

PAPERBACK
ORIGINAL



GLOBALIZED
CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1680–1860
PERIPHERIES

Edited by Jutta Wimmeler and Klaus Weber

Ambiguous Passages:
Non-Europeans Brought to Europe by the
Moravian Brethren during the Eighteenth Century

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First published 2020
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-1-78327-475-8

This chapter is an extract from *Globalized Peripheries: Central Europe and the Atlantic World, 1680–1860*, edited by Jutta Wimpler and Klaus Weber

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Funding Body: European University Viadrina

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620–2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

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Ambiguous Passages: Non-Europeans Brought to Europe by the Moravian Brethren during the Eighteenth Century

JOSEF KÖSTLBAUER¹

Visitors to the Moravian meeting house in Zeist in the Netherlands find themselves in front of a remarkable painting: created in 1747 by the Moravian painter Johann Valentin Haidt, it became known as *The First Fruits*. At the center of the picture is Christ, sitting slightly elevated on a throne formed by clouds and framed by two adulating angels. Surrounding him are 21 individuals, adults as well as children, most of them of non-European origin. The composition, as well as the palm leaves in the figures' hands, signalize the eschatological theme of the painting, namely Revelation 7:9: 'after this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands'.² The individuals depicted in Haidt's painting are not clad in white robes, however; some of them are wearing Moravian garb, while others are shown in their respective national attire – or at least, the artist's notion of it.³ There is the Inuit Samuel Kajarnak in his fur and leather outfit; directly beside him, the Mingrelian Christian Thomas Mamucha is dressed in a generic Oriental costume featuring a turban and long frock coat. The Huron Thomas and the Mahican Johannes to the right and left of Christ are wearing nondescript leather robes, and Rachel and

1 This article is based on research produced during the research project, *The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and its Slaves* (2015–2020), which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement no. 641110).

2 Book of Revelation, Ch. 7, King James Bible.

3 For a thorough analysis, see R. Kröger, 'Die Erstlingsbilder in der Brüdergemeine', *Unitas Fratrum* 67/68 (2012), pp. 135–63.



Figure 10.1. Johann Valentin Haidt, *The First Fruits*, 1747. (Photograph: Fred Manschot/Mel Boas/Museum Het Hernhutter Huis Zeist)

Anna Maria, two women from the Danish West Indies, are clothed in Moravian women's dresses.

This work is a prime example of Moravian eighteenth-century art. As such, it is also a product of the astonishing media system created by the Moravian Church during the eighteenth century, which encompassed handwritten and print media as well as pictorial media, and which served to foster a sense of connectedness and shared identity within a highly mobile community active around the globe.⁴ The painting is also a source that clearly shows the Moravian community's global reach and the deep integration into the Atlantic World that Moravians had achieved by 1747. The fact that 12 of the depicted individuals were slaves, former slaves or captives is a clear indication of the Moravian Church's involvement in the early modern slave trade. Especially through their missionary activities in the West Indies and North America, Moravian towns in Europe became part of what Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft have termed a 'slavery hinterland'.⁵

The Moravian Brethren, also known as *Unitas Fratrum* in Latin, or as *Herrnhuter* or *Evangelische Brüderunität* in German, were a pietistic community founded on 13 August 1727 in Upper Lusatia by the charismatic Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, together with members of the old church of the Bohemian Brethren.⁶ The latter had fled Habsburg Moravia to avoid religious persecution, and beginning in 1722 they found refuge on Zinzendorf's estates in the region of Upper Lusatia in south-eastern Saxony, where they began to establish a settlement.⁷ The fledgling town's name was Herrnhut, and from this the community derived its German name. Starting from these unlikely beginnings, the Moravian community spawned numerous additional settlements (*Gemeinorte*) and smaller societies (*Sozietäten*) throughout Protestant Europe and North America – as well as missionary outposts in America, Africa and Asia – within a few decades. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Moravian world reached from the Bay of Bengal to the Pennsylvanian back country. This global reach is also evidenced in the diverse geographic origins of the individuals depicted in the *First Fruits* painting.⁸

4 G. Mettele, *Weltbürgertum oder Gottesreich: Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine als globale Gemeinschaft 1727–1857* (Göttingen, 2009); G. Mettele, 'Identities across Borders: The Moravian Brethren as a Global Community', *Pietism and Community in Europe and North America, 1650–1850*, ed. J. Strom (Leiden/Boston, 2010) pp. 155–77.

5 F. Brahm and E. Rosenhaft, eds, *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850* (Woodbridge, 2016).

6 D. Meyer, *Zinzendorf und die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine 1700–2000* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 19ff; H.-J. Wollstadt, *Geordnetes Dienen in der christlichen Gemeinde* (Göttingen, 1966), pp. 24ff.

7 Emigration from Moravia to Herrnhut continued until 1732: U. Fischer, 'Die Entwicklung des Ortes Herrnhut bis 1760', *Graf ohne Grenzen: Leben und Werk von Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf*, ed. P. Peucker and D. Meyer (Herrnhut, 2000), pp. 32ff.

