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# Visual Colonization: Social Hierarchies in Postcards, Photographs and Sketches of German East Africa

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## ABSTRACT

*The article deals with the phenomenon of expressing colonialist concepts of racial and social hierarchy in German postcards, photographs and illustrations presenting German East Africa. The means of this expressing are shown, namely: tendentious selection of the main subject to depict; various compositional decisions placing the figures and elements which personify and symbolize the colonialist side in a compositionally dominating position within the frame of the image; de-individualization of local people both in images showing them in presence of their colonial masters and in their absence. On the whole, the rigid three-level socio-racial hierarchy is emphasized: the colonial whites as ruling power – their faithful servants among the local population, for example, askaris (while presenting the local Arab and Arabized people to which the highest regional elite belonged somehow aside and a little higher) – the main bulk of the local black population. The images in discussion, though produced by different creators, demonstrate a high degree of coherency and uniformity in expressing this concept via the above-described means, which fact shows the strong and stable colonialist clichés in German / European public consciousness of the period.*

**Keywords:** *German East Africa, colonial photography, German colonial postcards, book illustrations, social hierarchies in visual art.*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present work is to reveal manifestations of the concepts of racial and social hierarchies in colonial world in German

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postcards, photographs and illustrations dedicated to German East Africa (referred to as GEA below) and to show the means and mechanisms of this manifestation. The colonial studies which are exponentially developing and updating their research paradigm throughout the post-colonial period (Ashcroft *et al.* 2013), have long included two interrelated aspects dealing with visual representation. The first one is the self- and mutual perception of both sides, the colonizing and the colonized one, their visions of each other within the framework of their interaction as a part of the phenomenon of ‘meeting of cultures’ (*cf.* Yekani and Schaper 2017; Balezin 2015, *etc.*). The view of the first side on the second one was strongly affected by the traditional European interest in the exotic South and East, as well as by the needs of cultural and propaganda support, promotion and justification of colonial expansion, and by the associated Eurocentric presumptive concepts about non-historical and historical peoples, the universal ladder of linear-stage development, and the inequality of races, cultures and populations (particularly, in the movement along this ladder, and in their competition), partly taken in the Social-Darwinist way. The second aspect is the European pictorial presentation (through photo illustrations, other photographs, drawings, postcards, *etc.*) of the colonial realities and colonization itself, which provides indispensable data on relevant subjects of history and anthropology, and is especially interesting because it carries a heavy impact of the above-mentioned perceptions and conceptualizations from the ‘colonialist’ side: both the selection of topics for the presentation and the composition of images depended on these to a high degree. Therefore, the studies of this category of data, including works engaging German material, appeared in literature (*esp.* Axster 2010; also Steinmetz 2006; Langbehn 2010; Ciarlo 2011; Axster 2014; Conte 2018), and the present work is aimed to add to this range. However, before proceeding to its immediate subjects, it is necessary to characterize in brief the visual material in use and the historical context of its emergence and functioning.

### **GERMAN COLONIZATION OF THE FUTURE TANGANYIKA TERRITORY**

Since the mid-1880s the territory of the mainland of modern Tanzania (the future British Tanganyika) became the object of attention of the German Colonization Society, later transformed into the German East African Company, Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft (DOAG). Its

agents, while being adventurers and enthusiasts for the creation of the German colonial empire, organized expeditions deep into the continent in order to make the so-called ‘friendship agreements’ with local rulers, according to which these rulers, often lacking a complete understanding and clear perception of the situation, transferred their lands to the disposal of DOAG. In 1885 these treaties, many of which were signed with crosses, were ratified; the company was granted the right to administrate the received lands on behalf of the German government, and received guarantees of imperial protection within these territories. Carl Peters became the first Reichskommissar of the new German possessions (with residence in Bagamoyo), and the DOAG received the right to collect taxes in Pangani and Dar es Salaam, and then on the entire coast. However, with the advent of German administrators in Pangani, the situation became extremely aggravated and an uprising of the local population took place, affecting vast areas of the Tanganyika coast. Chancellor Bismarck decided to intervene and to suppress the uprising (which is often – and rather biasedly – depicted as ‘Arab’ one in German colonial narratives, to present it as aimed exclusively at protecting the interests of the Omani and local Arabized slave trading elites); in 1889 he sent there Major Hermann von Wissmann, who was appointed the second Reichskommissar for German East Africa. Wissmann led troops of German officers and African mercenaries, and with the support of the fleet, the uprising was crushed. Thus, the possessions of the de facto private enterprise Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft turned into an imperial colony, now under a governor with residence in Dar es Salaam (Iliffe 1969; Koponen 1994; Glassman 2005). The colony existed on the territory of modern Tanzania mainland, Rwanda and Burundi from 1889 to 1919, when, in accordance with the decisions of the Versailles Conference, Germany abandoned these territories in favor of the victors of the First World War.

