceedings. It is likely that as local expressions of political power they took place on Congolese terms, filled with cultural significance for the *Ikite* and his entourage. An analogous instance of this dynamic emerging out of sustained encounters between Congolese rulers and outsiders is that of Herbert Lang who spent years living and making photographs among the Mangbetu for the American Museum of Natural History, 1909-1915. It has been asserted that individual Mangbetu chiefs harnessed repeated photographic occasions with Lang to propagate a particular public image of themselves and had considerable input in determining compositions (Schildkrout 1991: 81). Similarly, the photographs made of Kot aPe, the *nyim* (or king), by the ethnographer Emil Torday whilst visiting the Kuba court have been analysed as part of a broader cultural tradition of sculpted royal portraiture among the Kuba (Mack 1991: 65). These photographic occasions were likewise entered into on the basis of the relationship which Torday had cultivated with Kuba people and the trust which existed between himself and Kot aPe (Mack 1991: 65-66). This enables an alternative interpretation of the photographic occasion with Gonzalez and Starr. For this Upoto *Ikite*, participating in photography may have

represented further opportunities to assert his political power and perform his identity for outsiders.

Across the photographic collections associated with Forfeitt and Smith, images of males (occasionally identified as chiefs), pictured surrounded by women and an entourage are a recurring genre. A lantern slide in the collections at MAA (Fig. 4.75) claims to show a Boela man and woman; and the same man appears three times in Smith's album in the BMS archives (Fig. 4.76 - 4.78). In the latter set of images he has been photographed at Upoto Station, with his son (Fig. 4.76), then seated on the steps of a mission house with son and wife (Fig. 4.77) according to Smith's annotations. In the third image he and Smith have been photographed shaking hands (Fig. 4.78). Here the caption describes him simply as a 'Boela chief'. The image with Smith appears to subvert the subject-object relationship of the other photographs because the two men have come to inhabit the same physical space and become equal subjects before the camera. They are pictured mid-handshake, bodies angled towards each other whilst looking towards the camera. It is impossible to know if the gesture enacted for the photographic occasion was symbolic of a particular diplomatic event. The gesture between the two men does however speak to a more complex relationship between photographer and subject than what can be inferred from an ethnographic portrait at MAA. Interestingly the same chief was photographed by Germain François Grégoire in 1911 (Fig. 4.79), a lieutenant of the *Force Publique* affiliated with Lisala military camp between 1910 and 1911.[41] The caption accompanying this image at the Africa Museum, Tervuren is *'Le Chef Mokoko, ancien chef de guerre des Modingiri (Bevela)'*. If, as these titles suggest, he was a local figure of authority, such photographic events would have added to his visibility and recognition among the European communities.

The similarities between these images across the photographic record suggest that photographic occasions had come to be seen as valuable socially productive events among local authorities. There is little indication that these men received the resulting print of their photographs, but in a sense, this was not the object. Their participation served to reinforce the cross-cultural translation of local power structures. Both Forfeitt and Smith made photographs with 'family groups,' a phrase occasionally used in captions on the reverse of the prints. Figures 4.80 and 4.81 are

[41] Biographie Coloniale Belge, (1948) vol. 1, col. 442.
https://www.kaowarsom.be/fr/notices_gregoire_germain_françois

examples of this genre, where women and children are arranged around a central seated male. These photographs share a symmetry in the positions of figures and were often framed as if to demarcate the social group. The compositions suggest degrees of kinship or affiliation through individual's proximity to the male. The women seated around them are grouped together, often holding young children. At the periphery of the group are usually younger men standing, and who sometimes bear a resemblance to the central male. The particular positioning of the participants in these images suggest that it was the prominent males who determined which people should be included. These images imply that the photographic occasion was a moment for the performance of local status and power: for Congolese onlookers but also for their European visitors.

What is striking about the images which the missionaries made of local Congolese political figures and their families is the resemblance to their own modes of portraiture within the BMS mission community at this time. Portraits of the 'missionary family' at Upoto and other BMS stations were made according to compositional conventions according to the gender, seniority and age of the sitters (Fig. 4.82, 4.83). Like the photographs of Congolese kin groups, the missionary cohorts frequently organised themselves for photographs around the men who were often situated centrally or at the apex of a group. Missionary wives were then almost always positioned in closest proximity to their husbands, followed by their children and other women with whom they were shared a similar occupation and status as part of the BMS mission. Women, children and Congolese servants formed part of the entourage of extended family who symbolically supported the patriarchal status of missionary men through the visual schema reserved for photographic occasions. Such arrangements, particularly for images intended for public circulation, sought to convey a sense of cohesive social order, respectability and the kind of appropriate gender relations one could expect at home from Baptists living in the Congo. Cultural spatial politics were also at play in the way Congolese people arranged themselves for group photographs, which would have been coherent with local concepts of relationality, social hierarchy and space. These are dimensions of Congolese individuals' lived experiences of those photographic occasions which cannot now be recovered. The photographs do, however, stand as documents of Congolese subjects' presence in those encounters with Smith and his camera (Edwards 2016a). What is apparent is that photography enabled opportunities for representation and public performance that were used in corresponding ways by the

different patriarchal societies in the Congo. Such occasions were experienced through their respective cultural worldviews and were meaningful for their subjects in ways that were distinct from the photographer's intentions.

In addition to the people chosen to feature in photographs of Congolese families and leaders, the material culture displayed was also intended to be recognised as symbols of power. The items worn or held on these occasions was often a mixture of traditional ornamentation and weapons, alongside items which would have been acquired through trade with Europeans. European textiles, hats and umbrellas appear alongside knives, spears, shields, metal ornaments and beads. Such objects would have had local cultural resonances for the Congolese subjects who deployed them that were not apparent for missionary photographers. In Figure 4.81 for example, the central man sits in a European-style deck chair wearing a style of naval hat and gingham cloth around his waist. Some of the women wear strings of spherical beads which were likely glass, one holds an oval mirror and another wears a white cloth skirt; all of which were goods imported by Europeans. The symbolic potential of these objects as prestige items acquired through trade and signifying connectedness in commercial networks with Europeans was likely harnessed deliberately for the occasion. A particular style of iron knife with a tripartite blade near the wooden handle seems to have been used conspicuously in displays of patriarchal power at Upoto in the late nineteenth century and can be seen represented in a number of Smith's photographs, some with elaborate fur pommels (Fig. 4.91, 4.93). Examples of this kind of knife were collected by Forfeitt (Fig. 4.88-4.90), Smith (now at BMAG), and by Starr, now in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History.[42]

A version of a photograph acquired by von Hügel, now at MAA (Fig. 4.91), exists at the Angus library (Fig. 4.92) as a print that has been fixed to some textured card and had its corners cut off. Beneath the print is written in pencil 'Mamunga', an inscription which combined with the image's 'remediation' (Edwards 2012: 226) suggests that at one point the assemblage was made to enhance a reading of it as a portrait. Though it is the same image represented as that in the collection of MAA, the cardboard frame and decision to name the man implies that the photographic object was made by someone who had known him, and it functioned quite

[42] For example, objects AMNH 90.0/6386 and 90.0/6397 AB are described as Ngombe knives which are very similar to the knife at MAA.

differently to the print which achieved ethnographic status. Another loose print of the same image (which is housed with it) has written on the reverse: 'Mamunga. Chief of Bopoto and his "throne". Died of smallpox June 15th 1901' (A/P/29/8) and corroborates that the man was an individual of some authority at Upoto. In Smith's personal photograph album a similar image was pasted in but there Mamunga is represented seated on the chair, his sash and knife sheath on the floor whilst the knife is propped up against the chair leg in full view (Fig. 4.93). Taken together, the two photographic images which originated from the same occasion reveal that there was a degree of staging and negotiation involved between the man referred to as Mamunga and by Smith as photographer. The objects in the scene were employed in different configurations, which were probably in part dictated by Smith who would have been keen to produce a useful visual record of the material culture and in part determined by the Bapoto authority who used them to perform his status. Interestingly, one of the items that Mamunga can be seen holding in these images is a dark European-style sailing cap, similar to one worn by Forfeitt in the portrait discussed in the previous chapter. Again, the knife, cap and stool were part of Mamunga's performance in negotiating his presence during the photographic occasion, and were likely filled with significance for him during the cultural encounter.

Significantly, Forfeitt and Smith were not the only Europeans to make these kinds of photographs, intended as portraits of authorities, in the communities around Upoto. Johan Frederik Lankamp was a Dutch trader based at a trading post west of Upoto 1890-93 (Schmidt and Westerdijk 2006) who had ongoing contact with the BMS. A photograph album of his survives housed at the Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden, which contains portraits of John and William Forfeitt, as well as Frederick Oram. Prints of some of the photographs attributed to Lankamp by the Museum Volkenkunden were owned by William Forfeitt and by Smith (now in the BMS archive) but the same images were also attributed to Forfeitt elsewhere, such as in Starr's published album. It therefore becomes difficult to identify with certainty the creators of the original images which were evidently shared among the photographers. Lankamp photographed a man he identifies as 'Chief Batamaduli' on a few of occasions (Fig. 4.84-4.86). In Figure 4.84 he identifies Batamaduli as a man of status, a translation of the caption is 'Group portrait of headman Batamaduli with women, children and subjects'. In another image made with Lankamp (Fig. 4.85) he is seen seated with his youngest wife and daughter, and in a third image,

Batamaduli posed for another group portrait (Fig. 4.86). These photographs share many of the characteristics of the portrait-style photographs made by Smith and Forfeitt, not only in the composition but the display of weapons and prominence of female attendants or wives. A further photograph of an important man seen in the image in Figure 4.86 appears in the album (Fig. 4.87), with the caption 'Group portrait of a Central African prince with his wives and children in front of a residence in the village of Bowangi'. The similarities between the images that the missionaries and Lankamp were making around Upoto in the 1890s suggest that these photographic occasions incorporated the agendas of the political figures being photographed. As moments in which they negotiated their position in relation to the European arrivals, these particular compositions of people and objects were likely conceived as assemblages which would communicate power according to a local understandings.

Upoto Women as Curiosity

Another genre of photographic images made around Upoto by Europeans at the turn of the twentieth century was associated with Congolese women in beaded attire. This type of image is recurrent in the Smith photographs sent to von Hügel, in images made by Forfeitt and reproduced by Starr, as well as appearing in the archives of the Africa Museum in Tervuren. Scenes of Congolese women and girls gathered together in heavy outfits made of white beads seem to have been considered a compelling spectacle for photographers in the Upoto-Lisala area. Sometimes the women were photographed in large groups, seemingly engaged in some other activity (Fig. 4.60) but on other occasions were photographed close up, isolated in pairs or individually against a neutral backdrop in ways which emphasised their modes of self-fashioning. Smith sent three photographs to Cambridge in which the beaded outfits of the photographed subjects seems to have been the focus of the image (Fig. 4.100, 4.101). The images in which girls and women were asked to pose in order to make visible their outfits are very similar in composition to some housed in the archives of the Africa Museum, namely Figures 4.94-4.98 by Pierre Ferraris, who was in Lisala in 1913. The necklaces and attached belts were made of white ceramic beads which were reported as having been trade goods used by Europeans and which were valued at Upoto in the late nineteenth century. Bentley refers to them as 'china pipe beads' that replaced white beads originally made from bone (Bentley 1900: 269, vol. 2). The appearance of women in

beads seated as part of the entourage in representations of Congolese authority figures confirms that the beaded dress symbolised wealth and contributed to the display of power by male leaders. Strings of white beads were also laid out on the bodies of the dead at Upoto, visible in some of Smith's photographs of funerary proceedings. Analysis of this genre of photograph suggests that the outfits did not constitute daily attire for all women but was worn by young and adolescent women on particular occasions. The women photographed wearing beads by Europeans may well have been affiliated with chiefly families in the area and the wearing of outfits reserved for select occasions such as initiation ceremonies, funerals or the inauguration of an *Ikite*. The captions supplied with scenes which portrayed women in this style of outfit were consistently vague: 'Girl's Festival, Upoto' (Starr's 1912 album), 'Bopoto Girls Beaded' (Forfeitt's lantern slide), 'Upoto slave girls in their holiday bead attire' (BMS album gifted to Henry Morton Stanley), 'Girls in beaded ornaments from Upoto ready to perform a dance' (Frederik Lankamp's album) 'Upoto - Dancing woman and attendants' (Angus A/P/94/58) and 'Slave girls decorated with beads' (Angus A/P/29/59), and 'Moto-o-keta & two attendants (white beads for funerals)' (MAA LS.125675.TC1). The recurrence of such images made at this time speaks to the ways in which Europeans were drawn to document the spectacle of Congolese women which would likely have been considered exotic and, ironically, traditional. It seems to have constituted a popular subject in the construction of authentic ethnographic imagery around Upoto, as opposed to scenes of women who would have been wearing textiles and some European-style clothes at this time. The prevalence of this kind of image also serves as evidence that outsiders were sometimes allowed to be present at these culturally significant occasions, if only at the periphery. In considering the breadth of ethnographic images made around Upoto, images of women in this guise suggest the shared interests of European photographers in this period but also the way in which Congolese people played into repeated photographic encounters.

'Boys' and Warriors

Among the photographs that Smith sent to von Hügel which became part of the collection at MAA are images of individuals who appear in other kinds of photographs made by Smith and Forfeitt and their colleagues. This second class of images conformed with the genre of celebratory convert portrait photography and were created with different ideological intent from that of constituting ethnographic

evidence. Unsurprisingly, they were not the kind of views which validated von Hügel's conception of Congolese people and were mostly retained in missionaries' personal archives before being incorporated into the BMS archives at the Angus Library. It would no doubt be possible to identify more people who performed their identity in these two guises for the missionaries' camera. Thus far it has been possible to identify four men who were engaged in creating scenes of 'traditional' Congolese activities as well as featuring in photographic occasions in which the missionary men sought to convey the success of the Upoto mission. What is evident by now is how the meanings of photographic content from Upoto were negotiated by individuals in England and the images' signifying potential was contingent upon the particular social and institutional settings in which they were placed.

Key to understanding how such images operated is the fact that the 'ethnographic' and 'mission work' genres as they were constructed through photography were put to work in largely separate 'interpretative spheres' (Edwards 1998: 109). This is because each genre fulfilled competing idealised expectations of Congolese people at Upoto. The anticipated audiences of the two genres had opposing wants: just as von Hügel rejected images of Congolese life which contained too much evidence of the missionary influence, readers of the *Missionary Herald* would likely have been disturbed by views of Christians which did not support their conception of a complete transformation of character, behaviour and appearance. Images of Congolese people in a 'traditional' state were only acceptable when incorporated into an ideological framework which stressed imminent change or sought to convey an earlier view which could be contrasted with an improved state of affairs. Baptist publics in Britain were largely given reassuring accounts of the one-way trajectories of African converts because reports of behaviour which constituted backsliding undermined the narrative of the evangelical progress being made at Upoto. There needed to be a clear 'before' and 'after' which was confirmed by photography and an exclusion of images which might disrupt the clear temporal direction and stability of that change.

Figures 4.105 and 4.106 are photographs which were made on the occasion discussed above which was described as the coronation of an *Ikite* at Upoto. A number of the men wearing body paint who accompany the key figure in these scenes are men who were also photographed according to conventions which stressed the individual achievements of members of the Christian community (Fig. 4.104, 4.107-4.109). In the *Ikite's* portrait, the man standing behind his right shoulder,

wearing a feather headdress and a necklace with metal bells, a whistle and a large horn who looks directly towards the camera (Fig. 4.102, 4.103), appears to be the same man photographed in Figure. 4.104. In this latter image two Congolese men were represented in pristine European-style clothing, including shirts and fitted tailored jackets. One of the individuals was probably Lonjiku, who worked as a personal 'boy' at Upoto for Reverend Dodds. They seem to be standing on the path in the mission station garden and the appearance of the composition suggests it was intended as a portrait. The format of this image, with its central focus on the two men and their relatively formal body language in relation to the photographer seems to imply that the image was made with the intention of documenting two successful converts. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, photographs composed of Congolese people in neat clothing functioned to evidence the visible outward changes undergone by local converts and were reproduced in BMS propaganda because they testified to the influence of the Upoto mission. Another man who posed for Smith whilst wearing body paint, whistles and holding a knife and spear also participated in photography on the mission station wearing European-style clothing (Fig. 4.105-4.110). Again, these images seem to cohere with the genre of 'boy' portraiture which was being made at Upoto. A third man can also be seen in both the guise of warrior and mission convert (discussed in the previous chapter) (Fig. 4.112, 4.113) and a fourth in the background was also photographed in clothing associated with mission 'boys' and evangelists. Here were supposedly 'civilised' 'boys' and converts dressed as savage warriors and continuing their native traditions. Any implication that these sorts of images were being made contemporaneously threatened reassuring authoritative missionary depictions of the changes evidenced in the behaviour of local converts.

The fact that these individuals participated in the making of photographs which represented their identities in different lights unsettles contemporaneous BMS narratives of the course of African conversion and what it looked like at Upoto. It is evidently difficult to say very much about what this meant for those people who were photographed by Smith, particularly as there is no definite chronology for when all the photographs were made. It isn't clear what conversion entailed for Congolese people at Upoto in terms of their pre-existing relationships, communities and responsibilities or how they navigated their identities as Christians. What can be said is that the exclusive views intended for Baptist publics played into idealised representations of the evangelical process. Celebratory mission portraits of

Congolese people helped to maintain the aesthetic and ideological distance between those who were living as Christians and those who were not, and by extension, between concepts of self and African other (Hall 2002: 108). The maintenance of certain visual categories of Congolese people at Upoto was necessary in the images distributed back to Britain by missionary photographers because it confirmed the effects of their influence and provided reassuring evidence that Christians and non-Christians were leading separate lives.