8 For a list of settlements and mission stations, see Mettele, *Weltbürgertum*, pp. 277ff.

According to David Crazz's history of the Moravian Church, published in 1771, the occasion for the painting was the death of 'Johannes, the first fruit and teacher among the Mahicans'.⁹ While all of the figures in the painting were representations of actual persons, only a scant few of them were personally known to Haidt or had been portrayed during their lifetimes.¹⁰

What is the meaning of the term 'first fruits'? The Moravians used it to designate the first converts of a people or place. Their missionary concept was not aimed at mass conversions; instead, Moravian missionaries were on the lookout for individual souls who had already been secretly prepared by Christ.¹¹ These converts occupied a special place in the Moravian culture of memory and remembrance. They were visible proof of the Moravian mission acting in accordance with Christ's plans, and they heralded the future redemption of all humanity. By means of paintings such as Haidt's, as well as through letters, diaries and journals read aloud during meetings, the names of the first fruits were made known throughout the Moravian world. Mediated communication brought these converts living in far-away peripheral places (from a European perspective) into the very center of the Moravian community. It established a virtual presence that helped to project visions of missionary success and communal identity.

But the Moravians did not leave it at that: from 1735 until the first half of the nineteenth century, they also brought individuals from mission areas to Europe. Of the 21 persons depicted in the *First Fruits* painting in Zeist, 14 had lived in Moravian towns in Europe or visited there for extended periods of time. And they were by no means the only ones: so far, in an ongoing research project, I have been able to identify 42 individuals who were sent to Moravian communities in Europe, traveled there of their own accord, or came into contact with them in other ways. It seems safe to assume that traces of several more such individuals can be found through further research in archives in the Netherlands, Denmark or England.¹²

The majority of these individuals – 24 men, women and children – were of African origin, with 17 of them coming to Europe from the Danish West

9 D. Crazz, *Alte und Neue Brüder-Historie oder kurz gefaßte Geschichte der Evangelischen Brüder-Unität in den älteren Zeiten insonderheit in dem gegenwärtigen Jahrhundert* (Barby, 1771), p. 454.

10 The Unity Archives in Herrnhut hold three versions of an explanation of the painting, one of them annotated by Zinzendorf: Unity Archives (hereafter: UA) R.15.A.2.1; UA R.15.A.2.2; UA R.15.A.2.3.

11 N. L. Zinzendorf, 'Die zwey und zwanzigste Rede, von denen Ursachen, warum die Ungläubigen vornehmen und gelehrten, noch ungerner mit dem Heilande zu thun haben wollen als andere', *Hauptschriften in sechs Bänden*, ed. E. Beyreuther and G. Meyer (Hildesheim, 1962/63), pp. 170–82, esp. pp. 172ff.

12 Paul Peucker published a pioneering article in 2007 in which he identified 31 non-Europeans living in Moravian communities in Germany. See P. Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen: Nichteuropäer in den deutschen Brüdergemeinden des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Unitas Fratrum* 59/60 (2007), pp. 1–35.

Indies. There were also Native Americans from Suriname and Berbice, as well as Inuit from Greenland and Labrador. The influx of converts was not a purely Atlantic affair, however: a boy and a woman from the Malabar Coast, a Tatar from Kazan, a Persian, an Armenian and an Ottoman Turk are likewise documented.¹³

Although not all of the non-Europeans traveling in the Moravian orbit were slaves, many of them did have their roots in the maelstrom of the Atlantic slave trade. But no matter where they came from, or whether they were slaves or free individuals, men or women, adults or children, servants or laborers – as aliens in foreign surroundings, they found themselves deeply dependent on those who had brought them there, and their legal and social status remained ambiguous. One might object that there is nothing ambiguous about slavery, but it did not always take the form of chattel slavery as practiced in the early modern plantation economy. Especially for European societies that did not consider themselves slave-holding societies, it is often difficult to determine the status of enslaved people brought there.¹⁴

This chapter attempts to sketch the muddled borderlands inhabited by these individuals, as well as by their Moravian masters/brethren. They are borderlands not only in the sense of colonial and imperial peripheries, but also in the sense of vague and contested legal and social delineations between free and unfree, between slavery, serfdom and servitude, experienced by many (if not all) of them.

Furthermore, the Moravian case highlights a peculiar dimension of the metropolis-periphery dynamics at work in the Atlantic World, in that the Brethren were operating in the Atlantic World, but not necessarily along familiar spatial structures. While Moravian missionaries and colonists as well as Moravian servants and slaves moved along the trading routes and established nodes of early modern Atlantic space, they created their own Moravian space in which places in Lusatia, Saxony, could feel much closer to Greenland or the West Indies than to London, Paris or Vienna. The Moravian community's use of media and communication in particular served to reduce distance, drawing peripheral locations on either side of the Atlantic closer together.

During Zinzendorf's lifetime (1700–1760), the centers of the Moravian community were such disparate towns as Herrnhut in Upper Lusatia, Marienborn and Herrnhag (1738–1753) in the Wetterau, a region in Hesse north-east of Frankfurt, Zeist in the Netherlands (1745), Lindsey Hall near London (1752) and Bethlehem in Pennsylvania (1741). While some of these

13 On Ernst Albert Christiani, formerly Mustafa, see G. Philipp, 'Integrationsprobleme im 18. Jahrhundert: Ein Türke am Weimarer Hofe und bei den Herrnhutern', *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 33 (2007), pp. 99–127.