One of vivid aspects of the colonial history of German East Africa is formed by its visualization in various images produced by the colonizers and their compatriots for their native German audiences. Postcards, publications of individual photographs and photo albums make up the majority among them, forming a fairly compact array. Here one should note that East Africa had significant features of its own for the colonial perception in comparison with the vast majority of other territories of sub-Saharan Africa colonized by Europeans. It lay at the junction of the ‘black African’ space, perceived as ‘primitive,’ with the Arab-Muslim ‘Eastern world,’ endowed in the eyes of Europeans

with some civilization, albeit a medieval one. Moreover, European foreign rulers were preceded in East Africa by Arab ones for a number of centuries. In particular, since the seventeenth century the Omani Sultanate (later divided into Omani and Zanzibar sultanates) subjugated the Swahili coastal-island part of the region (Islamized from even earlier times) and extended its influence to part of the territory of the hinterland. Looking ahead, we can say that it was precisely this peculiarity that the German pictorial representation steadily sought to smooth out and to blur. It tried to bring East Africa as close as possible into the frames of the standard image of ‘primitive and now colonized black Africa in general’ and often ignored the topics and realities that represented the previous long-standing Arab ‘colonial’ stay there and the extent to which part of East Africa had been already included in Islamic space, while the latter was somehow civilized in perception of the Germans themselves. The recognition and presentation of this fact was not needed by the German colonial propaganda and would contradict the desire of colonialists to present them as the first and only ‘civilizing’ force in the region.

### **COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS, AND POSTCARDS: IMAGES OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA**

The German colonial presence was recorded in a number of visual sources: professional author's photography, staged and non-staged (by Walter Dobbertin [Dobbertin 1932; Banshchikova 2022], Carl Vincenti, Otto Haeckel); private non-professional photography (*e.g.*, in the memoirs of Tom and Magdalene von Prince); albums, sketches and illustrations made specifically for the design of future editions of the memoirs or selected from available photographs and images (*e.g.*, a specialized album by Emil Völker; illustrations in the memoirs of Paul Reichart [Reichart 1892], Hugo von Behr [Behr, von 1981], Oscar Baumann [Baumann 1890, 1891], Joannes Wangemann [Wangemann 1894] and others); postcards issued for the correspondence of the administration of the colony and settlers with their friends, relatives *etc.* at home.

Postcards of German East Africa, produced mainly in Dar es Salaam and Tanga, represent a rather homogeneous corpus of sources suitable for study. We have studied more than a thousand of them, including are postcards based on photographs, and fully drawn postcards based on the author's creative art. They depict about a hundred locations inside modern Tanzania: from the capitals of the GEA (Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo) to very small sites, settlements of colonists

or missionaries (*cf.* publications on relevant data from German South West Africa: Huber 1984; Haller 1992; Steinmetz 2006: 161–166, and review of its archival sources in Balezin 1996; Hillebrecht 2017).

Postcards, as a genre, balance between two sides: between colonialists who seek to show some realities of a distant exotic country where they stayed; and an audience at home who wanted to see these realities, to learn about a certain corner of the world where their compatriots were present and ruling (Banshchikova 2021, 2022). Typical objects of this imagery are German garrisons and forts, administrative buildings, churches and mission buildings, schools, communications (stations, railways, and post offices). The message of such postcards is that the colonizers brought ‘culture and civilization’ to Africa, both materially (infrastructure) and spiritually (religion and school).

### **‘ETHNOGRAPHIC SKETCHES’: NON-HIERARCHICAL IMAGES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS OF THE GEA**

Images of people in photographs and postcards of German East Africa can be divided into two large groups: images presenting the local non-European people only (representatives of African peoples, Arabs, Indians) and images where both ‘the colonizers and the colonized ones’ are presented; such images include local residents along with the German officers or colonial officials, as well as any other Germans, for example, colonists and members of their families (note that the askaris, *i.e.* the soldiers of the colonial armies recruited from local population, fall into both groups). It is the second group of images that provides the main material on colonial hierarchies and their visual reflection by their subject and compositional features. However, before moving on to them, we will give examples and briefly characterize the images of the first group. There is quite a lot of material that is significant from an ethnographic point of view on the postcards: these are images of representatives of East African peoples with captions giving information about which particular people is depicted here, or images of ‘inhabitants of such and such places,’ with geo-referenced identification instead of ethnic one. In such illustrations, the ‘exoticism,’ the exotic appearance, specific military attire, edged weapons, scarification or facial plugs, face painting or coverings, massive decorations of head, neck, forearms are emphasized; for female portraits, on the one hand, nudity or semi-nudity is stressed, on the other hand, it is smoothed out due to the group representation of these women, which feature returns the postcard or photograph to its original genre and does not promote the eroticization of such images.