Conclusion

This chapter took as its focus the collection of photographs made by Kenred Smith and acquired by MAA, Cambridge. It examined the surviving correspondence between the museum's then curator Baron von Hügel, Smith and other intermediaries in order to understand the ideas which determined Smith's practice. It also examined evidence of von Hügel's selection criteria and the desirable qualities of images that, in his view, enabled them to function as valid anthropological artefacts. It has been revealed how the curator's processes of selection, informed by contemporary agendas within British anthropology, and subsequent material interventions, worked to confer documental status to Smith's images within the professional context of the museum.

Analysis of the different photographs which Smith created with certain genres of image in mind, has made it possible to identify compositional conventions which in turn have brought the nature of the photographic event into view. Discussion of the collaborative work which went into the making of photographs intended to function as anthropological artefacts has revealed the relationships which Smith had built with local Congolese people who participated in these occasions. Detailed analysis of the 'visual excess' of photographic content facilitated a consideration of the physical circumstances in which the photographs were made (Morton and Edwards 2009a: 4), often involving people with pre-existing relationships to the mission community. This finding was further corroborated by the existence of duplicate prints of the same photographs at MAA in an album of Smith's in the BMS archive. The attribution of names in handwritten captions evidenced the fact that Smith had known many of the Congolese individuals by name, a detail not deemed relevant in the context of an anonymised 'scientific' museum deposit .

The recurrence of photographs of Congolese male authorities in regalia and accompanied by wives or an entourage was a significant finding that was explored in this chapter. It was argued that such photographs represented historical occasions where political leaders sought to perform their authority and assert their identity for onlookers during the making of photographs with Smith. Connections were also established between the ethnographic photographs made by the anthropologist Frederick Starr and Willian Forfeitt, whose images feature the same Bapoto authority figure. Analysis of the photographs which feature in Starr's published album demonstrated that the BMS missionaries mediated photographic occasions at Upoto and were responsible for shaping genres of ethnographic photographs made in the area.

Crucially, in this chapter it was shown that certain individuals participated in making photographs of ethnographic scenes in addition to featuring in portraits of the mission's nascent Christian community. These personal reappearances between different photographic genres and archival locations disrupts a straightforward narrative of discrete Christian and non-Christian existences, of traditional lifestyles rejected in favour of a modern, civilised state envisaged by the missionaries. It is evidence that they presented different aspects of their identity to the missionary photographers at different times. This reinforces the idea that the photographs need to be approached cautiously because neither genre can be interpreted as a straightforward representation of the meanings that historical inscriptions have maintained. The analysis of the photographic collection at MAA has demonstrated the extent to which photographic content was shaped by its subsequent social and material framings in separate contexts of use.

Chapter Five
Curating Memory

Photographs and Memory

This chapter explores the work of photographic images associated with the Upoto mission and the social contexts where they were activated within the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) in Britain after their production. Attention is given to *how* and *why* photographic images were circulated within specific networks to understand how representations of the Congo were employed in the publicity work of the BMS and were received by members of the Baptist community. Through a discussion of four photographic assemblages this chapter analyses instances where photographs were used to disseminate information about the mission and represent Congolese people to audiences at home. Here it is shown how photographs were employed to foster imperial ideologies and generate philanthropy within the religious economy of the BMS and its supporters. This focus on photographic assemblages, as opposed to individual photographs, brings to the fore the various material and social mechanisms through which photographs were manipulated and given meaning according to their intended interpretive contexts. Once again, attention to the historical 'archival grain' (Stoler 2009) of how images were inscribed and narrated in processes of 'remediation' provides insight into the forms of 'expectancy' around their social purpose and value for specific communities (Edwards 2012: 226). Photographic images enabled missionaries to bridge distance and cultural difference, maintain relationships and shared identities across continents because the mediums that were used meant they were mobile and could be repurposed for different audiences. Some of the images made at Upoto which have been discussed in previous chapters resurface here in different social and material guises, where they are shown to have been active within a network of alternative processes and relations (Hevia 2009: 80).

The capacity of photographs as mnemonic devices in the narration of personal and group histories is a further dimension that is addressed to understand how photographs were kept and exchanged. It is well established that the unique indexical quality of photography as a medium has meant that photographs have been (and continue to be) valued culturally as records or pieces of evidence of past events (Kuhn and McAllister 2006b: 1). As 'a form of externalised memory *par*

excellence' (Edwards 2006: 70), this chapter examines how photographs were disseminated and re-assembled to shape narratives of past missionary experiences in the Congo in ways that served personal and organisational needs in the present. Photographs were given trajectories that reinforced family ties through a 'familial gaze' (Hirsch 1999: xi) and facilitated acts of remembrance in order to overcome the temporary loss of friends and family who had devoted their lives to mission. Photographs were also used by the BMS to represent their work in Congo to different publics in order to generate support and curate the information that entered the officially sanctioned historical discourse. As Maria Sturken has asserted: '[i]mages have the capacity to create, interfere with, and trouble the memories we hold as individuals and as a culture. They lend shape to personal stories and truth claims, and function as technologies of memory, producing both memory and forgetting' (Sturken 1999: 178). This chapter addresses the creation of private and public aspects of memory, whilst not positing 'memory' and 'history' as mutually exclusive conceptual categories that represent polarities on a linear scale. Sometimes the symbolic resonances of photographs held social currency in private settings, linking individuals to larger narratives of identity and belonging. The same symbolic meanings could be used to underpin a political agenda in the public representation of the mission's work.

In the course of this chapter, attention is directed to the material settings in which images were sensorially experienced to argue that these details were intrinsic to how visual representations were made meaningful. Traces of the physical interventions that photographs underwent offer evidence of how images were deliberately manipulated in accordance with the intentions and desires of actors at a given historical moment (Edwards and Hart 2004a: 13-14). The specific material and immaterial forms that constituted photographic assemblages, whether in albums, published books, or narrated in lantern side presentations, contributed to how meanings were constructed and in turn prescribed the nature of bodily and social interactions that were afforded (Edwards 2005: 34). Photographic prints could be touched and held, enabling a haptic embodied connection to the persons represented that in turn contributed to how images were interpreted. The oral dimension of how photographs were performed publicly by missionaries in order to narrate their experiences comprises another register in which photographic meanings were generated and personalised. It will be demonstrated that, as objects with 'social lives' (Appadurai 1986), photographs representing Upoto were invested with

meaning in a dialectic between the curators of these photographic assemblages and their subsequent viewers.

The photograph album '2001.414.1' is a small photograph album probably compiled between 1900 and 1920 which once belonged to an H.V. Collier and is now housed in Reading Museum (Fig. 5.1). On the inner cover '"Westgrove", Reading' has been written in ink, mirrored by the words 'H.V. Collier, 56 George Square, Edinburgh, 5/1/10' on the first page. The Collier family was a prominent Baptist family in Reading in the late nineteenth century, owners of the brick-making business S. & E. Collier Ltd. The family lived in a property named 'Westgrove' in Reading, next to their brickworks, Grovelands, which was in operation from 1870. The album comprises photographs of Westgrove, the brickworks, local scenes, members of the Collier family at home and on holiday. It also contains photographs of Baptist missionary work in the Congo, with a number of photographs related to the Upoto mission station. The compiler seems to have been a sibling of Anne Marie Forfeitt, née Collier, the daughter of Samuel Jeremiah Collier and Eliza Staner. Included in the album is a prominent portrait of Anne Marie and William Forfeitt which takes up an entire page (Fig. 5.2). One pencil inscription below reads 'Mr and Mrs William Forfeitt', followed by one in another hand which highlights Anne Marie's kinship relations: 'Annie Maria Collier, dau. Samuel J. Collier & Elizabeth Staner'. The photographs assembled in the album appear to reflect the compiler's experiences as part of the nuclear Collier family as well as in relation to the Christian community in Reading and the Baptist missionary community in the Congo. As such, it demonstrates the ways in which photographs made of BMS missionary work in the Congo were subsequently incorporated into personal narratives of identity and belonging by individuals in Britain (Dahlgren 2010: 181).

Material Connections

There is little surviving information about the Collier album's original owner(s) and therefore it is only possible to speculate how the photographs came to be compiled together or how the album was used and valued. The collection of photographs in the album may represent the work of different hands, potentially passed down, compiled and annotated in stages over the years. The volume was not a purpose-built album, but rather photographs of different shapes and dimensions were glued directly onto the ruled pages. There are hand-written captions in ink accompanying many of the images. The mixture of photographs depicting the Collier's home life in

Reading interspersed with those representing mission work in the Congo suggests that the Congo photographs were gradually accumulated through letters written home or shared on the Forfeitt's return visits. There is a photograph of the 1905 Reading School cricket team, Brock Barracks, the Kings Road Baptist Chapel during the harvest thanksgiving service (Fig. 5.3), Grovelands Baptist Church and a second family home. On the last page and back cover of the album are three hand-drawn family trees (Fig. 5.4), relating to the Collier family, and the Staner and Davies families (who appear to have married into the Collier family at various points during the nineteenth century). The author of the family trees has noted that a member of the Davies family was a missionary, and that members of the Collier family were connected to Jamaica and India. No further information is provided about the global dispersal of the author's relatives, but it is interesting that the family's connections to mission work and destinations abroad were documented given the album's incorporation of images relating to the BMS mission in Congo. The album can be interpreted as an attempt to visualise the Collier's familial ties, evidence their Baptist heritage and delineate the virtuous network of family members at home and abroad. Roger Hargreaves (2001: 46) has suggested that the practice of recording births, marriages and deaths on the fly leaf of the family Bible evolved in the nineteenth century into the family photographic album which likewise became a cherished heirloom that could be passed down through successive generations. Through the creation of a 'visual genealogy', concepts of idealised family structure and identity found expression in the curated family album (Hargeaves 2001: 46). It is as part of a project of recording a temporally and geographically extended Baptist family that the Congo photographs' function within the Collier album can be understood.

The photographs made in the Congo consist of a variety of scenes, with little coherence in terms of the given location, but the majority depict BMS mission personnel. There are missionary portraits, photographs of missionary parties whilst travelling, views of BMS stations, and aspects of Congolese life and mission work (Fig. 5.5-5.12). A number of the photographs might be considered to comprise a genre of novelty images from Congo, made and shared because they documented aspects of the culture that were perceived as alien, entertaining or somehow symbolic of and peculiar to an English missionary's experience. The images which can be seen to fall within this category are those apparently depicting 'fetishes' in the vicinity of Upoto (Fig. 5.10), a man climbing a palm tree to harvest the nuts (Fig.

5.12), displays of hunting trophies (Fig. 5.7), a flooded town (Fig. 5.8), a river crossing, the edge of a waterfall and a Congolese boy holding his wooden model of the BMS steamboat 'The Endeavour' (Fig. 5.5). There is little to link these images in terms of their subject matter or pictured individuals but they may have been conceptually linked through their perceived novelty value. As a group they can be understood offer insight into an array of missionary experiences, particularly the perceived surprises and trials of mission work, and thematically correspond with other images that were made by BMS missionaries in the Congo. Waterfalls and gorillas fulfilled expectations of the exotic equatorial African forest, whilst river crossings, tents, and Congolese porters conveyed the cumbersome aspects of travel. A picture of a dugout canoe in production and the image of a man shimmying up a palm tree could be seen to represent 'Congolese ways of doing things'. The same image was reproduced in *Congoland* with the background removed and Smith's personal photograph album contains a similar image of a man climbing a palm tree in order to tap it (Fig. 5.13). There is evidence that this was a popular scene circulated by BMS missionaries and a corresponding image was projected by Forfeitt during a lantern slide lecture in Nottingham in 1910 where he 'threw on the screen the picture of a native climbing on the tree by means of a rope fastened around his body' (*The Nottingham Daily Express*, March 4th 1910, p. 8). Here were snapshots of life in the Congo that were probably, in this context, intended to light-heartedly convey the peculiarities of the missionary experience. As part of the album's assemblage, the views intended to represent Congolese ingenuity were tinged with a sense of cultural inferiority when contrasted with symbols of European industrial civilisation: photographs of BMS hospitals (Fig. 5.14), steamboats (Fig. 5.9) and the railway (Fig. 5.7). Together the photographs do not provide a chronology of BMS activity in the Congo nor a detailed portrait of one mission station but offer snapshots into the mission endeavour that were palatable and affirmative. They were the kinds of images that would be well received at home: missionaries getting on with work, against the odds.

The inclusion of hunting photographs in the album can be understood as part of a genre of images which aimed to depict missionaries prevailing over the Congo. There is an image of a dead pelican held up by a Congolese boy, apparently shot by a Dr. Girling (Fig. 5.7). Above this image, on the same page, is one depicting a dead chimpanzee strung up by its wrists which, according to the caption, was shot by 'Nipiti at Yalemba'. He is pictured next to his prize wearing European-style

clothing and holding a rifle. Here the chimpanzee trophy belonged to a Congolese man, Nipiti, who was likely employed by a missionary as a 'boy' or porter. It is impossible to know the intentions of the photographer when this image was made, or how it was interpreted by the album's owner. A speculative reading might be that this was a message of European influence, a demonstration of Congolese people adopting a foreign technology and hunting for sport. Nipiti was imitating the behaviour of white men in Congo and the implicit separation of himself from animals in nature through this act was conceived as symbolic of his progress up an imaginary evolutionary ladder towards civilisation. John MacKenzie has demonstrated how hunting by Europeans in contexts of empire was used as an expression of imperial power and 'became a ritualised and occasionally spectacular display of white dominance' (1988: 7). Furthermore, as the nineteenth century progressed, hunting was increasingly linked to contemporary concepts of human civilisation, social differentiation and gentlemanly conduct (MacKenzie 1988: 26). The hunt accrued moral associations in conjunction with evolutionary theory and the promotion of natural history disciplines, which justified killing in the name of intellectual pursuits that were seen to advance and distinguish civilised society (MacKenzie 1988: 41-42). According to MacKenzie, the popular image of the imperial pioneer shared the masculine attributes of the successful hunter, which combined courageous character traits with physical prowess, moral standing and an intellectual ability equally adapted to scientific study as survival in nature (1988: 50-51). In the BMS missionary context, hunting imagery can be seen to conflate the imperial frontier with the evangelical frontier in the construction of acceptable male missionary identity abroad, where expressions of Christian zeal were not incongruous with the qualities of fellow citizens whose official calling to the Congo was political or commercial. This explains to some extent the popularity of hunting-trophy imagery in BMS missionary photograph albums relating to the Congo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Images similar to those in the Collier album appear in an album associated with the BMS station of Lukolela, housed at the Angus Library. Among the mission family portraits, views of pristine interiors of mission houses and Congolese schoolchildren are photographs of a dead crocodile, a dead leopard and a chimpanzee (Fig. 5.15-5.17). This suggests that such images constituted a normalised genre of photograph associated with the mission experience in the Congo, multivalent in its ability to represent both the exotic fauna and convey the triumphant effects of missionary men in unfamiliar surroundings.

As discussed in Chapter One, the concept of the gun-wielding missionary was used to index Christian masculinity and moral authority in the Congo despite its contradictory dimensions for them as professed pacifists.

Importantly, such photographs would likely have accompanied letters to the Collier family in Reading or have been shared by missionaries returning from the Congo on furlough. In both contexts the photographs would have been employed in forms of storytelling, either written or oral. Given that the Colliers were a prominent Baptist family who were active in church communities of the Grovelands and Kings Road Churches in Reading, it is likely that visiting BMS missionaries from the Congo would have called in on members of the family with news of Anne Marie and William Forfeitt at Upoto. Private and public gatherings on missionary circuits would have afforded opportunities to exchange letters and photographs. On these occasions the photographs would have been narrated to friends and family and interpreted by their collectors, if not their original makers, with news of the mission and loved ones. If they had been slipped into letters form the mission field, the Collier album photographs' contexts would likely have been narrated to recipients at home. It seems that some of the album's photographs were plausibly forwarded by Anne Marie Forfeitt because they feature scenes made by her husband and depict missionaries such as Smith and Reverend Marker from Upoto. A number of the photographs' captions associate them with the medical missionary Edwin Charles Girling, who worked at the hospital at BMS Bolobo from 1907, and was himself from Edinburgh. This suggests that Girling was a friend of the Collier family and kept them up-to-date with his work in the Congo through letters and photographs. The photographs in the album therefore index different relationships to individuals working in the mission field that were used to maintain connections in an effort to be remembered by the community which they had left. The experiences that were represented could have been explained through the authoritative descriptions of those in the Congo and then later been reinforced in person during visits with members the Collier family.