14 R. v. Mallinckrodt, 'There are no Slaves in Prussia?', *Slavery Hinterland*, ed. Brahm and Rosenhaft, pp. 109–33, here pp. 109ff.

places definitely *were* centers of the Atlantic World, others were situated at its margins – but what was peripheral in a wider Atlantic context could be central to the Moravian community and the spiritual and communitarian space it occupied.

The Moravian Brethren and slavery

It was their missionary activity that brought the Moravians into contact with slavery: starting in 1732, their first missionary endeavor took them to the Danish Caribbean islands of St Thomas, St Croix and St Jan.¹⁵ Within a few years, they transitioned from preaching to the slaves to being slaveholders themselves, and soon expanded their activities to further slave-holding regions like Suriname, Berbice, South Africa, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Antigua and Jamaica. As early as 1738, the Moravians acquired their first plantation on St Thomas, later named Posaunenberg, which came with nine slaves.¹⁶

Moravians neither questioned slavery as an institution nor did they hesitate to partake in it.¹⁷ Whatever feelings individual Moravians may have harbored regarding slavery, the community's leadership was well aware that a position of acquiescence was a prerequisite for missionary work in places like St Thomas or Suriname, where slave owners were initially violently opposed to missionary activities amongst their slaves. Upon leaving St Thomas after a short visit to the island in 1739, Count Zinzendorf gave a well-known farewell speech in which he defined the slaves' position as God-given and exhorted them to

15 P. Vogt, 'Die Mission der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde und ihre Bedeutung für den Neubeginn der protestantischen Missionen am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 35 (2009), pp. 204–36.

16 For a Moravian account of how the missionaries acquired slaves and plantations, see C. G. A. Oldendorp, *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caraibischen Inseln S. Thomas, S. Croix und S. Jan* (Barby, 1777), pp. 106f, 555ff. A near-contemporary Moravian account of events is UA R.15.B.a.3.31, *Historia wie die mährischen Brüder [...] zur Plantage mit Slaven gekommen, 1738* (copy of original dating to 1755).

17 For details on the Moravian discourse on slavery, see J. F. Sensbach, "'Don't Teach My Negroes to Be Pietists': Pietism and the Roots of the Black Protestant Church', *Pietism in Germany and North America 1680–1820*, ed. J. Strom, H. Lehmann and J. Van Horn Melton (Leyden, 2009), pp. 183–98; J. Hüsgen, *Mission und Sklaverei: Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde und die Sklavenemanzipation in Britisch- und Dänisch-Westindien* (Stuttgart, 2016); K. Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2018); J. Cronshagen, 'Owning the Body, Wooing the Soul: How Forced Labor Was Justified in the Moravian Correspondence Network in Eighteenth-Century Surinam', *Connecting Worlds and People: Early Modern Diasporas*, ed. D. Freist and S. Lachenicht (London/New York, 2016); C. Füllberg-Stolberg, 'Die Herrnhuter Mission: Sklaverei und Sklavenemanzipation in der Karibik', *Sklaverei und Zwangsarbeit zwischen Akzeptanz und Widerstand*, ed. E. Herrmann-Otto, M. Simonis and A. Trefz (Hildesheim, 2011) pp. 254–80; J. C. S. Mason, *The Moravian Church and the Missionary Awakening in England, 1760–1800* (Woodbridge/Rochester, 2001), pp. 100ff.

patiently submit to their lot.¹⁸ Such statements did not result purely from political prudence: there is no evidence that the Moravian community as a whole (or individual members) ever contemplated a condemnation of slavery – on the contrary, numerous sources make it very clear that slavery continued to be accepted.¹⁹

The Moravian Brethren owned and bought slaves for various reasons: whether working on plantations, in the household or as craftsmen, slaves provided the economic support required for missionary activity. Sometimes enslaved members of a mission congregation were bought by missionaries to prevent them from being sold to a far-away place – essentially, this was a way of keeping a congregation intact. A number of such cases are documented; Zinzendorf, for example, initiated the purchase of two converts, Andreas and Johannes, who had been sold from St Thomas to the neighboring island of St Croix.²⁰ Andreas eventually accompanied Zinzendorf to Europe and traveled to Herrnhag, Marienborn, Herrnhut, Zeist, London and Bethlehem as a member of the count's entourage.²¹ Furthermore, enslaved individuals were acquired by missionaries or Moravian visitors because they regarded them as prospective converts or community members. In 1756, for instance, the Moravian ship captain Nicholas Garrison brought a nine-year-old boy named Fortune to Germany from Suriname, because he 'recognized his pleasant, cheerful, and honest character ... and thought he might thrive for the Savior'.²²

Despite its involvement with slavery, the Moravian mission is notable for the equality practiced within the community. Becoming a member of the community meant being integrated into a group that treated all members as brothers and sisters, regardless of race, class, legal status or gender.²³ Free and enslaved converts alike could become 'helpers' or 'elders', playing a role in the congregation's spiritual and material life. Some non-European members even achieved clerical positions: Maria Andresen and Rebecca Freundlich, for example, were both ordained as deaconesses in Germany in 1745 and 1746.²⁴

18 UA R.15.B.a.3.64, Zinzendorf's farewell address, 15 February 1739, pp. 21f.

19 Hüsgen, *Mission*, pp. 119ff; A. G. Spangenberg, *Von der Arbeit der evangelischen Brüder unter den Heiden* (Barby, 1782), pp. 62ff.

