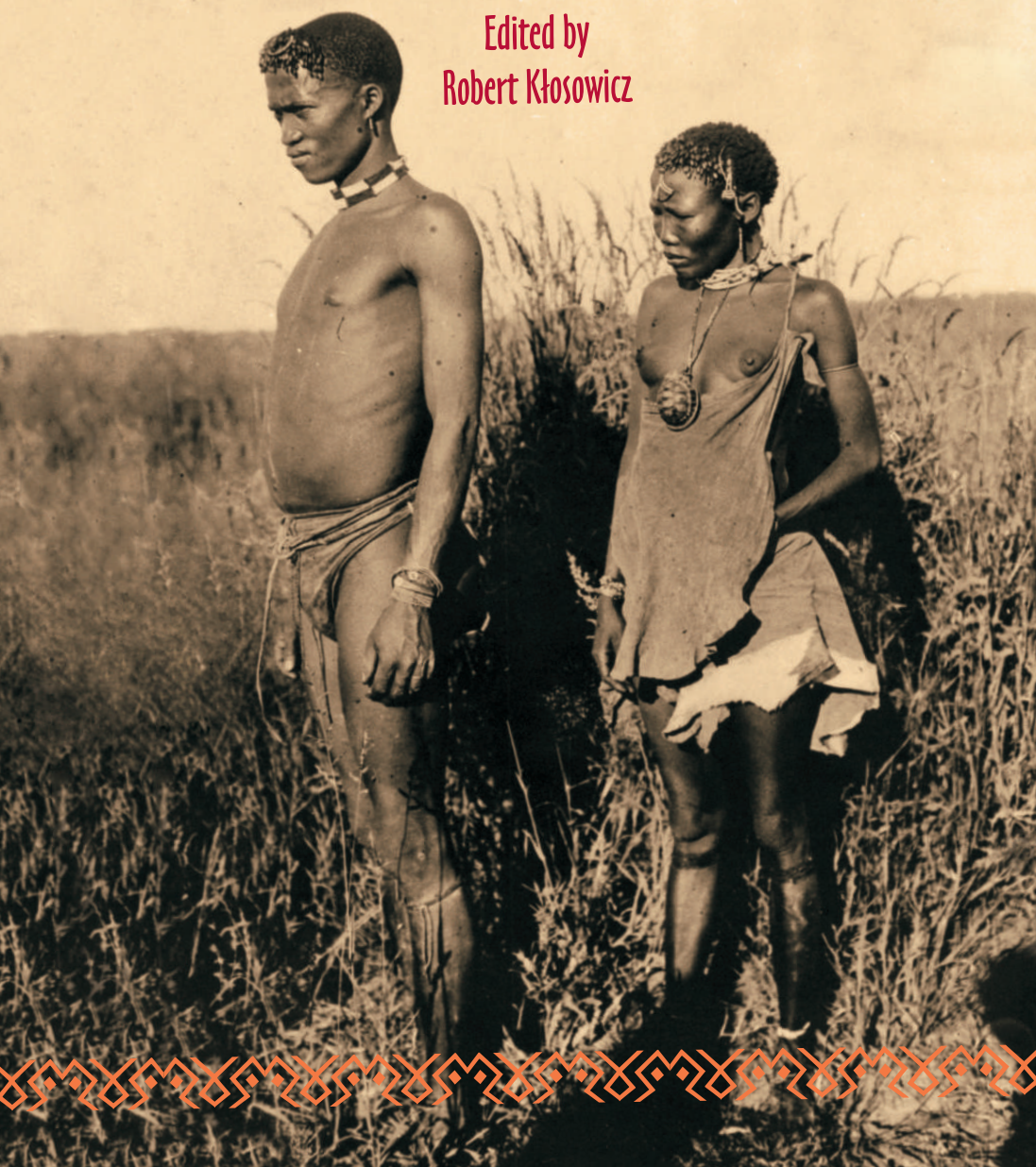


PIONEERS OF AFRICAN STUDIES IN KRAKÓW



Edited by
Robert Kłosowicz



PIONEERS OF AFRICAN STUDIES IN KRAKÓW

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In memory of Professor Roman Stopa (1895-1995)



Edited by
Robert Kłosowicz



Kraków

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Robert Kłosowicz, *Introduction* · 7