Once in the possession of the Colliers, these photographs likely became mementoes of a daughter and sister in Africa, and records of missionary networks. Anna Dahlgren has characterised the private photograph album in the nineteenth century as a 'virtual meeting point', where 'family members and friends separated in real life could be reunited' (2010: 187). The photographs collected and inserted into the album enabled the virtuous work of the Baptist family abroad to be experienced

vicariously in Reading and Edinburgh. The act of assembling images portraying the Congo alongside friends and family, the Baptist community in Reading, and the family trees, enabled an imaginative reunion of family members both living and deceased within the pages of the album. Scholars addressing the materiality of photographs have insisted that their 'thingness' be brought to the fore to consider how material form intrinsically determines their social capacities (Edwards 2002: 67). The presentation of photographs in albums in particular has been analysed for the social interactions they facilitate as 'conversation pieces' (Dahlgren 2010: 187). Edwards has demonstrated the social functions afforded by photographs in the sharing of oral histories (2005), re-activated in multi-sensory performances experienced in embodied ways (2002: 70-71). Conceiving albums as objects that give material form to the art of memory (Langford 2001: 42) and therefore as acts of communication (Langford 2001: 19) reinvigorates analyses of photograph albums in terms of their human uses as sites of remembrance and recital. Thus, certain images in the Collier album might have been seen to have had social cachet, used as talking points when the album was shared among interested parties. Photographs of the Collier's friends and family in the Congo could have been used performatively to articulate social status, Christian devotion and a sense of belonging within a Baptist community when narrated as part of family histories.

One of the photographs in the Collier album shows Smith leaning against a tree which has been built up with sticks, next to a Congolese child who appears to pose for the camera (Fig. 5.10). The caption inscribed next to the image reads 'Fetish. Bundle of sticks with loin cloths. Ngbele. Nr. Upoto.' This same photograph was reproduced by Smith in the July 1910 issue of the juvenile missionary magazine *Wonderlands* in his 'Answers from Africa' column (covered in detail below). The following description of the image was provided, as part of a reply to a child named Gladys:

> *'This is a photograph of a big hunting fetish in the town of Ngbele. It was taken by Dr. Girling while he was on a visit to this neighbourhood. If you look closely, you may see perhaps that the missionary standing at the foot of the fetish is none other than "Uncle Kenred". How are your pets getting along? My colleague here has a little live crocodile. Would you like one? I am glad you like Wonderlands.'*

The image was also reproduced again in Smith's published children's book *Congoland* with the title: 'African Hunting Fetish' (Smith 1913: 58) and another version of the photograph exists in the BMS archive at the Angus Library as a loose

print (Fig. 5.11). The latter version of the image highlights the way in which the photographic print in the Collier album was touched-up with white paint to give the impression that the Congolese boy was wearing a dress as opposed to a loin cloth. The process of doctoring images was usually reserved for representations of semi-nude Congolese women in order that the photograph could be reproduced in BMS printed media. At some stage, then, between the print's creation and its incorporation into the Collier album, someone deemed it necessary to physically intervene with the photograph's surface in ways that would shape its future interpretation. The image of the child was covered as if to appear dressed in European-style clothing and therefore conform to British concepts of modesty and appropriate dress. It is unusual for a photograph of a boy to have been touched-up in this manner because their nudity was generally perceived as less offensive to audiences at home; but the symbolic clothing of the individual might have given the impression that he was under the mission's influence and not just 'another native'. The child's proximity to the so-called fetish was therefore rendered less potent if it was conveyed that his alliance was to the mission under the charge of Kenred Smith and was not actively connected with the mysterious Ngbele 'fetish'. Following the positive narrative of effective mission work portrayed by the album's Congo images, this photograph supported the idea that BMS missionaries had the upper hand in their evangelical battle for Congolese spirituality.

In Smith's memoirs he documented an occasion where he encountered a so-called hunting fetish at the town of Ngbele.

> '*At Ngbele I saw the communal fetish which was connected with the hunting occupations of the people. This communal fetish was made by each hunter bringing in a branch of a tree. With certain ceremonies and songs these branches were placed in the highway of the village in an upright position supporting one another, and then all bound together with forest vines. On these branches the fetish doctor placed his mysterious bundles and fetishes with the appropriate ceremonies and rites.* (Smith 2016: 83)

Smith's description suggests that he had an idea of how the hunting 'fetish' was used by the people of Ngbele, however cursory. The existence of the image in the Collier album indicates that the story of the 'fetish' at Ngbele travelled back to England where the photograph was used to represent 'strange' Congolese beliefs. The wooden structure and the label of 'hunting fetish' which accompanied the image as it was distributed through different channels in England encapsulated for

audiences at home the alien Congolese mindset with which BMS missionaries grappled. Employed as visual proof of heathen understandings of the world, the photograph afforded various narrative opportunities, printed in a children's periodical or fixed to the page of a family album.

From the written description provided in the Collier album it is evident that the photograph was associated with some contextual information which had travelled with it in the form of recounted experiences, penned letters or annotations on the print's reverse (which became inaccessible when glued into the album). In this way, fragmented ideas pertaining to the missionary experience in northern Congo permeated people's perceptions of faraway places. A photograph of a 'hunting fetish', once in Reading, became a curio from Africa incorporated into a private collection of images. Archived in the album, indexical traces of moments in Reading and in the Congo intermingled, enabling memories to coalesce with second-hand accounts and imaginary events for the construction of personal narratives of identity.

In an exploration of her grandmother's family archive and her own family history relating to the mission station of Yakusu, Congo, between 1958 and 1964, Linda Devereux has drawn attention to how photographs kept in family collections privilege specific stories and work to hide 'uncomfortable complexities' in the construction of memory (2010: 132). She suggests that the images that were incorporated into her family archive made in the aftermath of traumatic events and departure from the Congo were comforting images that negated the political circumstances and trauma that had been experienced (2010: 132). In this way, she interprets her grandmother's selection of newspaper cuttings and photographs as an attempt to control the narrative surrounding the events that mirrored the silence around the subject of postcolonial violence in their family history (2010: 131-132). Likewise, the representations of mission work that were preserved in the Collier album conform with an ideal conception of the BMS endeavour in the Congo. The senders of images and the subsequent curator(s) of the album chose photographs that did not force a confrontation with the violence that was being inflicted on Congolese people or address the morally ambiguous relationship between BMS missionaries and the State infrastructure at a time when the Congo Reform Campaign was gathering significant public attention in Britain. The assemblage of images instead supports a narrative that the work of the mission community in the Congo was virtuous, harmonious and effective. Missionaries' personal reputations

and the BMS's legacy of mission were at stake when information travelled back to Britain and images were instrumental in maintaining concordant appearances in public and private settings. This particular selection of images permitted viewers to dwell upon scenes that validated a sense of self in relation to a narrative of friends' and family members' unwavering religious devotion and affirmative evangelical outcomes. The compilation of images and captions generated an unambiguous image of worthwhile mission which privately maintained stories about loved ones in the Congo that would also successfully protect their memory when the album was shared with select audiences. The preservation of memories of missionary kin would have been important for those in Britain for whom they were absent for periods of three years or more at a time. The gathering together of images with which to remember individuals reflects a desire to memorialise loved ones in the event of death but also a response to the recurring loss that was experienced when missionaries returned to the field. The material assemblage of photographs inserted into an album afforded its owners a symbolic meeting place that could reconnect the dispersed family unit and overcome the experience of separation.

Graphic Descriptions

Contained in local newspaper reports is surviving evidence of occasions when BMS missionaries used their photographs and lantern slide images during public displays to audiences across England. From the written accounts of these events it is apparent that the missionaries from Upoto frequently drew upon visual-material media to communicate the nature of their work and that these presentations were well-received precisely because of their use of photographic images. On 20th January 1899 *The Cambridge Independent Press* printed an account of a local missionary's return to Willingham and the events which were held for the occasion of his visit. The returning missionary was Kenred Smith, who was back on his first furlough since leaving England for Upoto in 1896. The article was titled 'A WILLINGHAM MAN'S RETURN FROM AFRICA. Enthusiastic Welcome Home' and began by highlighting the surprising connectedness of the small Cambridgeshire village:

> *'From Willingham in Merrie England to Bopoto, a missionary station on the banks of the mighty Congo river in Africa, is a far cry, yet there are links which bind the two places with a common interest as Willingham people have had brought to their minds in a marked manner this week.'* (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7)

That common interest was their Christian endeavour, personified in the figure of the Baptist missionary. Smith provided the personal link with the Congo through which Willingham's sense of Christian community with Upoto could be imagined and invested. The article noted that Smith had already been 'honoured' by the congregation at St. Andrew's Street in Cambridge, the Baptist Church with which he had also been affiliated before leaving for the Congo (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7). It was keen to emphasise Willingham's pride in 'one whom they proudly regard a son', for not only was Smith a representative of BMS work in Africa, he was a representative of the village in wider Christian circuits (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7). In a congratulatory tone, the article proclaimed that Willingham residents could bask in the glow of Smith's missionary success and take some credit for having fostered such a figure of respectability (Harries and Maxwell 2012: 1). The pastor at Willingham identified Smith as having been the catalyst for increasing local interest in mission work:

> *'Three years ago it would have been thought impossible to hold such a successful missionary meeting. The change had been brought about by the fact that Mr Kenred Smith was looked upon as their own missionary. The village came nearer to winning immortality since Mr. Kenred Smith had gone to the mission field.'* (*The Cambridge Independent Press,* January 20th 1899, p.7)

More significantly, the community had itself made spiritual gains through the association with their local 'hero of the cross' (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7). The enthusiasm for mission work which recently had been ignited was evidenced by the charitable contributions to the Missionary Societies made in the past year. Coombes has pointed to a misleading discourse of class unity directed at the working classes and underprivileged by missionary societies in Britain in fund-raising activities in the early twentieth century (1994: 163). In evangelical missionary appeals British publics were reminded: 'that everyone - young, old, rich, and poor - could become contributors for the same cause, since no matter how impoverished the Englishman, the heathen was even more spiritually and materially bereft' (Coombes 1994: 163). This aspirational symbolic levelling of differences at home through acts of charity hinged upon a shared ideological opposition to the African 'other' where diverse members of civilised society found an imaginary common ground. Willingham had rallied to support the mission in Congo and now prospered from a sense of unity; something which the *Press* believed deserved recognition.

The article provides an impression of the work that Smith carried out whilst on furlough. His time in Cambridgeshire comprised a full agenda of public talks. At the Willingham Tabernacle he had given an afternoon address to an audience of children who were reportedly 'spellbound' by the tales of his experiences in the Congo (*The Cambridge Independent Press,* January 20th 1899, p.7). On the Monday afternoon about 110 people had sat down to tea and 'spent a pleasant hour in inspecting the many curios which Mr. Kenred Smith brought back with him' (*The Cambridge Independent Press,* January 20th 1899, p.7). Here it is possible to get a sense of the way in which the artefacts that Smith collected were used during his speaking tours. The *Press* went on to detail some noteworthy aspects of his show-and-tell display:

> '*There were the quaint costumes of the people, wonderfully beaten out of wood fibre, funny little stools that seemed hardly large enough accommodate a babe, weapons of fantastic shapes, a peculiar pipe, tusks, cases of beautiful moths, stuffed beetles that were giant compared with the English specimens and many other interesting objects.*' (*The Cambridge Independent Press,* January 20th 1899, p.7)

As part of his performance, Smith's artefact collection became material metonyms for the people with whom he worked (Coombes 1994: 4) and verified impressions of the cultural void between Willingham and Upoto. The objects he showed were received as 'quaint', 'funny' 'fantastic' and 'peculiar' curios. Here was tangible evidence of the un-Christian lifestyles of the Congolese people in Smith's new parish. The image of Africans generated through the items of material culture was one that was alien, comical even, but not entirely dismissible. An appraisal of African material culture that at the very least recognised evidence of manufacture or skill was part of the necessary evangelical concession that Africans were human and therefore deserving of salvation (Coombes 1994: 186). Annie Coombes has identified the popular appeal of missionary exhibitions in Britain from 1890 and suggests that the marketing of such exhibitions as entertaining and educational was an important strategy in making events inclusive for a broader section of the public (1994: 165). The reporter of Smith's visit was keen to highlight the edifying nature of his presentation in which items of manufacture, natural history specimens and photographs were made available for inspection. Smith also apparently 'pointed out the scene of his labours upon a large map' and provided a number of facts about the geography of the Congo, its population and features of the Congo River. The content of his presentation combined elements of 'rational recreation' (MacKenzie 1988: 40)

in conjunction with an appeal for the Upoto mission, aspects that were complementary in conveying BMS work as part of the civilising in Central Africa. Far from being a mechanical mouthpiece for the BMS, the article presents an image of Smith in the role of instructor where he was able to share his scientific pursuits, animated by discussion of his collection.

According to the article, Smith also showed some of the photographs which he had made during his first three years as a missionary:

> '*There were some capital photographs depicting the African village, the life that its dusky inhabitants had, both on the majestic river and in their low huts in the village, and illustrating the work which Mr. Kenred Smith has heroically done. The camera, indeed, yielded a vivid picture of this pretty spot. There was the missionary's house, a pleasing residence set amid the luxuriance of African vegetation. Mr. Kenred Smith, in building this, astonished the natives by making and utilising bricks. Another print shows a number of pupils in the potter's art… Other pictures showed the natives gathered to hear the Message, and join in praise in their own language, or indulging in their own strange ceremonies; there were gatherings of the children, and, not least of all, views of the country itself.'* (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7)

Smith evidently used his photographic prints as a means to engage audiences during his public appearances where they became the basis for the narration of his experiences. Like Forfeitt's lantern slide collection, on this occasion Smith seems to have displayed an array of images relating to Congolese material culture and day-to-day life as well as scenes intended to illustrate the mission's progress. A photograph of Smith's house at Upoto enabled him to recount how the missionaries had introduced brick-making, which could then be woven into a narrative about the benefits of industrial training among Congolese people and entertaining anecdotes about the earliest accommodation endured by BMS pioneers. A poignant image for those gathered at the Tabernacle that afternoon was one depicting a Congolese boy whom the church congregation seem to have sponsored.

> '*Then everybody eyed and handled with interest the photograph of the African boy, whom Willingham has made its special care. "WILLIE WILLINGHAM" is an intelligent looking native, whom it is hoped may yet come to see his English friends. One of his books was there. His writing tells a tale of careful tuition and wonderful aptitude; it would put many a seventh standard lad to shame.'* (*The Cambridge Independent Press*, January 20th 1899, p.7)

This account indicates the way in which the photographic portrait was passed around, with individuals keen to handle it and see for themselves the Congolese boy in whose spiritual welfare they had invested. This offers some insight into the 'performance of the image as material object' in this public setting and how the photograph's forms of agency 'prescribe[d] relations and the telling of history' (Edwards 2005: 34).

Here Smith used his photographs to strengthen ideological ties between individuals in his home village and the boy whom they had adopted as 'Willie Willingham'. They could now put a face to the figure of 'Willie' who personified their religious investment in the Congo mission. Through the photograph, 'Willie' was represented as an individual with whom the donors had a personal connection, set apart from the other anonymous Congolese people who featured in Smith's photographs. They could imagine themselves as responsible for his Christian education provided by the Upoto missionaries; their sense of moral superiority and philanthropic gratification was pinned to his progress. In her comparative study of magic lantern lectures toured in the London campaigns of Barnardo's orphanages and those in Australia by the missionary John Gribble in the 1890s, Lydon has shown how visual strategies centred on images of children were deployed to rouse compassion (2020: 144). She asserts that:

> *'The emotional narratives central to these spectacular performances were a primary means of creating relationships between the viewer and distant others, telling audiences who to feel for and with across the British empire, bringing distant peoples into communication, and fostering new relationships that opposed near and distant, and familial and universal claims to affection.'* (Lydon 2020: 145)

Although the Congolese heathen were not British subjects, a similar rhetorical strategy was used by Smith to inspire sympathy for Willie and generate funds for the Upoto mission. It is unclear whether Smith gave an account of Willie's parents during the display, but it is possible to see how the invocation of an orphaned Congolese child, either literally or metaphorically, would have moved the audience at the Tabernacle.

The display of photographs during a Congo missionary's public lectures was standard practice for BMS employees returning home at this time. There is evidence of Forfeitt having used photographs and visual media in the same way. During a Sunday sermon in the town of Wantage in 1898 it was reported that:

> *'Mr. Forfeitt delivered his lecture entitled "One thousand miles up the Congo River," which was profusely illustrated by views from photographs taken by the lecturer, and shown by Mr. Ambrose Clark. The lecturer gave very graphic description his work among the Congo tribes during the past eight years.'* (*The Reading Mercury,* April 9th 1898)

Such descriptions convey the extent to which photographs and lantern slide images became standard equipment for use in lectures by the Upoto missionaries whilst home on furlough and were probably anticipated by their audiences in the 1890s. According to the article, Forfiett was accompanied by the Upoto evangelist, Liminamina, who apparently sang a song 'in the Upoto language'. Liminamina's presence and performance at the event presumably also added to the spectacle that was created for the Wantage residents. As a Congolese Christian his appearance in Wantage was presumably a novelty for residents and he was likely seen as a cultural curiosity.

By activating their ethnographic and photograph collections, and in Liminamina's case, performing himself, members of the Upoto Baptist community became mediators of cultural knowledge and relationships, paragons through whom the Congo could be experienced vicariously. For those present, the opportunity to handle physical objects made in northern Congo, touch photographs and hear Liminamina sing would have provided a sense of immediacy through an embodied connection to the people and places about which they had heard. Photographic and ethnographic objects were incorporated into Smith's missionary performances to perpetuate notions of intimacy and personal agency among the people of Willingham toward the people of Upoto. Assemblages involving material culture, photographic objects and living people were used to contribute to the 'dramaturgy' of the spectacle in provincial events (Coombes 1994: 66) and clearly developed as a honed technique used by the BMS to transmit ordered forms of knowledge about the Congo to British publics.