20 Oldendorp, *Geschichte der Mission*, p. 590. Zinzendorf's own account in UA R.15.B.a.2.a.3, Diarium des sel. Jüngers von seiner Reise nach Thomas zu Ende 1738 u. anfangs 1739, p. 21.

21 Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen', pp. 23f.

22 Gemeinarchiv Niesky, 27 March 1763, Lebenslauf Fortune.

23 This has recently been emphasized by H. Raphael-Hernandez, 'The Right to Freedom: Eighteenth-Century Slave Resistance and Early Moravian Missions in the Danish West Indies and Dutch Suriname', *Atlantic Studies* 14/4 (2017), pp. 457–75, here p. 459.

24 For Rebecca Freundlich's (later Protten) biography, see J. F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2006); on Maria Andresen, see Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen', pp. 1ff.

The result of the Moravian mission and the integration of enslaved individuals into Moravian congregations was a remarkable situation: a convert could be a respected sister or brother, and could even assume important functions while living in close community with his or her European brothers and sisters. At the same time, however, some of these black Moravians were also the legal property of their white brothers and sisters.

Ambiguous journeys

Eighteenth-century Europeans were hardly sedentary, with their spatial mobility depending on factors like profession, social status, age, gender and faith.²⁵ But even in this context, the mobility of members of the Moravian community was extraordinary: they were apt to change occupation, place of residence and their role within the community multiple times during their lives. This was especially true for the missionaries, both male and female, many of whom were transferred from one mission area to another every few years. But other members were likewise asked or directed to join different Moravian settlements where their skills might be needed. Count Zinzendorf led such an itinerant life as well, constantly traveling between locations in Germany, the Netherlands and Britain. He even journeyed to the New World twice: to the Danish West Indies in 1739 and to British North America in 1741 to 1743. The group consisting of Zinzendorf's household, staff and collaborators was called the *Pilgerhaus* (Pilgrim's House).

With the commencement of the Moravian mission among slaves and the Moravians' concomitant involvement in slavery, enslaved individuals were also included in the constant transferrals within the ever-expanding spatial network of Moravian communities. Insofar as they occurred in the context of their communal mobility, it is difficult to ascertain whether the slaves' travels were voluntary or involuntary, or the degree to which they had a say in them.

An example is provided by Maria Andresen. In 1742, the church leadership decided to send her from St Thomas to Bethlehem, where she was to marry the aforementioned Andreas, who had become a part of the *Pilgerhaus* and was once again crossing the Atlantic in the count's entourage, this time to North America. Both as a member of the congregation and as a slave, Maria had to follow decisions made by others. Already a vice-elder in the St Thomas slave congregation, she had been bought from her original owner by the Moravian missionaries in 1741 to facilitate her marriage to Andreas.²⁶ The fact that the

25 H. Gräf and R. Pröve, *Wege ins Ungewisse: Reisen in der Frühen Neuzeit 1500–1800* (Frankfurt, 1997), pp. 37ff.

26 UA R.15.B.a.4.12, letter to Zinzendorf regarding the purchase of Maria, 12 September 1742. For more information on Maria, see Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen', pp. 1ff.

marriage was prearranged had nothing to do with the couple being enslaved, since marriages within the congregation were generally arranged by seniors in the church hierarchy.²⁷

Such transatlantic relocations were usually triggered by the motivations and interests of the Moravian leadership. The available sources provide no indication of how Maria reacted to being told she would have to leave St Thomas, but it was likely not an easy situation for her – she left behind three children born into an earlier relationship, as well as her other relatives.²⁸ Then again, she may have considered it an honor and welcomed the prestige associated with marrying someone living close to Zinzendorf. Perhaps she was also excited at the prospect of visiting the spiritual center of the community in Marienborn and Herrnhag. But what if she trembled at the thought of never seeing her children again? What if she secretly feared isolation and utter dependency, living among strangers in a strange country? This is speculation, of course, but certainly not far-fetched; given the bias of Moravian sources, I would go so far as to call it appropriate.

An interesting twist is added to Maria's story by a short document now kept in the Unity Archives in Herrnhut, in which Friedrich Martin, a missionary in St Thomas, states that Maria was able to marry because her former husband had passed away. In an almost passing remark, she is described as having been 'brought into freedom' ('in Freiheit gesetzt') by the Brethren, and a few lines later as 'completely free, single, and unwed'.²⁹ The document is unique: while a number of bills of sale documenting Moravians purchasing slaves have survived, Martin's attestation is the only one I know of that describes the transaction as setting the slave free. In the *Büdingische Sammlung* (of 1745), the document is reprinted under the title, 'Letter of Manumission of the Negro-Eldress'.³⁰ The receipt for the sale of Maria by her master Johan Uytendal, which has likewise survived in the Unity Archives, does not mention her freedom being bought.³¹ Similarly, the sources describing the purchase and ownership of Maria's prospective husband, Andreas, who was bought to prevent his separation from the congregation (see above), never imply him being manumitted.³² Nor

27 On Moravian ideas on marriage and sexuality, see P. Peucker, 'In the Blue Cabinet: Moravians, Marriage, and Sex', *Journal of Moravian History* 10 (2011), pp. 7–37; P. Vogt, 'Zinzendorf's "Seventeen Points of Matrimony": A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality', *Journal of Moravian History* 10 (2011), pp. 38–67.