It is also possible to distinguish groups of images of local residents occupied with some specific regional (or, from the point of view of Europeans of the late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries, just a specifically African in general) household activity, such as carrying water in jugs on the head, crushing maize in a large mortar, grinding hard cereals on a grain grater, or washing clothes in a river. The artefacts involved in these activities can also appear (e.g., barns, storehouses, furnaces or kilns).



Masai Mann. Deutsch-Ost-Afrika.

Fig. 1. Masai. Postcard



Tanga, Deutsch Ost-Afrika. Swahili-Weib.

Fig. 2. Swahili woman. Postcard



Deutsch Ost-Afrika.

Tanga.

Fig. 3. Tanga. Postcard

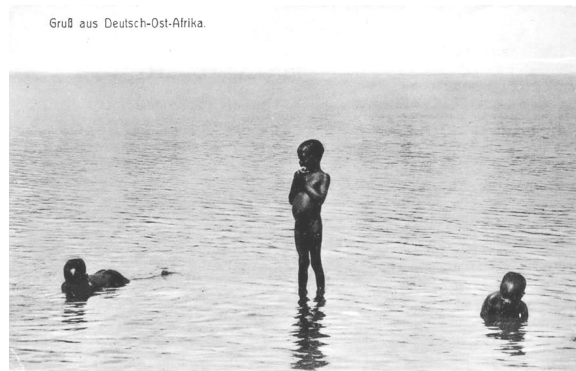


Fig. 4. Greetings from German East Africa. Postcard

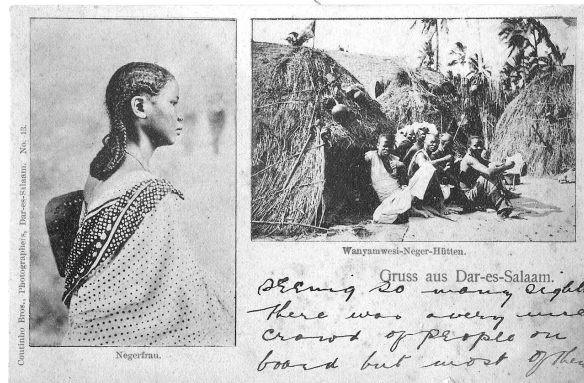


Fig. 5. Nyamwezi huts, woman. Postcard



Fig. 6. Dorobo, Swahili, Gogo. Postcard



**Fig. 7. Haya in the market. Postcard**



**Fig. 8. At a banana plantation. Postcard**



**Fig. 9. Laundry. Postcard**





**Fig. 10. Building a barn (Ugogo). Postcard**



**Fig. 11. Wanyema women in dance clothing. Postcard**



**Fig. 12. Pare hut. Postcard**



**Fig. 13. In millet field. Postcard**

This bundle of ‘ethnographic illustrations’ demonstrates a keen interest in the inhabitants of new territories, a desire to show representatives of other cultures and their way of life in their homeland. On the other hand, this interest often does not go beyond the ‘demonstrative exoticism’: the representation of alien ‘uncivilized’ ethnographic types, living their life in exotic ways, but not persons similar in individualized and personal terms to the Europeans themselves. This attitude is especially noticeable in such photographs, where the basis of the composition is the alignment of Africans in a row.



**Fig. 14. Haya warriors. Postcard**



**Fig. 15. Haya women**



Fig. 16. Luguru women. Postcard



Fig. 17. Rundi warriors. Postcard



Fig. 18. Nyaturu. Postcard

These photos (like many others) are obviously staged: it is clear that the Africans were asked to pose for them. The way the local residents are represented here (in groups united by some common feature, similar to each other, in the same poses, as if it were a ‘human collection’), demonstrates an extremely non-individualized attitude towards them (in Fig. 11 women are also lined up, but they really have in common that they are a dance group and show exotic dance decorations, which fact is reflected in the caption to the postcard). It is noteworthy that the objects of the image in the case of ‘human collections’ are male warriors (whose weapons, from the point of view of German technology of the end of the nineteenth century, could not be perceived otherwise than as primitive) and half-naked females (whose appearance is incompatible with the European idea of culture and civilization). Thus, it turns out that colonial hierarchies can be traced even in photographs in which the Germans themselves are not depicted, but the attitude to the natives is expressed in the very structure of the photograph taken: more portraying and individualizing photographs are

used to depict representatives of ‘more civilized’ groups of the local population from the point of view of the colonizers while the ‘human collections’ type of photographs is used for ‘the more primitive and less civilized’ groups.