Picturing Congoland

'And within the covers of the book a young Congo runs riot in the quaintest of snapshots, the most delightful of set pictures. It is not a question of pictures on every page; the question is rather as to where the printer shall find room for his type. And there are many full pages too, some of coloured photos mounted on a green background that suggests jungle and forest, some of well chosen subjects set out in black and white with the best of the photographer's art

and the engraver's skill. It should be said that Mr. Smith has had generous help from his Congo colleagues, for we see pictures here from Mr. W. L. Forfeitt, Mr. Kirkland, Mr. Howell, Mr. Oldrieve and several others whose camera work is familiar in the pages of THE HERALD.' (Review of *Congoland*, MH June 1913: 205-206)

The BMS began producing literature that was targeted at young audiences in 1845 with its monthly periodical *The Juvenile Missionary Herald*. As technological advances made photographs more easily reproducible in print they became instrumental to the way in which the BMS engaged children in their propaganda at home.[43] *Congoland: A Book for Young People* was a book authored by Smith and published in Britain in 1913 (Fig. 5.18-5.20). It is presented as an educational children's book with the purpose of informing young readers about aspects of Congolese ways of life in an engaging format. In Smith's own words, it is 'a book for the children in the Homeland about the children of Congoland' (Smith 1913: ix). Descriptions of customs from the Upper Congo are relayed from Smith's authoritative experiences as a missionary and he reflects on the Society's achievements thus far (Smith 1913: ix). In the introduction he is quick to reassure readers that in spite of the Congolese cultural practices to which much of the book is devoted, his time there was not spent in vain, but that 'many cruel practices and customs… are gradually ceasing under the Christianising and civilising influences introduced into the country during the past few years' (Smith 1913: x). In addition to the book's instructive rationale, Smith explicitly outlines his intended evangelical agenda: his hope of inspiring future generations of Christian missionaries.

> *'With the earnest hope that henceforth many white boys and girls may take a deeper and more intelligent interest in their chocolate-coloured brothers and sisters in Congoland, and that some of my many young friends may consecrate themselves to the crusade for the conquest of Congoland for Christ, these pages are written.'* (Smith 1913: x)

'Uncle Kenred', as Smith signs-off, evidently believed that the education of British children about Congolese peoples would inspire Christian zeal and inform the spiritual conquest of the Congo. Through the pages of *Congoland*, British children

[43] Technical experiments in photographic reproduction from the middle of the 19th century resulted in the invention and industrial adoption of the halftone printing process in the 1890s. This enabled the mass reproduction of photographic images in printed media because the photomechanical process was quicker and cheaper for publishers than older illustration techniques of engraving images by hand (Belknap 2020: 234-235; Gervais and Morel 2017: 20-26).

might recognise their condition of universal brotherhood with the faraway peoples of the Congo, whilst internalising a message of their own cultural superiority and responsibility to evangelise. Published by the BMS's Carey Press, the book served as a form of light propaganda for the Society as well as being the product of Smith's creative energies. In tone and content *Congoland* followed on from Smith's regular column in the BMS publication *Wonderlands: The Young Folks' Magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society*, the successor to the Society's *Juvenile Missionary Herald* which ran from 1845 until 1909 (Fig. 5.21-5.24). According to Stanley, *Wonderlands* became one of the most widely circulated children's missionary magazines in Britain (1992: 371). In 1914 the magazine claimed to have monthly sales of over 40,000 copies (*Wonderlands* March 1914). In *Wonderlands* Smith had adopted the persona of 'Uncle Kenred', answering letters from British children about the Congo and providing stories relating to his work at Upoto under the heading 'Answers from Africa'. These articles were richly illustrated with photographs, predominantly pictures of Congolese children (Fig. 5.25-5.27).

Through snippets of information offered in 'Answers from Africa' Smith painted an image of the Congolese 'other' as corrupted but simultaneously relatable. Congolese children in particular were innocents who could not be blamed for misguided culture imposed by their parents: unlike the fortunate children in Britain, they knew no better. Smith's approach was always comparative, drawing parallels and observing stark contrasts between experiences of childhood in Britain and those in Congoland. His articles tread a careful line between patronising condemnation of Congolese ways of life and maintaining that their 'heathenism' could be remoulded. The harshest criticism was reserved for Congolese adults. According to Smith, on the mission station boys and girls were 'being trained to become better men and women than their parents' (BMS archive A/51/A/CIV). Ultimately Congolese people, and in particular, Congolese children, were cast as redeemable characters. Congolese culture, however unsavoury, was, it seems, separable from spirituality. They might eat rats, dance in the sun until drenched in sweat, not need watches nor value time, fail to hold birthday parties, play with rude images made of clay, not enjoy flowers and be unable to appreciate beauty, have no Christmas stockings, possess no plates, cups, or saucers, and still be cannibals at heart; but these failings did not rule them out from potential salvation. In this guise Smith took on the role of translator, conveying ideas about Congolese culture and determining a flow of information that seems to have largely travelled in one direction. Through the authorship of articles

in *Wonderlands* and his book *Congoland* Smith presented himself as a paternal Christian role model and expert on Congolese habits and transgressions.

Through his published stories and replies to children's letters, Smith created a sense of fellowship among young readers. He conveyed to British children ideas about their own place in the world relative to Congolese people and other children of empire. However, the contours of Christian community that Smith invoked did not straightforwardly map onto British colonial possessions, but instead crafted an image of Christian empire as seen through the lens of contemporary Baptist mission. Although in his rhetoric Christian crusade and imperial conquest were closely intertwined projects, he was preoccupied with countries where the BMS was active, namely: the Congo, India, China and Jamaica: 'I am pleased that you girls have interests in China and India, as well as in Congo. Christ's empire is world-wide. We should "think imperially" when the interests of His Kingdom are at stake. The sympathy and love of Jesus embraces all races' (*Wonderlands* July 1910). In the constellation of British foreign missions, it was the Baptist mission field that children's attention was drawn to and where they were encouraged to aspire to working. In writing to the children of the Penge Tabernacle, Smith encouraged them to 'pray for these boys and girls who are living in such dreadful heathen surroundings' (BMS archive A/51/A/LXXVII). British children were reminded how fortunate they were to have been born into a Christian society and at the centre of civilisation, as Sammie was told: 'Yes, you are indeed a lot better off at Carnarvon than the boys are in India or Africa' (BMS archive A/51/A/LXI). On occasion Smith corresponded with the children of Baptist missionaries in other parts of the world, including Inez in Jamaica, the grandchild of the celebrated Baptist missionary William Knibb, who forwarded Smith some photographs and pressed flowers (BMS archive A/51/A/LXI). The ideological crafting of a community of international BMS mission sites interlinked through British missionaries, British donors and British prayers was reflected visually in the map reproduced on the cover of the July 1916 issue of *Wonderlands* (Fig. 5.28). Here radiating lines spread out from the location of the BMS headquarters in London to specific countries of mission: including France, Italy, Jamaica, the Congo, India and China.

The centrality of Baptist mission in Smith's promotion of Christian empire is also apparent in the literature he recommended to readers, which included in its scope biographies of leading Protestant figures and accounts of evangelical missions abroad as well as histories of the BMS in Congo and monographs authored by

Smith's colleagues. A child named Millicent was informed that she could 'get the "Life of J. G. Paton" out of the Norwich Lending Library' and was given a reading list that included *The Life of Livingstone* and *The Life of Grenfell* (*Wonderlands* June 1912). In the same issue, a child named Walter was directed to a number of titles which included *The Story of the Congo Mission*, *The Congo for Christ*, *The Life of George Grenfell*, *Congo Life and Folklore*, and *Yakusu, The Heart of Africa* (*Wonderlands* June 1912). Reference to a wealth of literature on evangelical mission and the history of the BMS in the Congo served to validate the BMS and Smith's claims to authority by highlighting the Society's canonical position in the history of foreign mission and the Christianisation of Africa. By drawing attention to texts that could convey the BMS's legacy, not only were children encouraged to play their part in the making of history, but Smith self-consciously positioned himself in relation to other historical figures who were celebrated contemporaneously for their contribution to mission. This conspicuous referencing of an archive to convey the depth of British evangelical mission heritage can be interpreted as an effort to situate the Congo mission as a continuation of this work and actively maintain the Society's reputation in the present.

In Smith's conflation of a nebulous Christian empire that encompassed all 'heathen lands' with the concept of Britain as the harbinger of Christian civilisation and advocacy for an 'imperial spirit', sometimes the Baptist-centric thread became obscured. Indeed, at times the nuance that the Congo was *not* a British colony was lost on young readers:

> *'We do not have "Empire Day" in Congoland, as it is not part of the British Empire. I fancy you think that I am in India. Look on your atlas and you will find that Congoland is in one continent and India another, but of course you know that.'* (BMS archive A/51/A/LXXVI)

It is telling that Smith chose not to illuminate in detail the rationale for the BMS's presence in a Belgian colony here, which was deemed, presumably, too complex. From Smith's discourse, readers of *Wonderlands* could be forgiven for thinking that the Congo and India were alike because of the attempt to simultaneously construct allegiance to an aspirational Christian empire and an extant Baptist mission community. British identity was another strand of membership that was woven through the articles but which did not tally neatly with the British imperial project when it was articulated in relation to BMS missions. It is apparent here how 'Answers from Africa' sought to convey multiple layers of community for its

audiences that supported a view of Baptist mission identity as aligned with national interests.

A further example of the attempt to create a fictive kinship is that Smith would address the children to whom he wrote as 'nieces and nephews', whilst Congolese children were described *en masse* as their brothers and sisters. On occasion they would be encouraged to write to their Congolese kin directly and pen-pal relationships were established. In his replies Smith often made reference to shared acquaintances or identified Baptist colleagues whom he knew in person in the places where the children lived. The missionary with 'Answers from Africa' could sometimes transcend the pages of *Wonderlands* and make appearances in real life. Sometimes the children who corresponded with Smith had seen him give a lecture at their home church whilst on furlough and would inform him. In a response to a child name Nesta, Smith wrote: 'Oh yes, I remember quite well coming to Stratford Road Baptist Chapel, and I am glad we shook hands… Do you think you will ever come out to this wonderful land to help?' (BMS archive A/51/A/LXXVII). Baptist ties were reinforced through references to attendance at special events at home or name-dropping. Through this printed dialogue Smith fostered his readers' sense of connection within an idealised Christian family that had British children at its heart, sharing the same culture and values, and Congolese children at its periphery. Smith also sought to instil a competitive spirit and hinted at a devotional hierarchy that structured the geography of the imagined Christian empire: 'Which do you think is nearer to the heart of God - India , or China, or Congoland, or England? And which do you think God loves best, a little Hindoo, a little Chinese, a little Congolese or a little English boy or girl? Write and tell me' (BMS archive A/51/A/LXIV). The magazine also fostered a competitive spirit through the monthly examinations it ran for readers that involved tests of knowledge on relevant evangelical literature. The prize-winners would have their names and scores published in the following month's issue, sometimes alongside photographic portraits (Fig. 5.29). The identification of individual readers added to the sense of shared readership and inclusion in an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) of Christian peers.

The insights Smith provided about life in the Congo were accompanied by images that were used in the article headers and set into the columns of text where they served as little cameos of life around the Upoto mission (Fig. 5.30-5.33). They functioned in conjunction with the written text, in which Smith would often direct attention to details about the image. For example, a photograph of a Congolese boy

was printed next to a reply to a girl named Hilda with the caption 'How a Congo Boy Dresses his Hair' (Fig. 5.30). The accompanying text read 'I think, perhaps, you will like to see this picture of a Congo boy, and the way in which he has dressed his hair. He is one of the boys who cannot read' (BMS archive A/51/A/XLI). Photographs were used in-text to generate ethnographic characterisations about Congolese people who were then animated in the minds of children with snippets of information that would make them relatable. But the descriptions of photographs that Smith provided were never full-drawn portraits, instead occupying a semi-real state they became fragmented fictionalised characters.

Smith's messages often had the quality of parables, individual Congolese Children's failings were flaunted so that readers might learn from their example. There were always lessons from the Congo that could be internalised by British children:

> *'Congo boys also copy and imitate their white men. If missionaries should make mistakes in matters of conduct, who will correct such mistakes? How necessary for leaders of others to make as few mistakes as possible. Does anyone copy your life, or actions? If so, I think you will try to make as few mistakes as possible.'* (*Wonderlands* October 1915)

Smith's comparisons between the Congo and Britain were relentless and the message of Congolese cultural inferiority never very subtle: 'Yes, there are some pretty flowers in Africa, but I think some of the cultivated flowers in England are much more beautiful' (BMS archive A/51/A/XLI).

Smith appeared to use his own photographs from around Upoto and photographs made in other parts of the Congo to disseminate quasi-scientific vignettes, suggesting that he had a collection of images at his disposal when he was mocking-up the pages. Importantly, most of the images that were pasted into the articles for printing were figures that had been cut out from a larger scene (Fig. 5.30-32, 5.35).[44] Through this intervention in the photographs, Congolese children were dislocated from the surrounding context in which they had been originally been represented. This may have been done for reasons of space and overall design but the cutting out of children's images could also remove any problematic aspects of the background such as family or nudity. In the pages that Smith constructed then, Congolese children were predominantly pictured in isolation or the missionary

[44] Page layouts featuring cut out photographs reproduced individually or as montages were a common design feature in publications of this period, see Gervais and Morel (2017), pp. 37-45.

presence was implicit, so that the corruptive parental presence was severed from view. The removal of figures from their original photographic settings enabled Smith to establish new contexts for the individuals and generate meanings that were not supported by their previous surroundings.

The material qualities of photographic prints that allowed figures to be cut out and isolated also afforded creative possibilities in the process of reassembly, inserted alongside formerly unrelated images. The effect of this collaging is that Congolese people appear to float in the white space within and between the columns of text. This severing of visual evidence gives them a surreal quality, particularly where figures' bodies end suddenly, presumably marking the edge of the original photographic print (Fig. 5.30, 5.33). The loss of the photographic conceit of three-dimensional space for many of the printed images has the effect of flattening the figures and in doing so makes them more whimsical. This was even more apparent when the prints had been retouched and flourishes applied to soften or conceal the visual information that lay underneath (Fig. 5.33, 5.34). The collage-like presentation of the images in *Wonderlands* also seems to invite readers to cut out the scenes themselves so that they could be used in their personal scrap-book compositions. This possible interaction with the pages is supported by the fact that occasionally the interspersed commercial adverts printed in *Wonderlands* ran competitions that involved cutting out shapes in order to solve puzzles and some of the articles' line drawings doubled-up as pictures which could be coloured in. The new aesthetic given to the images in the pages of 'Answers from Africa' visually reinforced the idea of Congolese people inhabiting a world that was divorced from British children's own reality. This manipulation appears to have been a deliberate strategy across the magazine's contents to make the photographs more pictorial and playful. Hand-drawn illustrations and cartoon renderings of people were a standard decorative feature of issues of *Wonderlands*. Communicating knowledge of people and places that seemed beyond the imagination and instilling a sense of wonder were professed objectives of the publication, set out in the first issue:

> *'Welcome to Wonderlands! We give you a promise that all the young folks who will open our pages and read what they find there will get peeps into things more wonderful than fancy. For the things we have to show you are real wonders that are truly happening in lands far away.'* (*Wonderlands* January 1909).

The magazine's bright red covers also deployed photographs reproduced and set within a hand-drawn frame alongside illustrations that evoked scenes through

windows (Fig. 5.21-5.24). Here the popular appeal of photography as a medium which could metaphorically transport viewers to other worlds was harnessed to engage juvenile readers in BMS foreign mission.

In Smith's repurposing of photographic material, photographs that may originally have been intended as ethnographic representations were used simultaneously to project evangelical ideologies. For example, in the October 1915 column Smith printed a photograph of a Congolese man carrying a wicker shield and spear (Fig. 5.32). Beside this he wrote to a child named Hugh, who had informed him that his father was at work 'drilling the 35th Lancashire Fusiliers':

> *'I hope to hear that daily you are proving yourself a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Our soldiers at the front are enduring hardship. "Take thy part in suffering hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus," said Paul to young Timothy. You will expect no path of roses… This is a picture of a native Congo warrior with his spear and shield. The missionaries go to Congo to win such men, and to enlist them in Christ's army… We can all do something to help on the Victory of God.'* (*Wonderlands* October 1915).

Through the illustrating photograph Smith was able to condense a number of concepts relating to militant evangelisation and Christian masculinity, a caricature of the Congolese man as 'warrior', a lesson about religious duty and the noble sacrifice being made by British forces fighting in the First World War. Here the concept of a battle for an imagined Christian empire is made analogous to the hardships of actual British soldiers fighting at the front, whose cause, Smith implies, is equally righteous. Smith's vision of a Christian empire is one that is achieved through divinely sanctioned force and accommodates an idea of romanticised violence in the name of religion. The hardship and suffering he alludes to is that of evangelical Christians whose work it is to 'enlist' the heathen, not the peoples who were the object of their crusade. In this view of the world, African suffering and by extension, that of enemy forces, pales in comparison with the suffering of Christian missionaries and British soldiers 'fighting the good fight'.