PART I

ROMAN STOPA'S AFRICAN RESEARCH

Paweł Siwiec, *Roman Stopa – Pioneer of Polish
African Studies* · 15

Arkadiusz Żukowski, *Roman Stopa's Research in
Light of African Studies in Poland and Worldwide –
Initial Considerations* · 25

Marcin Brocki, *Hottentots and Bushmen –
on the Margins of Roman Stopa's Ethnological
Commentary* · 71

Jacek Kukuczka, *Roman Stopa's Unknown Photographs.
Sketching a Portrait of the Khoisan Peoples* · 89

PART II

AFRICAN STUDIES IN KRAKÓW AFTER WORLD WAR II

Robert Kłosowicz, *Tadeusz Lewicki's Academic
Achievements in the Field of African Studies* · 113

Joanna Bar, <i>African Topics in Andrzej Waligórski's and Leszek Dziegiel's Research</i>	· 139
Joanna Mormul, <i>Andrzej Zaborski – Researcher of Cushitic and Semitic Languages</i>	· 163
Notes on the authors	· 175
Index of names	· 179
Geographical index	· 185

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HOTTENTOTS AND BUSHMEN – ON THE MARGINS OF ROMAN STOPA’S ETHNOLOGICAL COMMENTARY



“LET ME MAKE IT clear that I am not saying that post-hunter-gatherers are either better than or biologically different from hunter-gatherers. I am saying the opposite, on both counts. Hunter-gatherers most closely represent natural humanity. We ourselves, post-hunter-gatherer peoples, are in a sense beyond ‘normal’ natural humanity. We have found ways of coping with our unnatural state. Instead of groups of 150, we have networks of 150. And there exist unnatural (anarchists would say ‘inhuman’) political structures to keep us under control. The state and the city are not part of human nature, though they may today be part of our ‘natural’ environments”.¹

These words, stated by the exceptional contemporary social anthropologist, Alan Barnard, specialist in the San

¹ A. BARNARD, *Social Anthropology and Human Origins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011, p. 106.

and Khoikhoi cultures, Namibian honorary consul to Scotland, would be a perfect metaphor of what Prof. Roman Stopa stated in his 'ethnological commentary' on the subject of the so-called Hottentots and Bushmen.

First of all, I would like to draw attention to one obvious but very significant aspect: Prof. Roman Stopa was not an ethnographer (ethnologist, anthropologist); thus, the fact that he 'made use' in his texts of a generalised, caricature-like 'Bushman' or 'Hottentot' can be treated with much more understanding than in the case of similar practices applied in numerous anthropological studies. A caricature emphasizes traits that seem especially important to the observer; in this case, creating an image of a human whose carnality is suited to the rhythm of nature, and – as a result – who in general is, as in the above-quoted fragment of Barnard's book, closer to nature:

„At times, especially during the rainy season, a Bushman will eat enough (caterpillars or locusts) so that his stomach bulges and folds disappear, then again, during prolonged droughts, he starves and his stomach collapses and skin becomes wrinkled once again.²”

This image is significant in that Roman Stopa's entire text is subordinated to this vision of the naturality and primordialism of the Bushmen and Hottentots; for the author they fundamentally represent 'Palaeolithic cul-

² “Raz, zwłaszcza w porze deszczowej, naje się Buszmen (gąsienicy szarańcze) tak, że brzuch mu pęcznieje i fałdy giną, to znów w długotrwałej suszy całymi miesiącami przymiera głodem, a wówczas brzuch mu zapada i skóra marszczy się na nowo”: R. STOPA, *Z badań nad ludnością i kulturą Afryki Południowo-Zachodniej*, Instytut Wydawniczy “Biblioteka Polska”, Warszawa 1938, p. 5, *Prace Instytutu Naukowego Ligi Morskiej i Kolonialnej*, no. 1.