**EXPRESSION OF COLONIAL HIERARCHIES BY MEANS OF THE SUBJECT TO DEPICT**

Let us move on to the images which present both ‘colonizers and colonized’ (Germans and local residents) in one frame. Three blocks of photographs can be distinguished here. In which the hierarchy and the dominant position of the Germans are conveyed by the subject itself, and in the more brutal way: these are images of executions, corporal punishment and images of local residents bound or in chains. The first two subjects are presented only in photographs, but the third can be found even on postcards. Here are some examples.



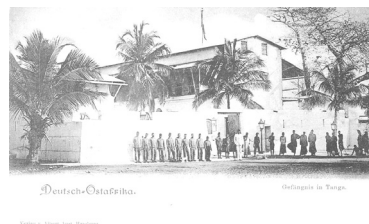
**Fig. 19. Execution of a convicted murderer, 1893. Photo**



**Fig. 20. A drawing illustrating the uniform of the Schutztruppe, from the Encyclopedia Brockhaus, 1892**



**Fig. 21. Prisoners accompanied by askaris. Photo**



**Fig. 21. Prisoners in Tanga. Postcard**



**Fig. 22. Street sweepers in chains, Dar es Salaam. Postcard**

The presentation of such an ambiguous and frightening subject as chained people on propaganda postcards should demonstrate to the inhabitants of the metropolis that Africans can easily be punished and chained at the behest of the colonialists, who are the masters of their land and administrate judgment over them.

#### **EXPRESSION OF COLONIAL HIERARCHIES BY BOTH SUBJECT AND COMPOSITIONAL MEANS**

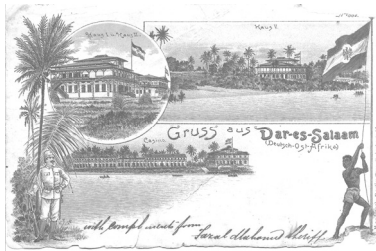
This includes images in which the imperial symbols (primarily the flag) convey a very clear and tangible colonization message in the composition. The flag always dominates within the composition: it is large in size (it can occupy up to half of the image, see Fig. 23), there can be several flags (three in Fig. 24, five in Fig. 25), it is emphasized by being placed at the top of the composition and it ‘overshadows’ all other depicted objects (Fig. 27). One can also trace the motif ‘an African carries or raises a flag’ (Figs 23–26): firstly, this demonstrates the fact of subordination of local residents to the empire, and secondly, the supposed voluntary nature of this subordination is also declared here in a propaganda way.



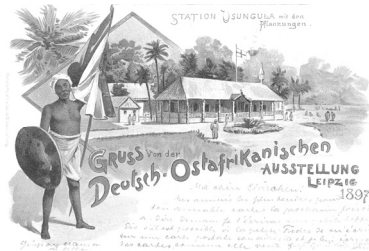
**Fig. 23. Askari with a gun and the flag of the German Empire. Postcard**



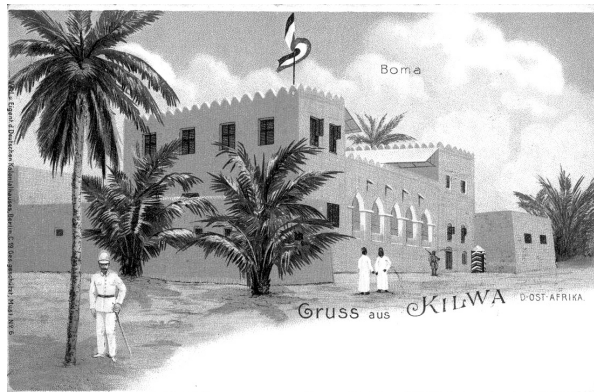
**Fig. 24. 'From German Colonial Life.' Wali (representative of the Sultan of Zanzibar on the coast). Postcard**



**Fig. 25. 'Greetings from Dar es Salaam.' Postcard**



**Fig. 26. Usungula with plantations. Greetings from the East African Exhibition in Leipzig, 1897. Postcard**



**Fig. 27. 'Greetings from Kilwa.' Postcard**

**EXPRESSION OF COLONIAL HIERARCHIES  
BY COMPOSITIONAL MEANS**

Majority of images relating to German East Africa and including both colonizers and colonized clearly demonstrate the usage of compositional features to express ideas of dominance and a hierarchically higher position of Europeans: a white officer / official can be depicted in the center of the composition (while local residents are around or on one side of him); emphasized by being shown in the foreground (while local residents are in the background); placed compositionally higher than the other depicted persons in other way; in many cases, these compositional techniques are applied simultaneously. See examples.