28 UA R.22.10.37, Andresen Maria, undated.

29 UA R.15.B.a.11.232, attestation regarding Maria, 10 November 1742.

30 'Frey-Brief der Neger-Aeltestin', *Büdingische Sammlung einiger in die Kirchen-Historie einschlagender sonderlich neuerer Schriften*, ed. Nikolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf (Leipzig/Büdingen, 1744/45), pp. 48of.

31 UA R.15.B.a.4.12.

32 UA R.15.B.a.11.3, purchase of Bertel (Andreas) and Peter, 10 February 1739; UA R.15.b.a.3.82, Johan Lorentz Carsten's letter of purchase for Deknadel Plantation, 29 July 1739.

is Maria ever described as manumitted and free in later documents – not even in her brief *Lebenslauf* (she died in Herrnhag in 1749).³³

A look at the marriage laws of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania provides some clarification. In Pennsylvania, slaves were subject to laws prohibiting servants to marry without their masters' consent. According to a succession of Acts regulating marriages in the colony, proof of the prospective partners' freedom from any prior engagements had to be furnished by way of a certificate 'from credible persons where they have lived or do live'.³⁴ This was the purpose of the document signed by Friedrich Martin. The assertion that Maria had been freed does not seem to have been strictly necessary, but perhaps the Brethren wished to make sure no legal objection against the marriage could be raised. Unfortunately, no similar certificate concerning Andreas exists, which supports the assumption that he legally remained a slave.

The Moravians bought Maria for a specific reason, namely because they intended to marry her to Andreas in Bethlehem. There is no indication that guaranteeing her individual freedom or personal autonomy was part of the motivation for this transaction – but then again, such a concept of freedom was not a feature of early modern German society, and even less so in a tightly organized and close-knit religious community. Indeed, obedience to what was considered the Savior's plan and the decisions made accordingly by the Moravian leadership was a central element of becoming and being a Moravian. From a Moravian point of view, Maria's legal status was presumably irrelevant as long as she remained an obedient member of the community. Aside from the document mentioned above, there are no other sources describing Maria as free or mentioning her former slave status.

The question of how Maria defined and interpreted her obligations to the Brethren and what she thought about the marriage arranged for her will have to remain unanswered. It seems important to point out one thing, however: to her and her husband Andreas, it must have been glaringly obvious where they came from and that their experiences and former lives were quite distinct from those of the European-born sisters and brothers they lived with in Bethlehem and the Wetterau. And whatever Friedrich Martin's attestation of Maria's freedom meant to the different parties concerned, Maria and Andreas must have known that they were utterly dependent on their Moravian surroundings.

A rare glimpse of the perceptions of a slave brought into the Moravian community is provided by the *Lebenslauf* of Christian Gottfried, formerly known as London, a West African man who was born in Guinea around 1731 and died in Bethlehem in 1756. The *Lebensläufe* (memoirs) are short

33 UA R.22.10.37.

34 'An Act for the Preventing of Clandestine Marriages, 28 October 1701', *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* 2, pp. 161f; 'A Supplement to the Act Entitled "An Act for Preventing Clandestine Marriages"', 14 February 1729/30, *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* 4, pp. 152ff.

autobiographical accounts intended to be read at a person's funeral. Essentially intended for the edification of posterity, they are highly formalized and stereotypical. Such memoirs are rare for non-European members of the congregation, and those that do exist were usually written by others and kept very short. Christian Gottfried's *Lebenslauf* is slightly longer, however, covering four pages. We do not know how and when he was enslaved, but he was apparently transported to the West Indies and from there to London on an English slave ship. He was sold into the household of a Mr Jones, a member of the Fetter Lane Society, who eventually gave him to Zinzendorf in 1749. Whether the count expected such a 'present' remains unknown, but he seemingly had little use for the man, and in May 1750, London was sent to Bethlehem with a large group of Moravian emigrants.³⁵ Judging from a terse statement in the source, London did not relish being sent to the American back country. The author of the *Lebenslauf* describes what was probably a very understandable expression of opposition and resentment as London's 'wild and evil ways'. However, he eventually seems to have resigned himself to his fate, consisting of hard work in the tannery. On 23 December 1751 he was baptized Christian Gottfried, and in 1753 he was transferred to the tiny Moravian outpost of Christiansbrunn located a few miles north of Bethlehem. He eventually died of an illness in Bethlehem on 4 January 1756.³⁶