Following this reasoning, the 'Victory of God' in Central Africa would necessarily involve a painful lesson for its populations where forms of civilised force were legitimated by the burden that had been endured by bearers of the Christian message. The photograph of the Congolese man here operated allegorically to construct the image of the noble savage fighting for the wrong cause, whose energies would soon be converted to the right 'side' of the earthly struggle for souls. This accords with John MacKenzie's notion of popular imperialism having comprised an

'ideological cluster… in which empire, crown, 'race', armed forces and nation became synonymous' (quoted in Richards 1989: 2). Smith's accompanying description would have shaped how the image was received by readers and the message that was articulated here is not straightforward. Through the dialectic of image and text the Congolese man is constructed as an ambiguous figure: his fighting spirit is recognisable, relatable, even commendable, but he also represented the heathen 'enemy' of Christian children in Britain whose birth right and duty it was to spiritually conquer people *like him*. Once again, an imperial narrative was repurposed for a lesson that linked the values of the Congo mission to other dimensions of British identity and situated the BMS as the central node where common ideals were manifested.

The composite image-texts that Smith constructed worked in sophisticated ways to communicate ideas about the Congo that would resonate with children. As Marriane Gullestad suggests about the operation of photographic images used in missionary publications: 'the message resides not in the text alone, not in the visual images alone, but in their combined force - be it in the form of contradiction, supplement or reinforcement' (2007: 8). The images used in *Wonderlands* were never neutral representations but cultivated as cultural artefacts through forms of 'tutored' viewing offered by the magazine's contributors (Lutz and Collins 1993: xiii).

Many of the photographs used in 'Answers from Africa' and in *Congoland* are reproductions of the same photographic prints and glass negatives that were collected by von Hügel for MAA Cambridge, discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, an image of two girls showing cat's cradles was selected by von Hügel and this same image was reproduced in the February 1911 issue of *Wonderlands* where the figures had been cut away from their surroundings and represented in the header (Fig. 5.33, 5.34). Similarly, an image of men playing thumb pianos and other instruments was reproduced for the column with the background removed (Fig. 5.35) and a version of this photograph was cropped to a square and transformed into a lantern slide by Cambridge Museum (Fig. 5.36). Many of the photographs used in *Wonderlands* give the impression that Smith was making photographs especially for his column. An emphasis on young children posed together with articles of material culture, often in comical positions, suggests that he asked people to participate in the making of photographs according to a scene he had in mind. Examples of this genre of image are a child posed inside a basket (Fig. 5.37) and a girl with a fish basket on her head (Fig. 5.38). Another *Wonderlands* image shows a boy leaning on a drum that

has been propped up next two carved stools and a flywhisk (Fig. 5.39). The arrangement of the stools balanced on top of one another and the boy in the centre looks like it was deliberately posed for an amusing composition. Accompanying this image, it reads:

> *'The boy in this picture is the son of a big Chief, and his father is blind. His blind father, however, has much power in his village… The photo shows his father's chair, with a smaller Chief's chair on top and a native drum; also a little "whisk" which the father of the boy uses to keep off flies and insects.'* (*Wonderlands* June 1911).

This child seems to have been the son of the Boela authority, Likala, who participated in making photographs which were selected for Cambridge Museum, as has been shown in Chapter 4 (Fig. 5.40). The same cut-out image was reproduced in *Congoland*, in the chapter 'Babyhood in Congoland' (Smith 1913: 2). Evidence of Smith's process in creating the articles and his book *Congoland* is contained in his photograph album, where the cut-out figures of Congolese children that were used were collected together and pasted into the pages (Fig. 5.41-5.43). Here patterns are discernible in the kinds of subject matter he selected from his personal archive to include for publication. Most frequently he used photographs of children posed in a row or clustered together, carrying objects or arranged among items of material culture in ridiculous ways. In his album he occasionally has handwritten the children's names, re-inscribing the images with individual identities that were not always recorded in *Wonderlands.*

Through the realistic qualities of photographs used in Smith's publications, Congolese children were transported into British homes and scenes were translated for them through 'Uncle Kenred's' interpretation. Through the images they came face-to-face with children who, they were told, were like them, and yet not so like them. Smith's integration of photographic images into the written text operated in precise ways. These published photographic assemblages were used to instil a coherent sense of Christian identity at home in relation to mission work abroad and encourage a paternalistic interest in Congolese people who were constructed as fictive kin. Through 'Answers from Africa' Smith provided children with hints and tips in order to know 'the Congolese' so that they too might become expert. In *Wonderlands* the arming of children with knowledge about 'heathen lands' was conceived of as a way of priming them for a life of service to Christian mission. Far from being harmless illustrations that let British children 'see for themselves', as assemblages the printed photographs were imbued with meanings designed to help

readers navigate a shared identity in relation to Congolese people in a way that drew upon popular imperial ideologies at home.

Commanding Views

The BMS embraced photography as a means of perpetuating official narratives of its Congo mission and used images to give an impression of the evangelical undertaking as a straightforward realisation of discourses generated about Africa's 'civilisation' in Europe, as opposed to the complex quotidian realities demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2. Held in the Stanley Archives at the Stanley Pavilion of the Africa Museum, Tervuren, Belgium, is an album described as a presentation album that was gifted to Henry Morton Stanley (later Sir) by the BMS in 1894 (No. 7007). The album bears the opening inscription 'The following photographs of Congo scenery were given to me by the Revd. Lawson Forfeitt of the Baptist Mission, Congo River, in 1894.' It is made up of 61 photographic prints, of which 29 were made at or near Upoto. The images are predominantly scenes along the River Congo, including BMS stations, aspects of mission work, views of riverine landscapes and other natural landmarks. There does not appear to be a strict organising logic to the images' presentation, although most of the scenes relating to Upoto are clustered together. The album begins with images made at Yollala Falls and Matadi in the Lower Congo and ends with a series made at Stanley Falls (present-day Boyoma Falls). Following the album's sequence by reading the images left to right it seems to thematically progress from the western to the eastern Congo Free State. This loosely traces the BMS settlement of stations advancing along the River Congo and follows in reverse the journey made by Stanley on his celebrated expedition from the Lualaba River in the east and his navigation of the Congo River to its mouth in the South Atlantic Ocean from 1874-1877. Presented to Stanley in 1894, the album was compiled after the sensation around the *Stanley in Africa* exhibition in London in 1890 and the publication of his *In Darkest Africa* the same year. There is no further information about the occasion of the album's presentation by John Forfeitt or the Society's motivations for making the gift. However, on the basis of some correspondence in the Stanley Archive, the two men seem to have been acquainted. John served as the official BMS Secretary in Congo from 1899 and the BMS steamboat, the *Peace*, had been requisitioned by Stanley for the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition from 1886.

For the purposes of this chapter, the album is a useful example or the way that photographs were selectively compiled to construct a specific narrative about a shared purpose in Central Africa. It is evidence of the way in which the BMS sought to ideologically link their evangelical efforts to larger historical narratives about the founding of the Congo Free State. As a gift, the album might be understood within the category of the speciality album, prepared for a deliberate purpose, often in order to pay tribute to somebody (Dahlgren 2010: 178). Distinct from the type of personal family album, the photographs that were included were those representing mission work that would be of general interest to an outsider. The album's intended function was not contingent upon recognition of the individuals portrayed: these were images that could be understood and enjoyed without a close relationship to the missionaries pictured. The album sought to construct a broader objective narrative about BMS endeavour rather than reflecting an 'inside view' of the BMS community in the Congo. As will be shown, the choice of images hinged more on a shared knowledge of *place* than of people. Deployed as visual evidence of the BMS's established presence, the photographs seem to have been used to validate the Society's work in the Congo Free State and commemorate it as part of the greater European endeavour in the colonisation of the Congo. Through the album the BMS sought to ideologically position themselves in relation to Stanley, who by 1894 was famed as the principal explorer of Central Africa, though his reputation was not uncontested at the time (Driver 2001: 123). The album can be interpreted as an attempt to create an unambiguous narrative about the positive legacy of Stanley's exploration and the transformative missionary influence that penetrated the Congo in his wake. Felix Driver has suggested that popular myths emerged around nineteenth century explorers such as Stanley who were charged with extending the frontiers of geographical knowledge (2001: 4). Romanticised accounts of the encounters between Europeans and Africans negated the unsettling realities of exploration and, Driver states, 'Such images were inevitably partial; indeed, they were in a sense designed to resolve imaginatively what could not be resolved in other ways' (Driver 2001: 4-5). The crafting of an image of BMS endeavours for public consumption involved the careful delineation of the nature of their dependence on the Free State government, the areas where their civilising ambitions converged and where they sought to distance themselves from imperial activities. As will be demonstrated, images in the album were used to highlight the positive associations between the BMS and the 'cultures of exploration' by commercial

organisations and State forces in the Congo that could potentially challenge other representations which might imply a conflict of interests (Driver 2001: 2).

The relationship between Stanley's legacy of exploration and the BMS mission was more than an imagined affiliation as contemporary bearers of civilisation in the Congo Free State (although this was one of the meta-narratives of the album) but one in which their endeavours had at times been in practical ways co-dependent. Stanley had been responsible for 'opening-up' the Congo in 1876-77 and later in 1880-84 for planting a number of State posts on the River Congo on behalf of King Leopold. The BMS subsequently built stations in close proximity to these State posts or used land that had supposedly been claimed for Leopold by Stanley in negotiations with Congolese people. But Stanley had also latterly leant on the BMS, through the use of their steamboat, the *Peace*, refuelling and lodging at BMS stations during the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition. Stanley had somewhat publicly reminded the BMS of their debt to him when in *In Darkest Africa* he published an account of his quest to secure the *Peace* for his expedition. In appealing to the missionary William Holman Bentley for use of the boat, he requested that he 'remember the assistance I gave the Baptists in 1880-84' (Stanley 1890: 86). The expedition itself received widespread criticism in the wake of its success as news spread of the violent tactics used (Driver 2001: 127), so in many ways the timing of the BMS gift to Stanley is surprising. As a self-conscious representation of the BMS's history in the Congo, taking stock of what had been achieved since Stanley's pioneering work, the album makes sense in terms of the Society's conceptualisation of their canonical place in the Free State's history. Furthermore, as a diplomatic gift, the album can be understood as formal recognition of Stanley's work in establishing the infrastructure that went on to facilitate BMS expansion in the Congo, even if individual missionaries' opinions of him were privately less deferential.

The majority of the scenes represented in the album's pages would have been places that were recognisable to Stanley from his extensive journeying along the River Congo. There were images of waterfalls and cataracts (Fig. 5.44), towns that had become important stop-off points for Europeans operating in the Congo, such as Matadi (Fig. 5.45), and views of BMS stations: Underhill, Bolobo, Wathen, Monsembe and Upoto (Fig. 5.47-5.57). The significant number of scenes at Upoto included in the album may simply be the result of John Forfeitt having been able to obtain images from his photographer brother, but it was the case that Stanley had

visited Upoto prior to the BMS presence there. He purchased land at Upoto in December 1883 on behalf of King Leopold. Recollecting the event, he wrote:

> *'At 11 A.M. we were skirting the hills of Upoto. We halted there to purchase provisions, to make brotherhood with Lubungu and Ibanza or Minyoto, and make a treaty. A beautiful piece of ground commanding a magnificent view was also purchased. Representatives from Ukelé, Umangi, Mpissa and Iringi appeared also, and, being the neighbours of Upoto, we concluded treaties with them.'* (Stanley 1885: 171)

The inclusion of images of Upoto, then, might be understood as a reference to Stanley's having secured the land which subsequently enabled the BMS to build a station. Through the album the BMS presented Stanley with the interesting changes that had occurred at the sites where he had established posts ten years earlier. If Stanley had been the pioneer explorer leading the march of civilisation into Congo, BMS stations like Upoto were testament to the influence of missionaries in the years since. The photographic scenes from Upoto were a mixture of images that were either ethnographic in nature or triumphant representations of the BMS mission. Many of the images are identical or near-identical to those photographs in the album of the Dutch trader Johan Lankamp, discussed in the previous chapter. Included are numerous views of dwellings and Bapoto people (Fig. 5.47, 5.49, 5.57), and scenes meant to portray local customs such as a 'war council' (Fig. 5.56). Some of the images are recognisable as those that were subsequently reproduced in BMS printed media or made into lantern slides, becoming iconic images in the public repertoire of representations of Upoto, such as the 'funeral dance' and 'Upoto slave girls in their holiday bead attire'. Images intended to convey the transformative missionary presence at Upoto included views of Congolese children standing in front of Reverend Oram's mission house, complete with corrugated iron roof (Fig. 5.49, 5.50), a school feast (explored in Chapter 1)(Fig. 5.55), and missionaries posed in the landscape accompanied by Congolese 'boys' (Fig. 5.48). Once again this constructed a narrative of demonstrable progress which anticipated future gains by the mission at Upoto. The act of commemoration through a photographic album speaks to a pre-emptive urge to preserve a particular version of the past and anticipates moments of reflection from the perspective of a future present. The album as a gifted mnemonic artefact deliberately enshrined a particular view of the past and imbued it with significance in an attempt to shape the material form of memory. The collection of images and inscriptions served to clarify the purpose of the BMS mission in relation

to other actors as part of an ideological 'opening-up' of Central Africa to legitimate trade and other 'civilising' forces. As such, the album demonstrates the ways that the BMS sought to curate their legacy, presenting through photographs evidence of their success and an optimistic outlook for their work in the Congo.

The views of the Congo that were presented to Stanley either implicitly or explicitly pointed to the European presence in the landscape, the most significant change since Stanley had first passed along the Upper River Congo. The very fact that William Forfeitt was able to have a commanding view from Upoto and make a photograph looking down to the river and Congolese people was linked to the fact of Stanley's geographic 'conquest' of Central Africa (Fig. 5.48). In the portraits that were featured in the album of missionary men posed in the landscape, the compositions convey a sense of geographic mastery. One depicting William Forfeitt and his colleagues on the hill slopes at Upoto show the men in postures of dominance such as hands on hips and legs positioned as if in mid-stride (Fig. 5.48). Two of the men are seated on what appears to be an ant hill, towering above the others. In the poses adopted by the missionaries here and in similar images in the album, they seem to represent themselves as embodying the ideal attributes of muscular Christianity, as men who had the physical strength and stamina necessary for exploration, comparable to other male pioneers of empire. If the explorer was conceived as a missionary of science (Driver 2001: 4-5) then an image of intrepid masculinity was embraced by BMS missionaries in the Congo to convey the ideology of an evangelical and scientific frontier. As was seen in Chapter 1, early on the missionaries at Upoto sought to map their geographical surroundings and define political boundaries in order to feel in control of the unfamiliar landscape. The photographic representation of parts of the Congo that until Stanley's exploration were unmapped and unseen by Europeans can be interpreted as an act of homage to him as the celebrated father of geographical knowledge in the Congo. In this way, the photographic visualisation of Congolese landscapes offered by the images compiled in the album can be seen as symbolically building upon Stanley's legacy of exploration. The exploration and mapping of African territories was used as means of generating effective knowledge towards imperial ends by Europeans in the nineteenth century (Driver 2001: 120). Exploration was conceived as a primary undertaking necessary for the exposure of African colonies to capitalist enterprise, associated with a tide of European civilisation and modernity (Driver 2001: 126). Different images in the album contribute to dimensions of this historical narrative

about the sweep of industrial and social progress: the railway buildings at Matadi, a European trader purchasing ivory, mission schools, trading steamers on the river, and a portrait of Sefu bin Hamid, the son of the infamous Zanzibari slave trader Tippu Tip, recently slain in the Congo-Arab War in 1893. It is within this context of the symbolic abolition of the 'Arab slave trade' in the Congo Free State, conceived as a religious crusade against the spread of Islam, and the forward march of free trade and industrialisation of the Congo Free State that the BMS sought to represent their evangelical work for posterity. One might argue that in the image of the Congo presented by the album, Belgian State infrastructure and officials are conspicuously absent. There are no portraits of Belgian officers or views of State posts in the way that missionary portraits and BMS mission schools and houses were included. The album represents a skewed view of the Congo in which predominantly British achievements were documented to reinforce a conceptual link between the BMS and Stanley as important British actors in the civilisation of Central Africa.

Many of the photographs reproduced for the Stanley album were given additional trajectories by the BMS when they were used in their propaganda in the following decades. That of the Dutch trader purchasing ivory is one that was deployed repeatedly. The trader was in fact Johan Lankamp, and the photograph was displayed in his own album with the title: 'Mr. Lankamp at his factory in Central Africa busy with the purchase of ivory' (Fig. 5.58). This image was transformed into a lantern slide that was used by William Forfeitt (Fig. 5.59), inserted into Smith's album (Fig. 5.60), and was also printed in Harry Johnston's *George Grenfell and the Congo* with the title: 'Dutch trader purchasing ivory at Bumangi, Upper Congo. About 1890' (Johnston 1908: 945, vol. 1). In this text the image was used in the section covering natural history to illustrate a discussion of 'the long and slender tusks of the Congo elephant' (Johnston 1908: 945, vol. 1). The repeated inclusion of the image in BMS propaganda indicates their steadfast commitment to an ideology of European 'free trade' activity as a necessary step for the Congo's 'advancement' to a state of 'civilisation'. The fact that the BMS continued to use the image even after international scandal around the atrocities of the rubber industry suggests that the earlier trade in ivory was remembered as a prior, innocent phase of European commercial activity in the Congo Free State. Through the photograph the Society was able to generate a narrative of a peaceful period of trade in the Congo where European and Congolese parties were equal

partners as opposed to trading activity that was exploitative of the Congo's natural and human resources.