*Composition ‘A white in the center’*



**Fig. 28. Administrative department of Neu-Langenburg. Photo**



**Fig. 29. Askari Orchestra. Photo**



**Fig. 30. After the lion hunt. Postcard**



**Fig. 31. Caravan with cotton. Photo**

**Composition 'A white ahead'**



**Fig. 32. Derema coffee plantation. Postcard**



**Fig. 33. Askari and a white officer. Photo**



**Fig. 34. Entrance to Tanga. Postcard**

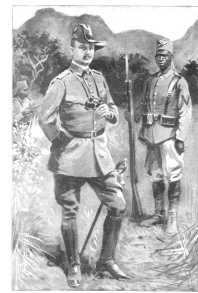
Dr. C. A. pstein



**Fig. 35. Little soldiers in Hohenfriedeberg. Postcard**



**Fig. 36. Hunting. Photo**



**Fig. 37. Major General von Lettow-Vorbeck. Postcard**

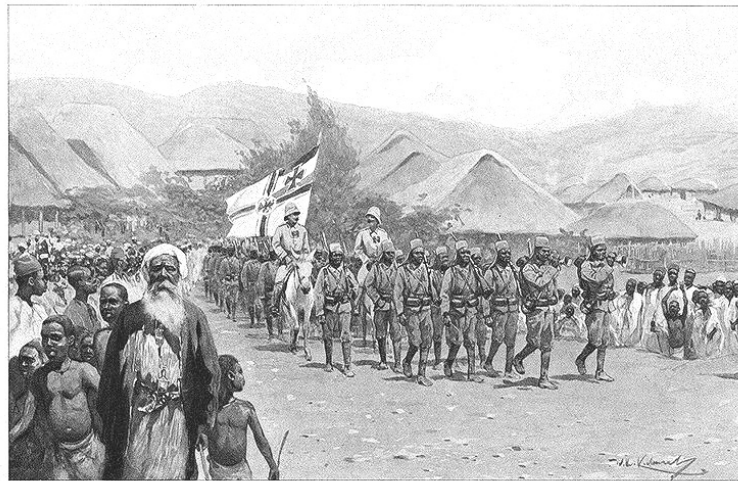
*Composition 'A white above'*



**Fig. 38. German post in Zanzibar. Postcard**



**Fig. 39. Battle of the Schutztruppe. Postcard**



Notariatscompagnie, Deutsch-Ostafrika

**Fig. 40. Painting by F. W. Kuhnert (1865–1926) 'Schutztruppe, DOA', printed in the album 'German Troops' as a color illustration (Deutschland in Waffen. Stuttgart und Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt [1913])**





**Fig. 41. Wissmann Monument, Dar es Salaam. Postcard**

Of course, in the latter case, the hierarchy is equally fixed on the postcard and in the composition of the depicted monument itself. Wissmann's dominant position, sculpted in a confident and even self-confident pose leaning on a saber, and the subordinate position of an askari looking up at him with a German flag in his hands (and from a level that is even lower than the level of Wissmann's boots) were perfectly reflected by the Tanzanians themselves: in 1967 this monument, which had been vandalized several times, was dismantled. The paint-smearing figure of Wissmann was removed (now in the Hamburg Observatory in Bergedorf; DHM). The new monument commemorates the Africans who died in the First World War: the figure of the askari leaning forward, overcoming difficulties, and going on the attack with a gun at the ready, has become one of the symbols of decolonized Dar es Salaam.



**Fig. 42. Modern Askari Monument, Dar es Salaam. The author's photo**  
*Composition 'A white above and in the center'*



**Fig. 43. Construction of the Central Railway. Postcard**



**Fig. 44. Captain Johannes during shauri (meetings with local residents) at Moshi. Postcard**

*Composition 'A white in the center and in front'*



**Fig. 45. Bagamoyo. Postcard**

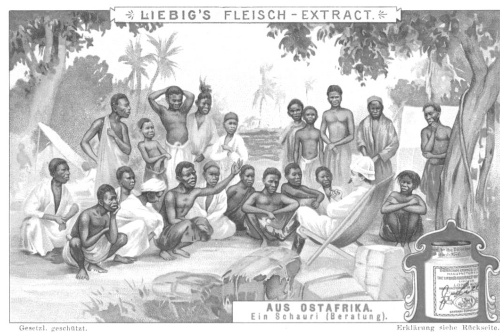


**Fig. 46. The Schutztruppe during the uprising Maji-maji. Askari with imperial military flag, 1906. Postcard**

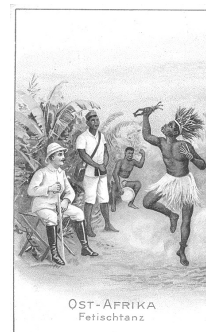
The postures of standing Europeans are also noteworthy: with legs wide apart, the position of the hands is on the waist (the ‘arms to the side’ posture conveys self-confidence and possible aggression, Figs 25, 28, 33, 36, 38, 41), behind one's back (‘I am so strong that I don't need to keep my hands ready to act immediately’; Figs 30, 34, 46), holding a weapon (even in the case of a child in Fig. 35, also Fig. 25, 27, 32, 33, 39, 41), keeping a cane or stick (Fig. 30, 31, 36, 38).