Consigned to one of the peripheries of the Atlantic World, Christian Gottfried seems to have cultivated the notion of a special relationship to Zinzendorf, based on the fact that he was technically the count's slave. He referred to him as his master and even wrote letters to him, allegedly expressing the wish to meet him again. Zinzendorf reacted at least once, sending Christian Gottfried a present in 1755. The *Lebenslauf* dedicates only a few sentences to this aspect, creating the impression of quaint, childlike devotion that is typical of early modern representations of master-servant relationships. It is feasible, however, that Christian Gottfried used the fact that he had originally been given to Count Zinzendorf to create for himself an imaginary tie connecting him to the center of the Moravian community, or to the hurly-burly of the London metropolis. Ostensibly, this makes sense as a strategy to enhance his status, however futile such an attempt may have been. But it may also have been due to the memory of a better or more interesting place and life, held dear by a man relegated to a back-breaking job in an American back country region.³⁷

Unlike Maria and Andreas or Rebecca Freundlich, all of whom attained a modestly privileged position within the Moravian community,

35 For a list of the colonists traveling with the 'Henry Jorde Company', including 'London (a negro from London)', see J. W. Jordan, 'Moravian Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1734-1767', *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 5/2 (1896), pp. 51-90, here pp. 74f.

36 UA R.22.143.3, Christian Gottfried alias London, 4 January 1756.

37 Ibid.

London/Christian Gottfried seems to have remained a slave. That certainly also had to do with the fact that he wound up in a North American colony, where slavery was common within Moravian settlements. There is little ambiguity to be found in his case; all of Gottfried's transatlantic passages were forced travels. And if he hoped to be able to return to England one day, he did so in vain.

Native Americans and Inuit

The trafficking of enslaved Native Americans to Europe has received little attention so far.³⁸ This is remarkable, since there has been a lot of research on Native American slavery and the enslavement of Native Americans by Europeans in recent years. Native American slaves also entered the Moravian orbit. Stopping in St Eustatius during his voyage to St Thomas in 1739, Zinzendorf acquired two Native Americans. We do not know how he met them. One of the two young men, named Sam, is described as an 'Anakunkas Indian from Boston in New England'.³⁹ Native American captives were common enough in New England's port cities, since the New England colonies as well as the province of New York were tied into a transcontinental trading network through which horses, humans and European commodities were exchanged. For all we know, Sam may have hailed from the Great Plains or some other far-away place, with New England simply being his last stop before being transported to St Eustatius.⁴⁰ The other Native American slave boy is described by Zinzendorf simply as a 'little Indian from the island where bishop Gervaise was killed'.⁴¹ Since Nicolas Gervais de Labrid was killed in the Orinoco area (and not on an island), the boy may have been of mainland Carib (Kalina) extraction.⁴²

38 Exceptions are C. F. Feest, ed., *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Lincoln/London, 1999); J. Weaver, *Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World 1000–1927* (Chapel Hill, 2014); N. E. van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham/London, 2015).

39 UA R.15.B.a.11.19, copy of receipt for Indian Sam from Boston, 27 February 1739; a Native American nation known as Anakunkas could not be identified. In an unrelated source, Zinzendorf wrote of the Anakunkas in Canada, but no such nation is known there either; besides, the Moravians used the term 'Canada' very unspecifically. See Zinzendorf, *Ein und zwanzig Discurse über die Augspurgische Confession: Gehalten vom 15. December 1747 bis zum 3. Mart. 1748 denen Seminariis theologicis fratrum zum Besten aufgefaßt und bis zur nochmaligen Revision des Auctoris einstweilen mitgetheilet* (1748), p. 125.

40 C. G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln, 2003) pp. 316ff; R. E. Desrochers, 'Slave-for-Sale Advertisements and Slavery in Massachusetts, 1704–1781', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59 (2002), pp. 623–64.

41 UA R.15.B.a.2.a.3, p. 39; UA R.15.B.a.11.19, receipt for the purchase of a 'garcon indien insulaire', 27 February 1739.

42 'H. Gelskerke to the Governor-General of Martinique, 2 March 1730', *Extracts from Archives, United States Commission on Boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana* (1897), pp. 251–3.

Contrary to initial plans, the two Native Americans were not taken to Europe but to St Thomas, where they remained for the rest of their short lives. Both died in 1739. According to a terse statement by Oldendorp, the nameless boy seems to have actively opposed his enslavement. Sam, the mysterious Anakunkas, was held in higher regard; he eventually made it into the *First Fruits* painting.⁴³

The Moravians also brought at least two Arawak from Berbice to Europe. One of them, a boy named Janke, had a life that was short but typical for the Moravian transatlantic world, touching both Atlantic peripheries and metropolitan regions. There is mention of him being born to an Arawak mother and a European father.⁴⁴ He was 'gifted' to Moravian missionaries in 1741 or 1742 and, as a talented translator, became a valuable asset. Janke was brought to Bethlehem in 1748, allegedly of his own professed volition. There, he was baptized by Zinzendorf's son-in-law Johannes Watteville and christened Johannes Renatus. He joined Watteville and his company on their journey back to Europe in 1749 and was taken to London, Zeist and Herrnhag before eventually being sent to the Moravian children's home in Hennersdorf in 1751, where he died of smallpox.⁴⁵

His legal status remains unclear. The Moravian missionaries in Suriname and Berbice worked among sovereign Arawak communities. Arawak people were sometimes enslaved as captives, but since we know nothing about Janke's parents with certainty, it is impossible to determine whether only his mother or both his parents were captives. However, an Arawak child moving in the Moravian Atlantic was obviously in a position of comprehensive dependency.