The portrait of Sefu bin Hamid (Fig. 5.61) was also reproduced in the first volume of the book illustrating a chapter about the history of the Congo Free State and the 'Arab War' (Johnston 1908: 425, vol. 2). The image was accompanied by the title: 'Sefu, Son of Tipu-Tipu, and his representative in Congoland, with the two Belgian officers who were subsequently killed. Photo taken by Rev. William Forfeitt at Stanley Falls in 1891' (Johnston 1908: 425, vol. 2). In combination with its title, the image was used to reinforce a notion of the barbarity of the 'Arabs' in eastern Congo against the Belgians and celebrate the success of the Congo-Arab War when 'all the Arab leaders were dead or sorely wounded, and the Arab power of Tanganyika and the Upper Congo had vanished, perhaps for ever' (Johnston 1908: 427, vol. 2). The inclusion of the image here can be seen as an attempt to evidence the coeval role that British missionaries had played in civilisation of the Congo and ideologically integrate themselves into a grand history of religious and military conquest in Central Africa.

The publication of Sir Harry Johnston's *George Grenfell and the Congo* is a corresponding example of the BMS's public efforts to commemorate their achievements and set out in writing and images the value of their presence in the Congo in terms of a contribution to scientific knowledge and as bearers of Christian civilisation. Published in 1908, the timing of the two volumes is a critical factor in considering why they were made and how they were invested in as artefacts that would shape public understandings of the history of the BMS in Congo. Firstly, this was the year that the Congo Free State was annexed by the Belgian government and was renamed the Belgian Congo. Secondly, the publication was compiled in response to the death of George Grenfell in 1906, the founder and celebrated figurehead of the BMS Congo mission. The books were dedicated to the president of the Royal Geographical Society (1908: ix, vol. 1) and were ostensibly commissioned with a concern for compiling and making public the 'ethnographical and geographical information collected by so many deceased members of the Baptist Mission' to prevent such valuable knowledge being lost (Johnston 1908: v, vol. 1). However, this was more than an effort in archival salvage and represented an attempt to materially chronicle their work in the Congo in relation to historical events and other European actors in order to preserve the Society's reputation. The volumes enabled the Society to publicly outline their official stance to revelations

surrounding King Leopold's regime at a pivotal phase in the Free State's history. The Belgian monarch's moment of reckoning had arrived and the timely publication of an official history of BMS activity in the Congo afforded an opportunity for them to author a narrative on their own terms, albeit through the words of the British colonial administrator, botanist, zoologist, journalist and explorer, Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston. The publications were also intended to commemorate George Grenfell and protect the legacy of his career in the face of recent criticism that he had been an apologist for King Leopold's rule. Grenfell had been the Congo mission's pioneer, celebrated in his lifetime for his heroic work navigating and mapping numerous rivers in the Congo, on one expedition working for Leopold directly. As such, the two volumes represent an effort to immortalise Grenfell and inscribe the nature of his scientific and philanthropic achievements.

While on the surface the volumes' content provides insight into the history of the Congo Free State, the founding of BMS missions, Grenfell's voyages, geographic, ethnographic, linguistic and natural history information gleaned, the chapters were presented carefully to position the BMS in the best possible light so that they might be judged on their triumphs. In a somewhat supplementary chapter at the end of the first volume, titled 'The Misdeeds, Mistakes and Achievements of the Congo State', Johnston grapples with the issue of the atrocities committed under Leopold's governance. It is here that he weighs up the immorality of events in the Congo and addresses the BMS' implication in this history. He delivers a thin critique of the Belgian monarch which he repeatedly undermines by offering scapegoats, presumably in an attempt to protect the BMS's diplomatic relations with Belgium. Johnston's condemnation of the Free State is tempered with subversive footnotes, reminders of the scientific gains made through Leopold's opening-up of Central Africa to European powers and recourse to an ideology of biologically innate African savageness and history of atrocity predating the European presence. The acute historical consciousness of this chapter is emphatic:

> *'As regard to the King's policy between 1892 and the present day, I doubt if the Muse of History when she can take a calm survey of these proceedings a hundred years hence will be able to acquit him of blame. He may have been deceived by his ministers and representatives down to 1902. Since then one can only imagine that he has deliberately shut eyes and ears to the truth.'* (Johnston 1908: 474, vol. 1)

This can be interpreted as an attempt at a careful, muted critique of King Leopold's regime until 1902. It was Johnston's contention that the legacy of European activity

in the Congo Free State since the 'Scramble for Africa' not be eclipsed entirely by the 'errors' of a select number of European and native agents (Johnston 1908: 468, vol. 1) As he saw it, there had been triumphs of civilisation and the BMS's role in this process needed to be recognised. In this vein he wrote:

> *'Let us try to remember not the misdeeds and mistakes of the Congo State, but such excellent work as we know has been done in railway construction, in agricultural developments, in the establishment of law and order over the western, northern and eastern regions, and last but not least, in the notable contributions that have been made to our scientific knowledge of Central Africa'* (Johnston 1908: 474, vol. 1)

The railway and other hallmarks of European civilisation were used in the text as moral counter-arguments to the history of atrocity in the Free State. As in the Stanley Album, the image that was presented was a selective view which invited audiences to dwell upon the 'achievements' of the Congo and diminished the significance of the 'misdeeds' and 'mistakes' in order that the BMS be remembered favourably.

The BMS contribution to the advancement of the Congo Free State was also couched in terms of its particularly British nature in Johnston's census of morally-sound work executed by various Europeans to date. He was at pains to point out that the earliest exploration of the Congo had been a largely British enterprise, by members of the BMS and others:

> *'It must not be forgotten - as some additional defence of our right to criticise - that the Congo basin was mainly discovered by Britons, and that during the first five years that went to the creation of the Congo Free State 80 Englishmen (as against 81 Belgians) served King Leopold out of a total of 263 Europeans employed under Stanley'* (Johnston 1908: 463, vol. 1).

In the final chapter of the first volume, the concept of Britishness - or, indiscriminately, Englishness - is leveraged to distance the BMS's legacy of mission in the Congo from the work of the Belgian State. It was implied that the BMS could not have been complicit in wrong doing on account of their Britishness, which morally separated and exonerated them: 'Thanks to Exeter Hall and the Exeter Hall spirit, Great Britain has strayed less frequently from the right path' (Johnston 1908: 475, vol. 1).[45]

According to *George Grenfell and the Congo*, the saving grace of King Leopold's regime had been the opening-up of Central Africa to the world, which had

[45] The Anti-Slavery lobby held meetings at Exeter Hall from its foundation in 1823 and the phrase 'Exeter Hall' subsequently became a metonym for abolitionist campaigning and ideological stances.

ultimately gifted riches in the form of scientific knowledge. The published volumes left readers with no doubt that BMS missionaries had legacies that matched those of other intrepid explorers and acclaimed scientists in the Congo: 'the geographical work accomplished by the State representatives (for the most Belgian officers) since the first great achievements of Stanley, Wissman, and Grenfell, is truly remarkable, an achievement without parallel in the history of geographical discovery' (Johnston 1908: 491, vol. 1). The concept of the natural wealth and scientific reaping of the Congo by morally-sound men, used here to patinate the reputation of BMS missionaries, resonates with the earlier portrayal of civilised landscapes by the BMS in the Stanley Album. Through both artefacts the BMS generated a representation of themselves as having been affiliated with the positive outcomes in the Congo, for which they sought credit, and distanced themselves from problematic histories. Intended as the definitive account of the BMS's actions in the Congo, it operated to deflect negative attention and shape public perceptions of the BMS' reputation.

Each medium enabled the construction of a form of selective memory that as an assemblage could be presented as a cohesive and comprehensive record. The particular physical format of bound volumes, that were read left-to-right, enabled the construction of a linear internal narrative. The material qualities of bound volumes meant that this narrative was supported between a front and back cover, providing the impression of containment and totality. Such artefacts permitted a means of ordering and inscribing different kinds knowledge, offering positive evidence in the form of written word and images. Textual captions purported to supply the necessary context with which to interpret the images, enshrining them visually and ideologically with a sense of finality. The material mechanism of front and back covers, which kept the integrity of the contents intact, enabled the literal closure and containment of information which mirrored the conclusive verdict reached within the text of *George Grenfell and the Congo*. The album and published volumes demonstrate the BMS's ongoing efforts to curate knowledge about their work in the Congo by creating 'official' artefacts that might guarantee the future integrity of public memory.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the various ways that photographs made in and around Upoto were appropriated into different personal and public contexts for the creation of narratives of the mission in Britain. Central to this discussion was the subject of

memory or legacy and the role of photographs as objects through which representations of the past were arranged to enable particular forms of commemoration. A focus on two photograph albums demonstrated how their material presentations were used to create a sense of containment and ideological coherence between images. Captions given to photographs were analysed as evidence of physical interventions which were intended to facilitate the recall of memories, the articulation of content and determine their future interpretation. In relation to the Collier album, photographs were shown to have been used to maintain relationships between family members in Britain and in the Congo and create a sense of connection with the progress of BMS mission as part of a Baptist community. It was demonstrated that the Stanley Album was used as an attempt by the BMS to generate a narrative of a collaborative civilising mission in the Congo in allegiance with the explorer Henry Morton Stanley. The gifted album can be considered evidence of how the Society consciously sought to formally document their efforts and actively craft a legacy of the mission from the perspective of the present.

Also discussed in this chapter were instances where photographs had been employed in the mission's efforts to publicise their work as part of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009). Attention to the historical conditions where photographic images were activated has generated insight into how photographs depicting the Congo were made meaningful to people in Britain, presented and engaged with in accordance with certain social expectations (Edwards 1998: 109). An account of Kenred Smith's public display of photographs to a congregation in Cambridgeshire was used to highlight the central role of photographs as objects which were performed in missionary displays. It was detailed that photographs made at Upoto were used alongside items of material culture and integrated into a narrative of mission by Smith in order to entertain his audience. In this way it was shown that the material and visual immediacy of photographic prints was instrumental to Smith's fostering an embodied experience and emotive connection with the verbal descriptions of Upoto he provided. The chapter addressed a further use of photographs by the Society in their juvenile magazine *Wonderlands* from 1909 onwards. The reproduction of many of Smith's photographs in this context was discussed in terms of the imagined community it sought to create among Christian children in relation to the version of Upoto constructed. In the pages of *Wonderlands*, reproduced photographs operated in tandem with written text to generate a morally

laden view of the Congolese people who the BMS engaged. The religious frontier was represented in an accessible and entertaining format which encouraged young readers to inhabit a sense of Christian brotherhood towards some worthy Congolese people whilst also encouraging them to reflect upon their own moral and cultural superiority. Photographs were mobilised to engender evangelical responsibility towards the Congolese 'heathen' among children at home.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the photographic and textual traces of the BMS Upoto mission dating from between 1890 and 1915, which now reside in collections in the UK. The re-collection of artefacts is an unprecedented experiment to see how dispersed material from the early Upoto mission can be reconfigured to generate alternative narratives to those which have predominated in the BMS' official accounts. By bringing this material together it has been possible to reveal information about the actions of Congolese people, whose interactions with missionaries were not always articulated in writing. In addition, thinking through photographs' circulation and assembly in different social contexts in Britain has shown how photographs created in and around Upoto subsequently became meaningful as objects of material culture. Tracing photographs' deployment through different media has illuminated how events at Upoto were represented in Britain and generated ideas which permeated the lived experiences of people far removed from the mission field.

This study set out to understand the historical formation of a Christian community at Upoto from 1890 and how the encounters of mission work were represented in Britain. The abundance of photographic material which attests to the Congolese individuals involved with the mission's activity presented a compelling opportunity to investigate the nature of photographs as evidence of their experiences. Integrating photographs with different sources from within and outside of official archives has had two distinct outcomes towards this objective. Firstly, analysis of photographic content has confirmed the presence of Congolese people at the time of BMS arrival who engaged to different degrees with their evangelical activity. Analysis of photographs alongside other forms of archival information has made it possible to interpret their content in novel ways, which allow for an impression of the motivations of Bapoto people at a given historical moment. Related to this are the discrepancies that have been revealed between how photographs' content was narrated in mission propaganda and the complexities of circumstances at Upoto during the first decade of mission. Secondly, by conceiving the creation of photographs as 'performances' involving Congolese and British actors this thesis has explored moments inscribed in photographs as instances where select Congolese people chose to present themselves. Their participation in making

photographs (some individuals on numerous occasions) speak to collaborative relationships which made those events possible.

Chapter 1, 'Mapping Morality', demonstrated BMS missionaries' attempts to carve out a distinct and coherent identity for themselves at Upoto. Different photographic and textual sources were analysed in order to tease out how diverse economies of information about life at the new mission station were produced concurrently and how the Society mediated the sorts of knowledge that was made publicly available. Reading 'along the archival grain' (Stoler 2009) of these sources has revealed that missionary men arrived in the Congo with a conception of themselves and Europeans as occupying a moral high ground, a self-image of robust Christian masculinity which they sought to maintain through visual and textual representations of work at Upoto. It has been shown how photographs, through their reproduction, were put into the service of official discourses which were intended to convey the peaceful circumstances in which relationships with Congolese and European people were being established. Through captions and written accounts, images became enmeshed in narratives of mission work which were unambiguous and triumphant. In this way the 'photography complex' was an integrated part of the performance of power and moral righteousness by Baptist missionaries in the Congo and shaped understandings of the evangelical project at home (Hevia 2009: 89-93).

Close readings of archival material which was intended for discrete audiences in Britain demonstrated how missionaries' faith in inherent European civility was progressively challenged by episodes of State violence. The message that they had come with peace was offset by displays of masculinity which employed guns, which were pre-existing symbols of European power in the Congo. Careful analysis of textual accounts has made it possible to detail Congolese people's responses to the BMS arrival and varying degrees of acceptance of the foreign arrivals over time. Initial Bapoto impressions that the BMS were allied with them and would be advantageous in their relations with other Congolese polities and local State representatives were reassessed in light of numerous disappointments. It became evident that the BMS would leverage State forces against Congolese people when it suited their needs. In the first few years, missionaries' initial friendships with people at Upoto were repeatedly tested and their limits laid bare. As a result, the terms of these relationships were re-assessed both by the mission's staff and Upoto's inhabitants. The analysis provided in this chapter highlighted the different actions

taken by Bapoto people over time in response to the missionaries' presence, thereby offering a more nuanced picture of how early relationships were negotiated than was ever publicised by the Society. The process of building relationships with Congolese communities living Upoto has been shown to have been complex and fraught with misconceptions on all sides of the cultural encounter. The frustrations, fears and ethical dilemmas experienced by the first generation of missionary men at Upoto did not filter into the accounts which featured in the Society's public propaganda. An assumed moral landscape which had at first seemed easy to navigate with axiomatic knowledge transported from Britain, became steadily more confusing as the mission attempted to configure their roles in the volatile political conditions created by the Congo Free State administration.

Chapter 2, 'Navigating Turmoil', detailed how missionaries' day-to-day interactions came to be determined by the needs of Congolese people who sought their help in response to violence in the region by representatives of the State and commercial companies. Through the analysis of archival material, it was possible to tease-out Congolese interpretations of missionary behaviour, including attempts to build beneficial relationships with the mission community on their own terms. Through a discussion of events recorded by the mission, the chapter traced Congolese efforts to engage the British missionaries in order to navigate the European occupation and its effects.

Approaching sources 'along the archival grain' (Stoler 2009) made it possible to scrutinise missionaries' repeated characterisations of events deemed trivial, troublesome or disruptive to their core evangelical work. The use of innuendo and humour to describe aspects of mission work in public literature was shown to have deliberately glossed the complexity of the political climate at Upoto and maintained a sense of the intellectual and moral superiority over Congolese people that Europeans were imagined to share. What is evident from the exploration of various interactions which staff considered a 'palaver' at Upoto is how the missionaries were made to fulfil roles that were asked of them, often in tension with what they believed evangelical work should consist of. It has been demonstrated how Congolese people sought to raise issues concerning the State's conduct with the missionaries, with the expectation that, as British men, they would be able to represent them to the administration. Somewhat reluctantly, in response to the demands of local people, BMS missionaries were forced to act upon their initial

proclamations that they had come to Central Africa with peace and were there with a purpose distinct to that of commercial agents or military personnel.

The unforeseen challenges and experiences of morally fraught work at Upoto rarely featured in official BMS propaganda in the 1890s because they threatened to jeopardise the foundational mythologies which had driven the BMS to the Congo mission field and inspired support from people in Britain. In public accounts of mission work, the staff at Upoto retreated into simplified narratives and tropes which reproduced prejudices about Africans. Frequently, characterisations of the struggle for evangelical influence reduced the equation to one of white European virtue and Congolese moral failings. An analysis of how photographs were made significant in relation to particular axiomatic forms of knowledge according to the 'interpretive community' (Edwards 1998: 109) of British Baptists has demonstrated how images made at Upoto contributed to the 'common sense' (Stoler 2009: 38) which underpinned evangelical work in the Congo and British imperialisms more widely. Through forms of inscription, photographs were made to reference an ideological framework which positioned Congolese people as culturally and morally inferior to Europeans, concepts which could be used to justify a degree of punitive action by State forces in the name of civilisation. During this period, it was easier to propagate a desirable anticipated narrative which reinforced British constructs of white superiority than detail individual experiences which were complex and contradictory. In official narratives disseminated by the Upoto mission between 1890 and 1900 there was little room for Congolese suffering that was not of their own making.