tures'.³ It should be emphasized that the Bushman topos as a 'living fossil', a modern-day form of the Palaeolithic human and model for interpreting archaeological material about the Upper Palaeolithic is widely present both in academic literature from very diverse fields of social studies or the humanities,⁴ and in journalistic texts, the media; it can thus be stated that it became dominant in the 'mass imagination'. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that this topos has for years been criticised as ignoring the fact frequently referred to by the renowned researcher of the !Kung, Edwin Wilmsen (the so-called revisionist thesis),⁵ which in essence states that the !Kung, like other San groups, have for centuries been in close contact with pastoral groups, while for the last 200 years they have been part of multicultural South African society, constituting a subclass in a modern-day state.⁶ It is also been emphasized that for hundreds of years there have been various strategies of adapting to living conditions, diverse settlement models, kinship principles, beliefs, etc. among the

³ IDEM, *Narodziny myśli i mowy ludzkiej (studium z pogranicza psychologii, socjologii i praindoeuropeistyki)*, Książnica Powszechna, Kraków 1948, p. 9.

⁴ Cf. e.g. B. SZAREWSKA, *Stare i nowe religie w tropikalnej i południowej Afryce*, Książka i Wiedza, Warszawa 1971, p. 75; S. KENT, *Ethnicity, Hunter-Gatherers, and the "Other". Association or Assimilation in Africa*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington 2002; R.B. LEE, I. DEVORE, *Man the Hunter*, Transaction Publishers, Chicago 1968.

⁵ E.N. WILMSEN, *Land Filled with Flies. A Political Economy of the Kalahari*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1989.

⁶ Cf. A. KUPER, *Wymyślanie społeczeństwa pierwotnego. Transformacje mitu*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2009, p. 9; Z. SOKOLEWICZ, *Wstęp do etnografii Afryki*, PWN, Warszawa 1968, p. 44; E.R. WOLF, *Europa i ludy bez historii*, trans. by W. USAKIEWICZ, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2009.

various San and Khoikhoi groups; in general, that there are no ideal “hunter-gatherers” who could serve as an ideal model that could be projected into the past.⁷ As Adam Kuper puts it, “no primeval hunter-gatherers existed, who by some magical means have survived to this day with intact institutions from the Upper Palaeolithic period, ready to be studied by the most adventurous of field researchers”.⁸ It is interesting to note that the motifs of the ‘living fossil’ and ‘humanity’s cradle’ tend to nowadays be promoted by the San societies themselves as an element attracting tourists and the tourism industry. As this has turned out to be the source of considerable income, today the identity of the ‘Bushmen’ is undergoing commercialisation, whereby they use the pejorative term enforced on them by the colonialists and have turned it into a South African trade mark.⁹

In Stopa’s texts, this topos serves to reinforce his own glottogenic theory, in which the ‘primitive’, ‘child-like’ and ‘ape-like’ physique, especially the shape of the chin, is supposed to have been responsible for the difficulties in producing speech sounds, and thus, for the persistence of archaic, almost quasi-human sounds in the clicks so characteristic for the Bushmen.¹⁰

⁷ Cf. A. BARNARD, *Anthropology and the Bushman*, Berg, Oxford – New York 2007.

⁸ “Nie istnieli żadni pierwotni łowcy-zbieracze, którzy w cudowny sposób przetrwaliby do dziś z nienaruszonymi instytucjami z okresu górnego paleolitu, gotowi do zbadania przez najbardziej żądných przygód badaczy terenowych”: A. KUPER, *op. cit.*, s. 10.

⁹ J.L. COMAROFF, J. COMAROFF, *Etniczność sp. z o.o.*, trans. by W. USAKIEWICZ, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2011.

¹⁰ Cf. R. STOPA, *Archaizm kultury buszmeńskiej*, Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, Lublin 1947, pp. 3-11; IDEM, *Narodziny myśli...*,

Another issue, important from the ‘anthropological point of view’, is Roman Stopa’s attachment to the large quantifier – Bushman, Hottentot. Such generalisations provide special fodder for their ‘exoticisation’, which unfortunately tends to be common practice in ethnology and cultural anthropology, and can even sometimes happen to the masters of thick description. Clifford Geertz, for example, used the generalised, collective term ‘Balinese’ in his texts, to whom he ascribed experiencing emotions, as if being Balinese was a computer programme releasing individuals from their personal emotional reactions.¹¹ Prof. Stopa himself admits in his introduction to *Hotentoci*¹² that it was his intention to depict the exoticism of the people so as to focus the reader’s attention on them. However, it is important to note that he does not only depict a world of curiosities, he does not flaunt their otherness just for the effect in and of itself; what is more, despite using such terms as ‘the indigene’ in the generalised description, he is able self-reflectively to neutralize the danger of the reader creating an overly simplified image of the native. He writes first, for example, of “the Hottentot, a born shepherd, owner of flocks, pastures and springs, currently vegetating