Two more frequent motifs can be traced, which demonstrate the dominance of the Germans and the subordination of the locals: the German sits on a chair in the presence of the locals, who are either standing or sitting on the ground; and the German shows or makes a pointing gesture with his hand (already seen in Fig. 24). Here are some examples.

***Composition ‘A German sits on a chair in the presence of local residents’***



**Fig. 47. In GEA. Advice. Advertising card for Liebig's meat concentrate**



**Fig. 48. Dance with a fetish. Advertising card for Eduard Kleefeld's chocolate factory**



**Fig. 49. Wissmann in the council hut in Mkwaja. Photograph illustrates the memoirs of P. Reichart (Reichart 1892: 280)**



**Fig. 50. Shauri in Dar es Salaam. Illustration in the memoirs of H. von Behr (von Behr 1981: 117)**



**Fig. 51. Inringa. Photo from the memoirs of M. von Prince (von Prince 1908: 88)**

***Composition 'A German makes a pointing or directing gesture with his hand' (see also Fig. 24)***



**Fig. 52. Fragment of a painting by F.W. Kuhnert 'Battle of Mahenge'. The motif 'A white is above' is also present**



**Fig. 53. The Schutztruppe. Photo**



**Fig. 54. At the station of the Usambara railway. A promotional card for the Hartwig & Vogel chocolate factory**

### INSTITUTIONAL HIERARCHIES: SCHOOL AND CHURCH

Dealing with the visual expression of the institutionalized hierarchies of the missionary and secular school and church, we see, as well as in other images involving the local residents, that there is a fairly large number of postcards and photographs that depict local students and converts without German teachers and missionaries. The students and converts are captured in free natural poses (Fig. 55), sometimes with white or black teachers. However, there are postcards which vividly carry the features of a structural hierarchization, similar to the one presented above: students are lined up in even rows, like soldiers; they march in organized columns (Fig. 56), they do exercises that one would rather expect from the military men (Fig. 57; there is also a motif 'a white makes a pointing or directing gesture with his hand'); one may notice portraits of the Kaiser and his wife in the classroom (Fig. 58; this photo captures a real classroom, however, on many postcards, imperial symbols – coats of arms, flags, painted portraits of the Kaiser, the Emperor and the officials of the highest colonial ranks, or their photographed monuments are added intentionally to emphasize the status of the metropolis and the fact of subjugation of the colony).



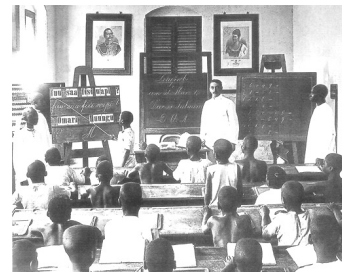
**Fig. 55. Disciples of the mission. Postcard**



**Fig. 56. Public school students march on the square, Dar es Salaam. Postcard**



**Fig. 57. Exercise 'turn'. Postcard**



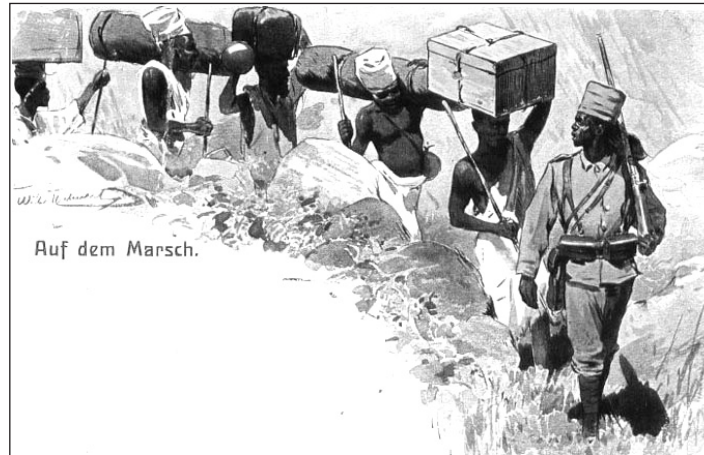
**Fig. 58. Lesson in school in Dar es Salaam. Photo**

The missionary photography is a separate large topic that goes beyond the scope of this work, but in general it can be said that the colonial hierarchies are built here in some different way or are not fixed at all (especially when compared to the main array of German colonial imagery). In full accordance with Christian ideas about the equality of people before God, in these postcards and photographs one can rarely see the central or dominant position of a white missionary: in group photographs, he is often on the edge, in a crowd of wards; mission photographers took many individualized portrait photographs of African converts; quite often, the photographs depict the process of teaching local children – the missionary is really presented in them in a dominant position, but this is the position of an adult among children, of a teacher among students, and not of a colonizer among the colonized.