This chapter's evaluation of the 'epistemic habits' (Stoler 2009: 39) of the mission staff has brought to light how certain kinds of information about the actions of the State military and commercial agents were considered politically charged and were therefore recorded in cursory form in the station's logbook. This information had the potential to undermine accounts of conditions at Upoto produced for BMS propaganda, and furthermore, bring the Society unwanted public scrutiny. Specific incidents of Congolese individuals' suffering were therefore carefully managed, confined to certain documentary practices with restricted audiences. In the course of the first decade of work at Upoto, BMS staff were forced to re-evaluate the nature of their relationship with the Congo Free State administration and previous efforts to remain politically neutral. Ultimately the missionaries were drawn into the social unrest and came to be used as mediators by some Congolese people. The nature of

mission work therefore evolved in response to the changing colonial complex at Upoto. However, aspects of this work were not made known in BMS propaganda until external pressure demanded that missionaries publicly account for their knowledge of the Congo's misrule. Archival sources betray the gradual 'epistemic transformations' (Roque & Wagner 2012: 5) experienced by British missionaries at Upoto, whose self-assured beliefs about the benefits of a 'civilising' European presence in the Congo were progressively challenged through their day-to-day encounters. The certitudes of their own moral authority and ability to improve the lives of the Congolese 'heathen' were called into question under the conditions created by the colonial regime.

Chapter 3, 'Picturing Transformation', demonstrated how the missionaries at Upoto came to understand their own activity and the relationships they were building with Congolese people through the concept of the 'mission family'. It was seen how the idea of the Baptist family was transported from Britain to the Congo where it was reworked to provide a framework through which cultural differences might be resolved and accommodated in accordance with British Christian values. As a model of social organisation, it enabled the missionaries to retain a sense of propriety, moral authority and control over the Congolese people who came to live and work among them. Exploration of the BMS photographic archive revealed how photography was used as a medium which could sustain an official narrative of successful mission in which the ideal relationships between British missionaries and Congolese individuals were performed for the camera. A focus on the material settings in which photographs from Upoto were circulated made it possible to identify how visual content was made significant in accordance with specific discourses presented in BMS propaganda. Establishing how certain photographs were 'expected' to function (Edwards 2001b: 21) when they were reproduced and activated within a wider 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) enabled the interpretation of images made at Upoto for which little or no historical context exists. The identification of repeated visual conventions in photographic content, combined with the repertoire of ideologies found in textual inscriptions across the BMS photographic archive, facilitated an understanding of the anticipated uses which motivated the creation of certain images.

The process of reading the archives of the Upoto mission 'along the archival grain' (Stoler 2009) highlighted the restricted scope of the information that was made public concerning the Congolese people who were adopted by the missionaries or

who demonstrated an interest in Christianity. Fragments of information contained in missionaries' private correspondence and the station's logbook were shown to carry traces of events which suggest that relationships were constantly being renegotiated on all 'sides' of the religious encounter. This information resists and challenges the dominant grain of discourses that were being produced by the BMS for public consumption. The chapter offered evidence of Bapoto responses to the BMS arrival, their expectations about what new relationships would mean and how new opportunities were used by individuals with local authority. The little information available in the archive suggests Congolese agency in the building of new alliances, but that such efforts were at times filled with uncertainty, mistrust and resistance to the BMS. Quite apart from the missionaries' objectives, those Congolese people who came to the mission classes or sent their children to work at the station had their own reasons for doing so. In the 'presences' which they document (Edwards 2016a: 313), photographs are testament to the choices Congolese individuals made and the intercultural relationships they formed in their engagements with the Christian mission but offer only clues as to what these relationships meant to them. Congolese Christians at Upoto performed their religious membership for their camera, a ritual which was cherished by BMS staff for the demonstrations of identity it facilitated.

Chapter 3 explored how the medium of photography enabled the missionaries at Upoto to represent their relationships with Congolese people in accordance with popular conventions of photographic portraiture in Europe. With these photographic practices came forms of ideological significance which shaped images' reception in Britain. Through photography the Baptist mission family in the Congo was represented as infinitely malleable and accommodating, its relationships were defined in terms of emotional connection and shared faith in a reworked model of the British patriarchal family unit. For missionaries, photography was a means of displaying the relationships which had emerged from the religious encounter in ways which would resonate at home. As photographs from Upoto were circulated within a the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) and reached BMS members, British people could participate in evaluating the supposed transformation of Congolese individuals in their conversion to Christianity. By engaging with authoritative photographic documents which were inscribed with missionaries' narratives of the nascent Congolese Christian community, they received visual instruction on the transformations which could be witnessed at Upoto. Furthermore, photographs helped BMS supporters to imagine themselves as agents of change in the Congo

through their prayers and donations. It was argued that photographs were used by the BMS to represent and ideologically link the nascent Baptist community at Upoto to an extended Baptist membership across continents.

Chapter 4, 'Curating Ethnography', analysed the photographs which came to be housed at MAA to demonstrate both the collaborative work that went into the collection's production and the subsequent processes of disciplinary evaluation which enabled their institutional admittance as ethnographic objects (Mitman and Wilder 2016). Analysis of the relationships that enabled the circulation of photographs within this realm of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) highlighted the formal and ideological criteria which shaped the creation of an anthropological photographic archive for the Museum. It was demonstrated that the interests and expectations of the curator, Baron von Hügel, were linked to the scientific agendas of the wider field of professional anthropology in Britain, which in turn informed the photographic practices of Rev. Smith at Upoto. By following the trajectories of photographs made at Upoto it has been possible to show the value attributed to this collection as images were transformed into scientific documents, and to demonstrate the kinds of classificatory knowledge that they were made to communicate.

The analysis of Smith's and Forfeitt's photographs provided in this chapter indicated that the making of ethnographic images was not a discrete task undertaken with dedicated objectivity but embedded in the pre-existing relationships and activities associated with mission work. Through a 'forensic' approach to indexical details represented in the images (Edwards 1992: 13; Prins 1992: 219) it was possible to tease out information about how photography itself functioned as a social activity involving the agendas of Congolese people for whom these events afforded opportunities for performance and social recognition. Photographic subjects rendered anonymous as Congolese 'natives' in the Museum's archival context were identified as having been familiar acquaintances, church members and colleagues of the missionaries based at Upoto. These were Congolese individuals who were sometimes named in the personal photograph albums of the missionaries. Comparison of the collection at MAA and the photographs which remained in Smith's personal possession laid bare the archival structures which shaped their interpretation according to distinct genres and maintained these to the present day. The social construction of mutually exclusive views of Upoto suggested

the different appraisals of photographs by individuals in separate contexts of viewing.

Chapter 4 revealed how Smith and Forfeitt contributed to the creation of anthropological knowledge about northern Congo in the early twentieth century: through the photographs they made and exchanged, the artefacts they collected and through the photographic encounters they mediated at Upoto. It was argued that the capacity for missionary photographs to carry ethnographic value was contingent upon their selection and re-activation in contexts of professional anthropology where specific intellectual criteria worked to stabilise their meanings. For von Hügel, Smith's photographs offered a means of collecting views of Congolese people which could serve as objectifications of ideas about cultural traits. Some of the photographs' material transformation into lantern slides attests to the pedagogical function of the images in the context of a university museum and their role in reinforcing the credibility of individuals as professional anthropologists. Once distributed within this realm of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009), the photographs could be put to work in myriad ways and appropriated to convey new meanings unintended at the time of their conception.

Chapter 5, 'Curating Memory', interrogated how ideas were generated by photographs in diverse ways according to their social activation and material (re)presentation in different realms of the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009). Different case studies addressed how photographs were assembled in multi-media compositions which afforded creative possibilities in shaping their future interpretation. Analysis of the settings where images were 'placed' and given significance (Edwards 2012: 226-227) demonstrated how the same image could operate differently according to the information which was brought to bear upon its photographic content. It was shown that representations of Upoto were ideologically charged with meaning in accordance with pre-existing forms of knowledge comprising the cultural 'common sense' of communities in Britain (Stoler 2009: 30). The BMS used photographic imagery to support different narratives of 'self' and 'other' and encourage identification with Congolese people within certain ideological parameters.

The chapter explored how the emotive potential of representations of the Congo was harnessed to encourage an emotional engagement among audiences in Britain that would capture imaginations and generate donations. Photographs were used by the missionaries at Upoto to maintain relationships with friends and family,

shape how they were thought of in the present and how they would be remembered in the future. The ability of photographs to reproduce geographically and temporally remote events meant that they were called upon to support claims to truth and defend the organisation from scrutiny. Close readings of the BMS archive revealed the dominant 'archival grain' (Stoler 2009) of official historical memory perpetuated by the Society about its evangelical efforts in the Congo. This chapter demonstrated how photographs were instrumentalised in the construction of selective discourses for consumption by British publics and used to perpetuate collective memory. It has been possible to bring to the fore the 'cultural stage' onto which photographic images 'performed' their meanings (Edwards 2001a: 17) to address those ideological currents which informed the reception of photographs from Upoto. Images were invested in as material connections and visual evidence of relationships to real and imagined communities, whether as inhabitants of an English town, members of a Baptist community, Christian children, British citizens or as a league of 'civilised' men in Africa. The BMS used photographic images in an effort to stabilise the information made available about its work in the Congo and generate a selective memory that would protect its reputation for posterity.

This thesis' attention to historical photographs as forms of evidence for re-assessing historical narratives and popular recollections has implications for how indigenous experiences might be located in other archival material which was produced in colonial settings (Roque and Wagner 2012). The research presented here has shown how photographs can be integrated with dispersed archival sources to generate new meanings about historical events and unsettle established official narratives, information which is not always accessible when images are viewed in isolation. The re-evaluation of Baptist Missionary Society artefacts has demonstrated that missionary heritage can be reappraised in order to illuminate different perspectives on the lives of people who engaged with Christian missions. As forms of evidence, photographs have been shown to augment existing textual accounts of historical events, at times creating powerful challenges to authoritative narratives and at others giving rise to ambiguity, and with it, new interpretative possibilities. The experiences and actions of Congolese people associated with the early history of the Upoto mission have been brought to the surface of textual and photographic sources and activated in tension with information recorded by missionary authors. By doing so, it has been possible to highlight alternative lived experiences of events and re-integrate traces of Congolese perspectives of cultural encounters. This has

enabled an understanding of the motivations of Congolese actors who chose to build relationships with the British Christian community at Upoto as they navigated the European occupation of northern Congo. Such a method of situating historical photographs along and in tension with the 'archival grain' of textual sources (Stoler 2009) could be replicated for other colonial-era collections which have been under-researched.

The approach taken in this thesis to follow the trajectories of photographs within the 'photography complex' (Hevia 2009) as they were reproduced and re-appropriated in contexts of use in Britain has enabled a view of how knowledge was created between mission site and metropole. It has been possible to contextualise the kinds of knowledge generated by BMS missionaries as 'artefactual', borne out of specific, physical cultural encounters between individual persons in northern Congo (Roque and Wagner 2012: 4-5). This expanded view of the social networks in which photographs operated has revealed the different purposes for which images were used by historical actors in contexts of evangelical propaganda, academic anthropology and personal and collective forms of commemoration. The advantage of such a perspective for this thesis is that it allowed for an analysis of how information recorded in close proximity to historical events was filtered, selectively disseminated and 'remediated' for audiences further afield (Edwards 2012: 226). It has been shown how photographs were charged with meaning according to specific cultural frameworks and made to serve intellectual and political agendas in Britain. It has also been made apparent how news of events in a remote mission field in northern Congo was incorporated into domestic discourses and could serve as reference points with which to construct ideas of British identity, morality and piety. Conceiving photographs as objects of material culture which were mobile and reproducible suggests that there is further scope for understanding how missionary photographs were appropriated into social contexts by Christian communities in home countries.

In light of current scholarship in anthropology and museum ethnography which has sought to reconnect archival artefacts with 'source' communities or contemporary stakeholders, the findings discussed here offer some groundwork towards such a project. Understanding how historical collections were made and why they were important for earlier societies is a necessary step towards questioning their differentiated cultural value in the present. Photographic evidence that the church constructed at Upoto in 1912 is still standing (Fig. C.1, C.2) and is still in use

suggests that the photographic archives of the Upoto mission have unexplored relevance to the residents of Upoto today. In sum, the artefacts in the UK, which did so much work in representing the Congo to British people over a century ago, can be re-collected anew in order to re-present the Congo, its history and ongoing legacies, to those who live there now.

Postscript: Enduring Images

Dispersed throughout the pages of Kenred Smith's children's book *Congoland* (1913) are printed photographs of Congolese boys playing with makeshift guns or standing as if conducting a military salute (Fig. PS.1-PS.4). Some of the children were pictured wearing hats which imitated those worn as the official uniform by *Force Publique* soldiers. Many of these images were also reproduced as hand-coloured postcards which were sold by the BMS, advertised in *The Missionary Herald* and *Wonderlands* (Fig. PS.4). Such images were coherent with the BMS rhetoric of militant Christianity which employed soldierly metaphors to link the concept of the evangelical Christian calling to more mainstream ideals of masculinity and patriotism in Britain. The captions given to the images included titles such as 'Playing Soldiers', 'Playing at Soldiers - Attention!' and 'Salute!'. As photographic illustrations assembled for the pages of *Congoland* the images were incorporated into a narrative of mission alongside other playful depictions of Congolese children. However, from the perspective of the present day and in the context of the history of Upoto discussed in Chapter 1, such photographs have a more troubling valence.

Writing in 2020, with the knowledge that the Belgian colonial regimes were responsible for the deaths of an estimated 10 million people and knowing the turbulent history of the Congo before and after independence in 1960, photographs of children playing with imitation guns appear anything but light-hearted. These types of photographs made by BMS missionaries are suggestive of a period from the late nineteenth century onwards when the militarisation of the Congo became a normal dimension of childhood for many. The retrospective knowledge that for some children in the Congo, recruitment into militia groups and experiences of military insurgence would make the use of guns a reality, gives the earlier photographs an unsettling prophetic quality. They speak to how forms of Congolese masculinity were remade under colonialism and guns replaced other symbols of political authority. Johanna Zetterstrom-Sharp has written about an anthropomorphic parade knife which was acquired by the BMS missionary Rev. Lionel G. West during his time spent working in the Congo at Lukolela station between 1930 and 1961 (2015: 187-189). The knife's iron blade appears to have been reworked from an earlier form into the shape of a man wearing a cap with one arm raised, standing as if in salute. The details of the knife's creation and acquisition are minimal but the motif, which likely represented a soldier, suggests the visibility of

militarised European forms of authority in the Congo under colonialism by the mid-twentieth century (Zetterstrom-Sharp 2015: 188-189). As Zetterstrom-Sharp puts it, as an object the knife 'encapsulate[s] the very process of transformation, with new gods, languages and leaders inscribed into its very fabric' (2015: 189).

The images disseminated in Western media portrayals of the Congo from the second half of the twentieth century have perpetuated an imaginary of Central Africa as a place of violence and suffering, and a moralising discourse of Congolese people as inherently self-destructive. The prominence of this imagery has played into a continuing skewed impression of the Congo from outside, shaping how its history has been understood. In turn this has informed foreign policy and outside investment in the country. A rhetoric of post-independence Congolese democracy as irredeemably broken and eternal damnation from the global north seems to echo ideas emanating from Europe over a century earlier. This thesis has elucidated how those earlier narratives came to be generated in a context of Christian mission and were latterly embedded in popular consciousness and archives in Britain. While I have not undertaken a detailed assessment of the relevance of visual representations of the Congo to conceptions of the country's more recent history, even a cursory examination indicates that there is more research to be done to understand the legacies of early photographic archives.

The sense of cyclical exploitation and devastation in the Congo is a theme explored by the Congolese artist Sammy Baloji who frequently employs archival photographs made by Europeans in the Congo Free State and Belgian Congo in his work.[46] Historical images are repurposed by him to represent Congolese people superimposed onto or beside photographs he has made of contemporary landscapes inscribed by the aftermath of colonialism. The effect of these inter-temporal montages is a powerful compression of time and space which work to critique the current political and economic circumstances in the Congo through an engagement with the past. Through his visual time-warps Baloji achieves a suffocating sense of repercussion in a country trying to shake off its colonial legacies. The historical specificity achieved in his use of photographs can be seen to actively resist a narrative of the Congo as axiomatically self-destructive because it locates specific and repeated systems of oppression which have impacted generations of Congolese people.

[46] Examples of Sammy Baloji's work can be seen at: https://axis.gallery/artists/sammybaloji/. Date accessed: August 2020.