pp. 8-9; cf. also: R.K. HERBERT, *The Sociohistory of Clicks in Southern Bantu*, [in:] *Language in South Africa*, ed. by R. MESTHRIE, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 297; B. SANDS, T. GÜLDEMANN, *What Click Languages Can and Can’t Tell Us about Language Origins*, [in:] *The Cradle of Language*, ed. by C. KNIGHT, R. BOTHA, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009, pp. 205-206.

¹¹ C. GEERTZ, *Interpretacja kultur. Wybrane eseje*, trans. by M. PIĘCHACZEK, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2005.

¹² R. STOPA, *Hotentoci. Kultura – język. Bajki – pieśni*, Wiedza – zawód – kultura, Kraków 1949.

in service to the Whites or in reserves [...]”,¹³ etc. A moment later he notes that some among them were lazy, others hard-working and frugal, irresponsible and unreliable, given to drunkenness, so as – in the case of the Whites – they are not just a reverse image of the Black population. I wish to emphasize that in comparing the image and data about the so-called Bushmen and Hottentots presented by Prof. Stopa and that of professional ethnographers, especially those working in the period from the 1930s to the end of the 1950s, it becomes apparent what a careful and ‘compassionate’ observer we are dealing with in this case. The ability to perceive the details of their daily lives, essential for gaining an understanding of a particular society’s ‘imponderabilia’ of everyday life (as Bronisław Malinowski would say), and the capability of bringing these together into a meaningful whole make Prof. Roman Stopa’s texts an important source for ethnographic studies. This skill made it possible for him to provide reliable observations, which in turn allowed him to have a critical approach to theories too trusting in ‘armchair anthropology’-type considerations. For example, when he encountered an ethnographic obstacle in the form of ‘armchair anthropology’ typologies dividing peoples into hunter-gatherers and pastoral groups, not applicable to the observations he had just made, he showed that while pastoralism is the dominant social and economic type among the Hottentots, there are also gatherer and hunter elements, just as strongly impacting the organisation of their lives (he provides a similar de-

¹³ “Hotentot, pasterz urodzony, dawny właściciel trzód, pastwisk i źródeł, obecnie wegetujący w służbie białych lub w rezerwach [...]”: *ibidem*, p. 55.

scription of the Bushmen with the hierarchy of the types in this case reversed).

An element of Prof. Stopa's work just as significant and exceptional, especially in a period of quoted texts, is that he 'gives a voice' to those he studied, citing their statements using direct speech. This practice came to be appreciated in 1970s' anthropology and is valued highly to this day.

The ethnological commentary scattered across Prof. Stopa's texts have the value of being ethnographic material, even though it cannot always be accepted without debate, for a number of reasons. First of all, the folkloristic material ("Hottentot texts", songs, stories, etc.) he gathered, which is placed within a wider cultural context, is of the highest value. Secondly, his work can interest social and cultural anthropologists currently debating the possibilities and also sometimes the mode of a researcher's engagement in the studied community. This is because the idea appears in Prof. Stopa's texts that his work contributed to improving the fate of the societies he studied, yet not through the researcher taking on the role of a spokesperson for the subaltern and marginalised community, but rather through indirect intervention, through 'educating the reader' and forming sympathy for the described peoples.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, he is capable of achieving this plan in reference to the readers of his texts, which can be testified to not only by the author of this very article but also by careful and critical reviewers of his texts.¹⁵ This educational

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. D. WESTERMANN, *Studies on the Peoples and Culture of South West Africa*. By Roman Stopa. 1938. Warszawa: Instytut Biblioteka Polska, "Africa" 1939, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 258.

effect is rarely emphasized in contemporary anthropology. Anthropologists prefer to 'intervene' rather than insist on shaping the understanding of others, a much more complex route to take. Roman Stopa directly negates the possibility of intervening, writing that it is not his "thing to find a way to rescue [the Bushmen and Hottentots from extinction – note M.B.]. For me, a casual observer, this presents itself to be a problem within a series of other problems that Africa in general, especially South-West Africa, grapples with."¹⁶