Clearly *not* slaves were five Inuit from Greenland who did a circuit of Atlantic Moravian communities between 1747 and 1749, visiting Amsterdam, Zeist, Herrnhag, Herrnhut, Ebersdorf, London, Philadelphia and Bethlehem before returning home to Greenland.⁴⁶ According to the Moravian chronicler David Cranz, these three men and two women traveled of their own volition, having 'expressed a desire to see Christianity'.⁴⁷ Indeed, there is a record from 1741 of Pussimek, later christened Sara, stating her wish to visit the congregation in Europe.⁴⁸ They seem to have had little influence on the itinerary, however.

43 UA R.15.A.2.1; both cases are discussed in Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen', p. 8.

44 UA R.22.05.28, Johannes Renatus, 16 October 1751.

45 UA R.22.1.a.69, Ludwig Christoph Dähne, 1769; Moravian Archives Bethlehem, Diarium Bethlehem, Vol. 7, 1748, pp. 228, 778ff; UA GN.1749.2.XXXIX–LII, Gemeinnachrichten 1749, Diarien Reisegemeinde, pp. 306ff; UA GN.1750.Bd.1.I–XII, Gemeinnachrichten 1750, p. 318; UA R.22.05.28.

46 D. Cranz, *Historie von Grönland: Enthaltend die Beschreibung des Landes und der Einwohner &c. insbesondere die Geschichte der dortigen Mission der Evangelischen Brüder zu Neu-Herrnhut und Lichtenfels* (Barby, 1765), pp. 673ff. The Moravian mission to Greenland was their second missionary endeavor after the West Indian mission. It began in 1733. See *ibid.*, pp. 409ff.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 673.

48 J. Beck, 'Brief aus Grönland an den in Teutschland sich befindenden Boten an die Grönländer Matthäus Stachen (Schreiben vom 14 Juli 1741, aus Neu-Herrnhut in Grönland)', *Büdingische Sammlung*, pp. 215–19, esp. p. 217.

Apparently, they were meant to stay in Europe for only a few months and return before the onset of winter, because the missionaries – here assuming the role of ‘experts’ – were concerned that the warm climate and unaccustomed diet might harm them. Due to organizational difficulties, the Greenlanders’ journey ended up lasting much longer than expected.⁴⁹

While their freedom was never subject to debate, as recent converts the five Inuit were nevertheless perceived in ways similar to individuals from the West Indies or North America. The rhetoric of the mission turned all such individuals – free or unfree – into children, ‘braune Herzeln’ (brown darlings) to be lovingly guided and sometimes cajoled along on the path to Christ. And as children, they were obviously dependent on their elders, who were more experienced in the ways of the world and Christian religion. In addition, people like the five Inuit were naturally dependent on the Moravian Brethren for their survival in foreign lands, and it was Moravians who eventually decided where they went, what they did there, and when they could return home.

Children

Age is a further aspect to be considered. Of the 42 non-European persons identified so far, 17 were children or adolescents, and an additional four were offspring of non-European parents born in European settlements.⁵⁰ In some cases, the sources straightforwardly report children as having been bought, proving that they came into the Moravian community as slaves. In fact, the first person brought to Europe from the West Indies by the Moravians was a boy of about seven by the name of Carmel, who accompanied the missionary Leonhard Dober from St Thomas to Germany.⁵¹ According to Oldendorp, he had been bought by the missionaries, but the author provides no further information on the circumstances.⁵² Carmel is also depicted in the *First Fruits* painting; he is one of the two boys in white jackets in the lower mid-section of the painting.⁵³

During the visit to St Thomas mentioned above, Zinzendorf himself acquired several children: in addition to the Native American boy discussed earlier, there were Andres (about two years old) and the four-year-old girl Anna Gratia, with

49 Cranz, *Historie von Grönland*, p. 674.

50 Concerning children, see also Peucker, ‘Aus allen Nationen’, p. 11.

51 For Carmel, originally named Oly and baptized Joshua, see *ibid.*, pp. 29f. Leonhard Dober, a potter by profession, was one of the first two missionaries ever sent out by the Moravians. He served in St Thomas from 1732 to 1735. Carmel’s story is also referred to in Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*.