#### **HIERARCHIES OF LOCAL PEOPLE: THE ASKARIS, ARABS, AND SWAHILI**

In present paper, the askaris have already been shown on many postcards, photographs and paintings (Figs 19, 20, 21, 23, 27, 29, 33, 34, 37, 39, 40, 41, 45, 46, see also Figs 63, 64), their depictions are very frequent, since the military and administrative subjects is, in principle, the leitmotif of our corpus of sources. Askaris are visible on postcards and photographs of colonial military stations; they were specially fixed during training, performing military parade exercises, while guarding any buildings. They are almost invariably portrayed as some kind of ‘relatively cultured’ loyal servants and helpers always faithful to their colonialist masters. This is achieved both through a targeted selection of the situations in which they are depicted, and through compositional decisions and details selection within these situations: a hierarchy is always visible in the images. It manifests itself in several ways: the white officers leading the askaris are always shown compositionally in a dominant position – the askaris are not depicted mixed with their white commanders, they do not form a visually single group with them, these commanders are always distanced from them in one way or another (the officers stand in front of the askaris in the foreground; the officers ride on horseback between the foot askaris, *etc.*), *cf.* also the already considered composition of the monument to Wissmann); images with askaris most often contain the German imperial flag in dominating function; the background of the images includes military administrative buildings rising high above both askaris and the rest of the landscape. The same fidelity and involvement of askaris in colonial statehood is conveyed by the fact that they are usually depicted in

groups forming orderly ranks; everyday and individual scenes with their participation and free poses (rather popular for European postcards with European soldiers) are much less common. Occasionally, the askari can still appear in an autonomous and individual role without presenting next to him such elements that directly convey his subordination to the Europeans, but at the same time he still turns out to be emphatically included in the colonial hierarchy – on the same Fig. 59 next to the askari we see the porters. *i.e.* representatives of the next, lower level in the hierarchy (the ‘ordinary black population’), whom he commands. Thus, the askari acts here as a delegate and functionary of the colonial power in the region (in addition, it is self-evident to the viewer that this askari leads black porters on the official assignment of white officers, not by his own will and power).

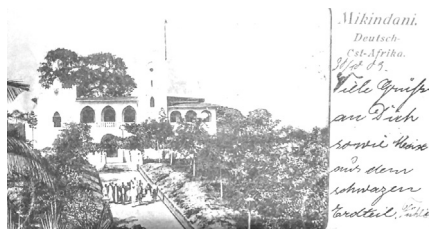


**Fig. 59. On the march. By F. W. Kuhnert. Postcard**

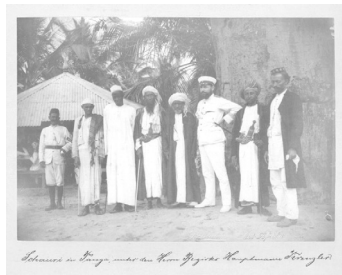
The Arabs and Arabized Swahili have also been shown above, see Figs 6, 24, 26, 27, 40, 44, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57. These population groups can be distinguished by the clothes typical for the Muslims of East Africa – Swah. *kanzu* (long, light-colored men's shirt like a galabea), Swah. *kofia* (men's brimless headdress like a Turkish fez) or turban, a cane or stick in the hands; at the same time, the Arabs can retain a pronounced phenotype (Figs 24, 40, 51) and wear more specific types of clothing and weapons indicating their Middle Eastern origin (caf-tans, turbans, curved daggers – Swah. *jambia*). Here are some more examples.



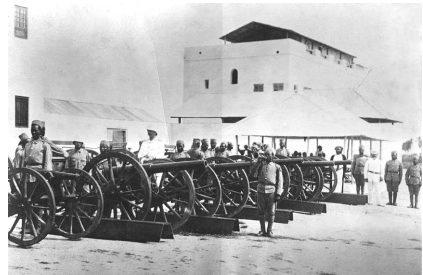
**Fig. 60. In the harbor of Dar es Salaam. Postcard**



**Fig. 61. Boma in Mikindani. Fragment of a Postcard**



**Fig. 62. Shauri in Tanga. Photo**



**Fig. 63. German artillery in Dar es Salaam**



**Fig. 64. Reception of the ‘Negro Sultans’ at Wilhelmstal. A promotional card for the Hartwig & Vogel chocolate factory**