We can find similar intentions to those expressed by Prof. Stopa in texts written by anthropologists, including in reference to this same field he was studying; however, these are usually studies that merge ethnography and biography.¹⁷ There are certain dangers inherent to the proposed approach, even though it is noble and worthy of support. Thus, it can turn out that while telling his/her story the author marginalizes or conceals anything that might be detrimental to this sympathy, anything that could shatter the image of the 'noble savage'. In fact, in Roman Stopa's texts we can find no information about normal banditry or thievery, recorded across the world, among the 'noble Bushmen' as well.¹⁸ Elisabeth Marshall Thomas, writer and daughter of the renowned researcher of the San peo-

¹⁶ "...jest rzeczą wynajdywać drogi tego ratunku. Dla mnie, przygodnego obserwatora, przedstawia się to jako problem w szeregu innych problemów, jakie w ogóle następuje Afryka, a Afryka Pd.-Zach. w szczególności": R. STOPA, *Hotentoci...*, p. 54.

¹⁷ M. SHOSTAK, *Nisa, the Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2000; EADEM, *Return to Nisa*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2009.

¹⁸ K. MOSZYŃSKI, *Ludy zbieracko-łowieckie, ich kultura materialna oraz podstawowe wiadomości o formach współżycia zbiorowego, o wiedzy, życiu religijnym i sztuce*, PWN, Warszawa 1951, p. 105.

ples, Lorna Marshall, wrote her book *The Harmless People* in a similar manner during the same period (the 1950s).¹⁹ Even though this text was held in some mild esteem among anthropologists and Africanists,²⁰ unfortunately the odium of mythmaking compromised its final evaluation.²¹ In the case of Roman Stopa's texts, the situation seems analogous – we are dealing with excellent observations and exceptionally valuable original texts, but we also have the above-discussed omissions.

The Africanist from Kraków also touches upon the issue already mentioned at the beginning of this article, that of the primitiveness of the Bushman and Hottentot cultures. In this scope, Prof. Stopa's ethnological commentary, even though frequently published in the years after World War II, bear clear traces of the anthropological approach from the interwar period or even earlier. Primarily, it is permeated by thinking in evolutionist categories (subordination to the glottogenic concept of the primitiveness of click languages), characteristic especially for German pre-war ethnology linking physical anthropology with social and cultural anthropology.²² In those years, it was almost universally acknowledged that the studies written

¹⁹ E.M. Marshall THOMAS, *The Harmless People*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, New York 1958.

²⁰ I. SCHAPER, *The Harmless People*. Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, "American Anthropologist" 1960, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 341-342; M. DOUGLAS, *The Harmless People*. By Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, "Africa" 1961, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 195-196.

²¹ Cf. R.J. GORDON, *The Bushman Myth. The Making of a Namibian Underclass*, Westview Press, Boulder 2000.

²² Cf. A. GINGRICH, *Kraje niemieckojęzyczne*, [in:] *Antropologia. Jedna dyscyplina, cztery tradycje: brytyjska, niemiecka, francuska i amerykańska*, ed. by F. BARTH et al., trans. by J. TEGNEROWICZ, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2007, pp. 114-116.

by German researchers were descriptive and objective, and they were not seen as ideologically shaped interpretations. As late as in the 1950s, the renowned Polish ethnologist Kazimierz Moszyński, in his monumental introduction to ethnography, linked the physical features of populations with their psychological features, referring directly to the work conducted by German pre-war anthropologists, especially the texts by Egon Freiherr von Eickstedt,²³ a foremost representative of Rassenkunde. “Moszyński’s *Man* was not read at the time as a book based on ‘improper’ literature, synthesizing knowledge from ethnological studies with suspect facts and effects”,²⁴ as both before the war and for many years after it, race typologies and hierarchies, as well as “cultural analyses conducted according to the race criterion did not meet with objections.”²⁵ It was in fact the accepted methodology, if not absolutely and undisputedly binding.

²³ K. MOSZYŃSKI, *Człowiek. Wstęp do etnografii powszechnej i etnologii*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wrocław 1958, p. 360.