It has been detailed here how a British evangelical self-image was constructed in relation to people and cultures encountered in the Congo from the late nineteenth century. Unfortunately, many of the prejudiced beliefs which BMS missionaries at Upoto held and disseminated about Africans are not unfamiliar and recur in popular and political discourses within British society today. Worldwide protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement have reignited with new urgency in recent months and are a reminder that such racist ideas are prevalent and negatively impact the lived experiences of black people. Ideas of cultural and racial superiority over people of African descent continue to be widely harboured. As Felwine Sarr has asserted, although countries on the African continent have adapted since the end of colonisation, much of the discourse about Africa and its place in an imagined world order manifests as a persistent relic of Eurocentric imperialism (2019: ix-xv). The debates which antiracism campaigns have sparked in Britain have demanded scrutiny of the nationalistic British self-image and its intersection with widely held understandings of Britain's colonial past. Questions have surfaced about how certain perverted narratives of Britain's colonial history and self-aggrandising myths came to be so firmly entrenched within the postcolonial collective memory. Although this study was not directly concerned with British colonial interests in Africa, it tangentially illustrated how narratives of African peoples were conceived and propagated in material form by BMS missionaries. Its emphasis on the social and material sedimentation of narratives about the Congo in Britain has resonance today, when there is an increasing awareness of how histories (and by extension, identities) are made and preserved.

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  - Correspondence by Oram from Upoto (A/35/15).
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- Photographic prints associated with Upoto (Bopoto) Station, Congo, File number (A/P/29).
- Photographic prints made at Congo Mission Stations, File numbers (A/P/94), (A/P/116-117), (A/P/151-153).
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- Baron von Hügel's outgoing correspondence, Museum letter book, 1904-1905, MAA Archive.

Africa Museum, Leuvensesteenweg 13, 3080 Tervuren, Belgium.

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Appendix. 1 Portraits of Key Figures

AP.1 Portrait of Rev. George Grenfell made in 1902, illustration in George Grenfell and the Congo (Johnston 1908, frontispiece vol. 1).

AP.2 Print, portrait of Rev. Frederick Oram in Johan Lankamp's album. (RV-5997-136-108) Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden.

AP.3 Lantern slide, portrait of Rev. William and Anne Marie Forfeitt (née Collier) with their daughter Gladys. (William Forfeitt Papers, Accession 277) BMS Archive, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford.

AP.4 Print, portrait of Rev. John Lawson Forfeitt. Date: before 1910. (William Forfeitt Papers, A/43) BMS Archive, Angus Library, Oxford.

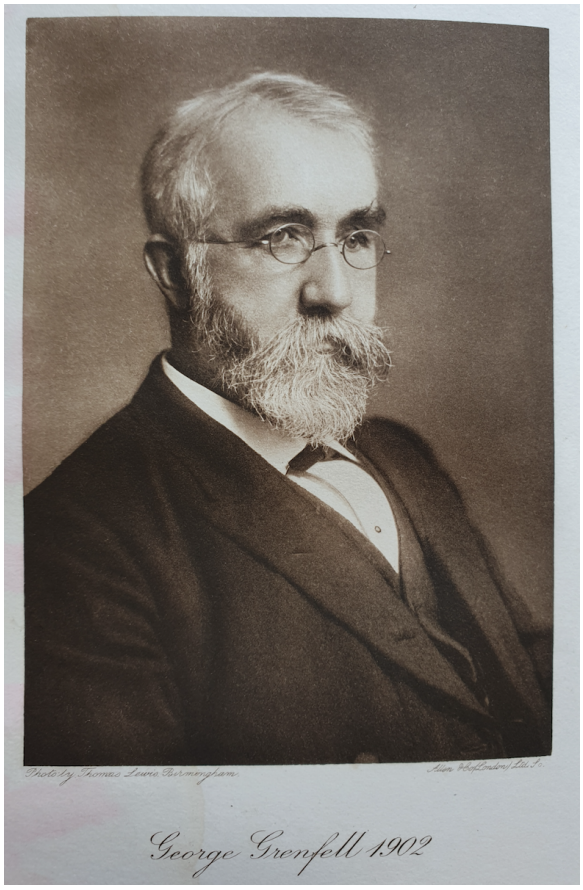
AP.5 Portrait of Harry and Jessie White and their child, illustration in *Harry White, Missionary to the Congo* (Roberts 1901, opposite page 1).

AP.6 Portraits of Maud Smith (née Gregg) and Kenred Smith, illustration in *The Missionary Herald* October 1899: 479.

AP.7 Print, portrait of Rev. Kenred and Ethel Smith on their wedding day. Photographer: unknown. Date: c. 1906. Courtesy of Keith Carey-Smith, private collection.

AP.8 Print, group portrait of missionaries at Upoto. Photographer unknown. Date: c.1910. Courtesy of Keith Carey-Smith, private collection.

AP.9 *'Groepsportret van de heren Pool, Lankamp, Jansen en Vloer aan boord van S.S. Erasmus.'* Print, portrait of Dutch traders aboard the S.S. Erasmus, February 1890. Photographer: unknown. (RV-5997-136-1) Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden.



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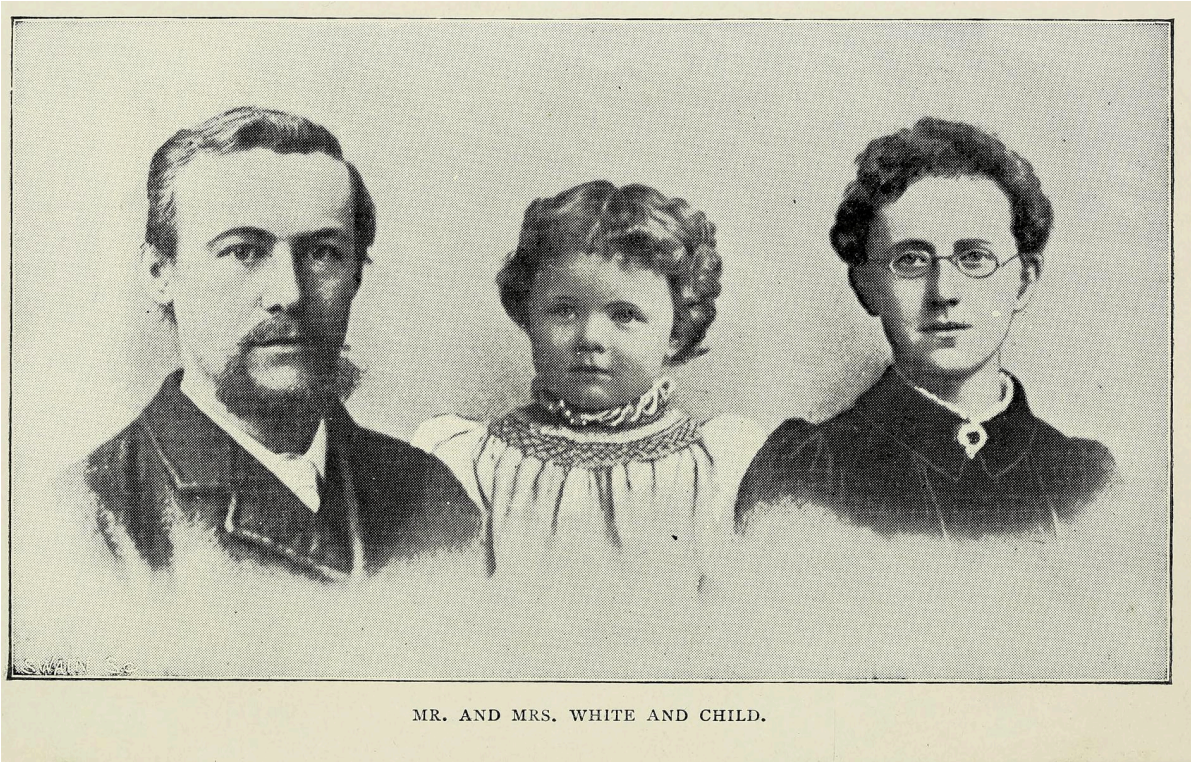

MR. AND MRS. WHITE AND CHILD.

Figure AP.5 Portrait of Harry and Jessie White and their child, illustration in *Harry White, Missionary to the Congo* (Roberts 1901, opposite page 1).

Figure AP.6 Portraits of Maud Smith (née Gregg) and Kenred Smith, illustration in *The Missionary Herald* October 1899: 479.

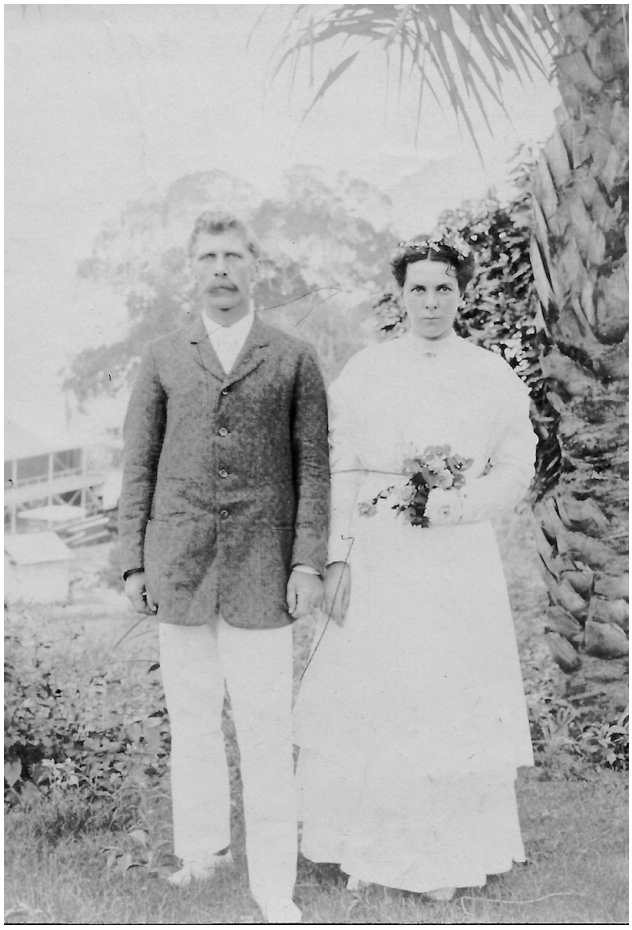

Figure AP. 7 Print, portrait of Rev. Kenred and Ethel Smith on their wedding day. Photographer: unknown. Date: c. 1906. Courtesy of Keith Carey-Smith, private collection.

Figure AP.8 Print, group portrait of missionaries at Upoto. Photographer unknown. Date: c.1910. Courtesy of Keith Carey-Smith, private collection.
Top row, left to right: Rev. Charles Dodds, Dr. Abrassart, Rev. J. H. Marker, Rev. William Forfeitt, Ethel Smith, Rev. Kenred Smith.
Middle row, left to right: Mme. Roelutte, Madame Abrassart, Anne Marie Forfeitt.
Front row, left to right: Mrs. Dodds, Mrs. Marker.

Figure AP.9 *'Groepsportret van de heren Pool, Lankamp, Jansen en Vloer aan boord van S.S. Erasmus.'* Print, portrait of Dutch traders aboard the S.S. Erasmus, February 1890. Photographer: unknown. (RV-5997-136-1) Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden.
Johan Frederik Lankamp is pictured standing on the far right.

Appendix 2. Timeline of Key Events in the History of the Baptist Missionary Society and the Colonisation of the Congo

(BMS activity relating to the Congo mission is shaded grey).

1792	The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) is founded on 2nd October in Kettering, Northamptonshire as the 'Particular-Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen'.
1793	William Carey leads the first BMS mission to India.
1814	The BMS establish a mission in Jamaica, and thereafter in the Bahamas, Haiti and Trinidad.
1844	A BMS mission is founded in the Cameroons at Fernando Po (present-day Bioko, Cameroon), the Society's first effort to begin work on the African continent. Founding members include missionaries and Jamaican Christians affiliated with the BMS mission there.
1860	The BMS establish a missionary presence in China.
1865	Leopold II begins his 44-year reign as King of Belgium.
1871	Henry Morton Stanley travels to East Africa to locate the missing Scottish missionary Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873). After a successful expedition Stanley publishes the account *How I Found Livingstone: Travels, Adventures, and Discoveries in Central Africa, Including Four Months' Residence with Dr. Livingstone* (1872).
1874	Stanley commences a journey (1874-77) to explore and map the main course of the River Congo descending from its headwaters at the Lualaba River to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.

1877	Robert Arthington, a Quaker from Leeds, donates funds to the BMS for the purpose of establishing a mission on the River Congo.
1878	Two British missionaries who had served the Cameroon mission, George Grenfell and Thomas Comber, set sail in January to survey the mouth of the River Congo, staying less than one month.
1878	Stanley publishes the monograph *Through the Dark Continent*, an account of his travels in Central Africa.
1878	Grenfell and Comber return to the Congo in July and are received by the ruler of the Kongo Kingdom, Dom Pedro V at São Salvador (Mbanza Kongo). This region south of the River Congo was eventually claimed as a colony of Portugal. On this particular BMS expedition the missionaries were halted from being able to explore further into the interior by Congolese authorities.
1879	Unable to advance into the interior, the BMS establishes its first mission station in the Congo at São Salvador (Mbanza Kongo). BMS missionaries continue to try to press further inland but this proves the first of thirteen fruitless attempts to establish a route between São Salvador and the area where the River Congo widened, which the explorer Stanley had named Stanley Pool. This lake-like expanse marked the beginning of the navigable stretch of the River Congo coursing north-eastwards upriver, whereas the estuary between the Pool and the Atlantic Ocean was punctuated by regions of cataracts which made it impassable by boat.
1879	Stanley returns to the Congo at the behest of King Leopold and over the next five years is engaged in establishing posts at various points along the River Congo, claiming tracts of land for the Belgian monarch by persuading Congolese authorities to sign treaties in return for payment in trade goods.
1880	On 10th September the French explorer of Italian birth, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, encourages the ruler of the Teke Kingdom, Makoko Iloo I, to sign a treaty transferring sovereignty of his land north of the River Congo and the

	area referred to as Stanley Pool to France. The treaty was ratified two years later and the area named French Equatorial Africa.
1882	The BMS establish their second mission station on the south side of Stanley Pool, on land leased by an agent of King Leopold, naming it Arthington Station. The station is close to the town referred to as Léopoldville, present-day Kinshasa.
1884	The BMS launch their first steamboat 'The Peace' from Stanley Pool, marking the beginning of the BMS' efforts to survey regions in which to build new stations in northern Congo.
1885	After the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) the **Congo Free State** is declared a possession of King Leopold and this claim receives diplomatic recognition on the basis that 'free trade' will be permitted by different nations within the monarch's personal territory.
1886	The BMS station of Lukolela is founded on the upper River Congo.
1888	The BMS station of Bolobo is founded.
1890	The BMS establish a station at Upoto on the River Congo, close to the State post of Lisala.
1890	The BMS station of Monsembe is founded, east of Lukolela.
1896	The BMS station of Yakusu is founded near to Stanley Falls, present-day Boyoma Falls, south of Kisangani.
1903	The British consul in the Congo, Roger Casement, begins a tour of the upper Congo as part of an independent inquiry into reported abuses of Congolese populations by the administration and rubber agents.

1904	In February the *Casement Report* is presented to parliament detailing the results of Roger Casement's investigations.
1904	Members of King Leopold's Commission of Enquiry embark on a journey around central and northern Congo, returning in March 1905.
1904	Edmund Dene Morel establishes the Congo Reform Association in Britain. Morel had left his job at the Elder Dempster (a Liverpool shipping firm) in 1901 to pursue journalism and campaign against the exploitation he had discovered taking place in the Congo Free State.
1905	The BMS makes its first appeal to the British government to intervene in King Leopold's administration of the Congo.
1906	Morel's *Red Rubber – The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade that Flourished in Congo in the Year of Grace 1906* is published.
1906	George Grenfell, the Cornish missionary celebrated as the founding father of the BMS Congo mission, dies at Basoko on 1st July.
1908	Sir Harry Hamilton Johnson's *George Grenfell and the Congo is published* in two volumes, commemorating Grenfell's career in the Congo.
1908	The Congo Free State is formally seized from King Leopold by the Belgian government and becomes a Belgian colony, renamed the **Belgian Congo** (*Congo belge*).
1909	King Leopold II of Belgium dies on 17th December.
1913	Kenred Smith's book *Congoland – A Book for Young People* is published.
1960	The Congo gains independence from Belgium on 30th June and is renamed the **Republic of the Congo**. Patrice Émery Lumumba is elected the first Prime Minister of an independent Congo.

1961	Patrice Lumumba is assassinated, believed to have been killed on 17th January 1961.
1965	Mobutu Sese Seko, a former military officer born in Lisala, seizes power in a coup.
1971	In October the country's name is changed from the Republic of the Congo to the **Republic of Zaire** and Mobutu begins a programme of renaming places in order to Africanise them.
1997	Leader of an anti-government rebellion, Laurent Desire Kabila, overthrows Mobutu and on 17th May installs himself as president. The country's name is changed to the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.
2000	The Baptist Missionary Society changes its name to BMS World Mission.
2001	On 18th January it is announced that Laurent Kabila has died on an aeroplane on route to Harare, following reports that he had been shot some days before at his presidential palace.
2001	Joseph Kabila, son of the former president is inaugurated on 26th January.
2016	Keith Carey-Smith publishes the memoirs of his grandfather (Kenred Smith) under the title *With Christ in Congoland.*
2019	Joseph Kabila steps down on 24th January and the elected candidate Félix Tshisekedi assumes power, the first peaceful transition of power in Congo since independence in 1960.