We see, that in all these images, the Arabs are depicted among the Europeans, standing in a row with them without signs of their compositional dominance, talking with them; in Fig. 51 an Arab even sits on



a chair next to the colonial official, although the black local residents stand in front of him emphatically; and in Fig. 64 the Arabized Muslims in caftans form the center of the composition and the Germans communicate with them almost on an equal footing (however, there are still motifs ‘a white man sits on a chair in the presence of standing locals’ and ‘I am so strong that I can keep my hands behind my back’). We see here a visual realization of the racial picture of the world kept by the German colonizers, in which the Arabs (albeit the bearers of an alien, often opposing religion and culture) stand above the Africans as representatives of a ‘second-rate, but still civilization’ in relation to the ‘uncivilized barbarians’ (see Lindström 2019: 216–217, 330). Other Muslims and Swahili are not presented in such a privileged position: *cf.* Fig. 50, where a German is sitting on a chair, and elderly locals are squatting and standing nearby.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Let us summarize our observations. First of all, we should emphasize the revealed phenomenon itself: the hierarchical concepts of the creators and the audience of the studied visual material are expressed to a high degree and in uniform and stable forms, both in the choice of plots and in the composition of the images. This fact is all the more indicative since no one would set for the creators of the considered postcards, photographs and drawings any special goal of subordinating these images to any concepts, no one forced them to carry out these concepts, no one developed rules and techniques for their visual expression and did not bring such rules into system or uniformity. Nevertheless, it is precisely such a systematic character and uniformity of methods for transmitting the same stable concepts that we can trace as guiding in the creation of images in question. Apparently, both the clichés of a certain racial and socio-hierarchical concepts, and the artistic methods of conveying hierarchies and dominance were so stable and so widespread in the public consciousness that the creators of visual artistic material presenting the colonial world transmitted the same approaches by methods taken from approximately the same set even without receiving any guidelines and instructions from any instances. This self-tuning in one and the same way is a clear evidence of the strength and stability of the corresponding perceptions and concepts in the European (in this case, German) culture of that epoch, and, in particular, of a high uniformity in the assimilation of these concepts and following them.

These concepts themselves can be summarized as ideas about racial and ethno-cultural inequality, about the right of higher, civilized peoples to rule over the lower ones, and, at the same time, the claiming of a civilizing mission in relation to these lower peoples and inclusion of this mission into the set of goals and justifications for colonial domination. This attitudes generated the following patterns: the imagery of the exotic, wild and barbaric world as an object of subjugation and transformation; the oppositions of domination / submission and defiance / suppression; some benevolence towards those inferior locals who are ready to obey and serve the colonial authorities and to be 'cultured' by them (whether these elements are askaris or students of missionary schools) and the pathos of inflexible suppression of the recalcitrant ones by a qualitatively superior (both physically and culturally) force. These approaches dictated the corresponding features of selection and composition in the production of images: racialization (that is, the representation of people of different races apart from each other and in clichéd different roles, special for each race and hierarchically ordered) and proper hierarchization (with an abundance of methods to express who is dominating, and who is obliged to obey, and in case of disobedience would be crushed).

In the images of the local black population out of presence of 'higher' groups, all this is expressed in the deindividualization of many such images, their 'ethnographic' accent (people are usually depicted not as persons, but as representatives of groups, even if they are shown outside the group; this is even more true for images of 'collections of people'), an emphasis on exoticism, on the one hand, and primitiveness, on the other hand. These tendencies are noticeable both in the display of people themselves, and in the display of their activities; primitiveness and exoticism together are often conveyed by the semi-nudity and nudity of the depicted people.

In the case of the images showing representatives of different hierarchical levels of the colonial world altogether, some other techniques are used, both in plot selection and composition. The plots include the presentation of scenes of domination of one over the other by the main displayed action (scenes of punishment or defeat and suppression of the recalcitrant locals, or of white leadership, or of training the locals and ruling them, with a strict distribution of roles) and the presentation of scenes and images of 'civilization' ( buildings and structures that can serve as signs of colonial power and the penetration of European culture and technology, local residents who are subject to 'civilizing' influences, for example, the local soldiers in the service of

the colonial authorities who have received a regular and ‘Europeanized’ appearance).

Compositional techniques are designed to emphasize all of the said. These include, first of all, the placement of leading persons (*i.e.*, the whites) and elements symbolizing their dominance (a flag, an administrative building, *etc.*) in the center of the composition, or in its higher registers (a flag flying over askaris, a mounted officer towering over foot askaris, *etc.*), or in the foreground, or in some other prominent position (for example, the orderly ranks of the colonial forces and the scattered, not unified natives, or a shapeless, disorderly group of natives nearby); these elements can also have a predominance in scale (a huge colonial building over rows or groups of locals, *etc.*). Another series of techniques conveys the hierarchy by the difference in the poses and gestures of the figures (the bending of ones *vs.* the straight posture of others, the officer who points out and orders and a number of local residents facing him, respectfully listening to him, *etc.*). Very often, a combination of several plot selection decisions and compositional techniques is used, and they are used over and over again in various combinations of elements picked up from the same stable set of techniques, despite the fact that the images under discussion belong to different authors and to different types (photography *vs.* drawings) presuming different degrees of creative freedom in the selection of plot elements and the construction of the composition.

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