²⁴ “Człowiek Moszyńskiego nie został odebrany w swoim czasie jako ten, który opiera się na ‘niewłaściwej’ literaturze, który syntetyzuje wiedzę nauk etnologicznych z podejrzanymi faktami i skutkami”: Z. LIBERA, *Antropologia biologiczno-kulturowa i polityka rasowa III Rzeszy w działalności Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit*, [in:] *Antropologia i etnologia w czasie wojny. Działalność Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit, Krakau 1940-1944, w świetle nowych materiałów źródłowych*, ed. by M. MAJ, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2015, p. 31.

²⁵ “...prowadzenie analizy kulturowej według kryterium rasowego nie spotykało się ze sprzeciwem”: G. KUBICA, *Antropologiczny dyskurs rasowy: jego twórcy i dekonstruktorzy*, [in:] *W krainie metarefleksji. Księga poświęcona Profesorowi Czesławowi Robotyckiemu*, ed. by J. BARAŃSKI, M. GOLONKA-CZAJKOWSKA, A. NIEDŹWIEDŹ, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2015, p. 96.

Thus, reading Roman Stopa's texts from the presentist perspective leads to the loss of an important historical context for his works. It should therefore come as no surprise nor in fact lead to feelings of indignation that on the first pages of his book dedicated to the culture of the Bushmen,²⁶ Roman Stopa writes that they were "backward" both in physical and cultural terms. "First of all, their silhouette is primitive in physical terms."²⁷ This results from the bodily features, which to a certain extent make certain tribes or some individuals similar to apes: a) the average height corresponds more or less to that of an anthropoid ape [...], d) the face similar to that of an ape, due to both the nose and chin being very poorly developed".²⁸ Stopa's Bushman is a 'natural human', following his/her instincts (like an animal): "[...] for a Bushman, 'the call of the steppe' is something like the instinct of migratory birds",²⁹ his life can only

²⁶ R. STOPA, *Archaizm...*

²⁷ In the footnote, Prof. Roman Stopa explains that the term "primitive" cannot be understood literally, that this does not refer to the absolute meaning, but rather that 'primitiveness' should be regarded primarily as a spiritual approach – inarguably standing due to backwardness or rather specialised in a certain direction and adapted to the conditions resulting from their physical build" ("prymitywny" nie może być czytane literalnie, że nie chodzi o sens bezwzględny, lecz 'prymitywność' należy tu pojmować przede wszystkim jako postawę duchową – bezsprzecznie stojącą w związku z zacofaniem czy raczej wyspecjalizowaną w pewnym kierunku i dostosowaną do warunków budową fizyczną"): *ibidem*, p. 1.

²⁸ "Po pierwsze, postać ich jest prymitywna pod względem fizycznym. Wynika to z ich cech cielesnych, które do pewnego stopnia zbliżają niektóre szczepy czy niektóre indywidua do małp: a) przeciętna wysokość ciała odpowiada mniej więcej wysokości małp człekokształtnych [...], d) twarz podobna do małpy, gdyż zarówno nos, jak i podbródek są bardzo słabo rozwinięte": *ibidem*, pp. 1-3.

²⁹ "[...] dla Buszmena «zew stepu» jest czymś w rodzaju instynktu u ptaków przelotnych" and the steppe "żłobi w duszy ludzkiej wrażenia głębokie i niezapomniane": IDEM, *Hotentoci...*, p. 81.

be understood, Stopa writes, through the joint consideration of the natural environment he lives in, and the people, as the steppe “carves profound and unforgettable impressions into the human soul”. “Against the backdrop of this nature, there is man in compliant, tacit collusion with it, perhaps even in league, primitive man with the psyche of a child, delicate hands incapable of work, [...] as if an ape-man [...], this is the Bushman”.³⁰ The comparison with a child, and thus the use of mythopoetic imaginations in the style of Vico, animals, and even the reference to being physical maladjusted to working serve Roman Stopa as means to emphasize primitiveness and naturality. However, they also indicate psychological features: “A Bushman is not at all capable of achieving a rational understanding of the world. This in essence is what differentiates him from civilized man”.³¹ As the framework imposed by language is not neutral, it should be remembered that for decades this type of narration served to strengthen European paternalism and the colonial presence in Africa, by suggesting that the ‘peoples’ or ‘tribes’ of Africa were ill-prepared nations, ‘not mature’ enough for independent existence.

It should be emphasized that Prof. Stopa’s views did not stand in opposition to stock views held by other scholars,³² especially German physical anthropologists and ethnologists, attempting to prove the similarity between the

³⁰ “Na tle tej przyrody człowiek w zgodnej, cichej z nią zmwowie, niejako w przymierzu, człowiek pierwotny o psychice dziecka, o rękach delikatnych, nie umiejących pracować, [...] niby małpolud [...], to Buszmen”: *ibidem*, p. 54; emphasis – M.B.

³¹ “Buszmen nie jest w ogóle zdolny do rozumowego ogarniania świata. Tym zasadniczo różni się od człowieka cywilizowanego”: *IDEM, Archaizm...*, p. 5.

³² A. BARNARD, *Anthropology and the Bushman*, p. 2.

Nama and anthropoid apes,³³ and who a few dozen years earlier had been involved in the organisation of popular travelling ‘human zoos’ (also referred to as ‘ethnological expositions’), within the framework of which representatives of the ‘Naturvölker’ were presented publicly.³⁴ For example, in the slogan of the brochure advertising one such touring exhibition travelling around the Netherlands in 1900, one could read that in their appearance Bushman had more features similar to that of an ape than a human.³⁵

Simultaneously, German physical anthropologists, such as Eugen Fischer or Otto Reche, developed their racial theories, which ceased to be limited to registering physical differences between populations, but rather increasingly more distinctly referred to theories linking physicality with mental features, i.e. to the theories of Johann Blumenbach or Christoph Meiners.

In 1913, Eugen Fischer’s text about the ‘Rehoboth bastards’ was published, in which he attempted to prove that mixed marriages led to the birth of degenerate offspring, confirming in this way the 19th-century concepts of Arthur de Gobineau on racial purity. The latter used the example of the Bushmen, wanting to show that they could be taught civilised gestures and behaviours but their nature could not be modified.³⁶ Of course, Roman Stopa does not in any way

³³ M.W. KOWALSKI, *Antropolodzy na wojnie. O ‘brudnej’ użyteczności nauk społecznych*, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2015, p. 108.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 103-104.

³⁵ R. CORBEY, *Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930*, “Cultural Anthropology” 1993, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 347.

³⁶ S. MORAN, *Representing Bushmen. South Africa and the Origin of Language*, University Rochester Press, Rochester 2009, p. 67.

refer to the herein listed studies and cannot be accused of racism; it was only my intention to show that the 'scientific atmosphere' at the time permitted an approach showing proximity between 'race and culture', frequently with the two terms applied synonymously.

In his research, Roman Stopa was in essence on his own, knowing little of the anthropological and ethnographic literature on the societies he studied, gathering ethnographic material on the margins of his own linguistic research, referring mostly to stock scholarly opinions and widespread ideas, yet despite this, a large part of his observations of their everyday lives, and especially his folkloristic material, remain to this day a valuable source of field data, a source which is still awaiting proper analysis.

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Photo 1. The San (Bushmen), South-West Africa (borderlands between present-day Namibia and Botswana), 1935. Photograph from Prof. Roman Stopa's collection. From the collections of the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków.

For Kraków-based African studies, the 1930s were a turning point, during which the developing interest in Africa would bear fruit in the form of the first independent research projects conducted in the field – on the African continent. The best example would be the studies conducted by Roman Stopa (1895-1995), considered to be the father of Polish research into African linguistics, a professor of the Jagiellonian University, a world-renowned expert on click languages. In 1935, Roman Stopa conducted linguistic studies for a few months in the area of modern-day Namibia and Botswana among its indigenous inhabitants: the San and the Khoikhoi, at the same time collecting a significant amount of ethnographic material on the culture of the San peoples. Today, this unique collection is housed by the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków.

In reference to the rich tradition of African studies at the Jagiellonian University and in response to the increasing interest in Africa and Africans, the idea emerged to form a research centre that would bring together Kraków-based Africanists, scattered across various University units. In 2014, by the decision of the Jagiellonian University Senate, the Jagiellonian Research Center for African Studies was created as an interdepartmental unit of the University.

Excerpt from *Introduction* by Prof. Robert Kłosowicz