52 Oldendorp, *Geschichte der Mission*, p. 492.

53 UA R.15.A.2.1, Erklärung des Gemäldes von den Heiden-Erstlingen, 1747.

the latter destined to be a companion to Zinzendorf's daughter Benigna.⁵⁴ Anna Gratia and Andres were transported to Amsterdam together in 1739 on a ship owned by Johann Lorentz Carstens; they arrived in Marienborn in August of the same year. Another girl or young woman named Cecilia was supposed to be acquired for Zinzendorf's wife, the Countess Erdmuthe Dorothea, but the deal was called off when Carstens and his wife decided to keep her in their own household in Copenhagen.⁵⁵

Amongst the children in the *First Fruits* painting is a boy named Jupiter, an eight-year-old who was purchased by the Moravian bishop David Nitschmann in New York in 1736. Jupiter was baptized in Herrnhut on 11 January 1739 and henceforth known as Emanuel. In Zinzendorf's explanation of the painting, he is described as being from Carolina; but in one of the three versions of the document in the archives of Herrnhut, he is mentioned as hailing from New York.⁵⁶ On the one hand, it is entirely feasible that the boy was born in Carolina and later brought to New York: David Nitschmann had been traveling from Georgia to New York in 1736, and he may have bought Jupiter either in Carolina or in New York before leaving the colonies.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the discrepancy may be a simple mistake resulting from ignorance. Like other owners of slaves, the Moravians apparently were not overly concerned with the origins of trafficked people. The involuntary mobilization and 'commodification' of human beings inherent in the slave trade practically turned them into people without home or origin.

Not all cases are so straightforward, however. Particularly in connection with children, rather diffuse wording was often used. Children are frequently mentioned as being 'given' or 'gifted' to Moravians, either by their parents or by other responsible adults. In May 1742 in London, for instance, George Whitefield⁵⁸ gave a 12-year-old black boy named Andrew to the Brethren, 'to bring him up for the Lord and to dispose of him as they shall find fit'.⁵⁹ Whitefield had brought Andrew along from South Carolina, where he had received him from the boy's own mother. The only certain fact in this case is that Andrew was in a situation of absolute dependency. Decisions about his future were made by virtual strangers who may have had no title to him but were

54 For Andres and Anna Gratia, see UA R.15.B.a.2.a.3, p. 39; UA R.15.B.a.1.IV.2.b, Zinzendorf to Carstens, 1 March 1740.

55 There ensued a bitter quarrel between the Zinzendorfs and Carstens that caused Carstens' estrangement, thus depriving the Moravians of an influential and rich patron. For a brief overview, see Peucker, 'Aus allen Nationen', pp. 7f.

56 UA R.15.A.2.1.

57 Cranz, *Alte und Neue Brüder-Historie*, pp. 251, 254.

58 George Whitefield, famous preacher of the Great Awakening, friend of George and Thomas Wesley, and intimately connected to the Fetter Lane Society for some time. See C. Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England, 1728–1760* (Oxford/New York, 1998).

59 Cited according to *ibid.*, p. 83. Podmore's sources are UA R.13.C.1.6 and Fetter Lane Daily Helpers' Conference, DHC 4, 26 May and 9 June 1742.

obviously considered to be his masters and to have the right and obligation to decide on his behalf. Whitefield himself may have had qualms about the entire affair, since he asked the Moravians to return the boy to him in December 1743, prior to another trip to America. But the Brethren declined, having already placed him in the *Kinderanstalt* in Marienborn.⁶⁰

The ‘giving’ of a child may be considered a transfer of responsibility and was tied to certain expectations, like the provision of support and education. In the context of early modern society, this practice can be understood as a strategy of providing for a child – of giving it access to all-important social networks. Thus, a child like Andrew could find himself in a position not unlike that of European-born children sent away to learn a trade, receive an education or earn their own keep. In November 1742, it was decided that Andrew was to learn a trade; he was sent to a shoemaker.⁶¹

This was obviously a position of dependency, albeit a dependency that could be expected to end when the child had come of age or when training/schooling was considered complete. But what about a child of African descent from South Carolina? Would he or she be considered permanently bound to the Moravian community in some sort of serfdom? Or would he be considered a free man when his training was finished, able to go wherever he pleased? Such questions never arose in this case, however, as Andrew died in Marienborn in 1744.⁶²

Conclusion

Whether free or unfree, the persons brought to Moravian communities in Europe and Bethlehem in North America were assigned a specific role in the enactment of Moravian (self-)representation. First of all, they were symbols of the success of the Moravians’ missionary endeavors. The physical presence of such persons, their ability to speak of their conversion, and their relationship with the Savior clearly demonstrated the success of Count Zinzendorf’s vision. Visitors to Herrnhag or Zeist in the 1740s will have seen foreigners from different parts of the globe – some in plain but well-made Moravian dress, others in their national costumes. They may even have been able to observe the Inuit Simon demonstrating his kayaking skills in the ditch surrounding the palace in Zeist, or gape at the ‘Moorish couple’, Andreas and Maria.⁶³

60 Ibid., p. 87; D. Bentham, *Memoirs of James Hutton: Comprising the Annals of his Life, and Connection with the United Brethren* (London, 1856), pp. 81f; UA R.8.33.b.3, 1742, Kurzes Diarium der Gemeine des Lammes in der Wetterau, vom Jahr 1742; UA R.8.33.b.2.b, Continuatio des Gemein Diarii zu Herrnhag vom 14 May 1742 an.

61 UA R.8.33.b.2.c, Diarium Herrnhag, 1 November 1742 to 31 January 1743.

62 UA R.8.33.d.5, Diarium Marienborn, 9 August 1744.

63 On kayaking, see UA R.10.A.b.2.a, Diarium Zeist, 12 August 1747.

The symbolic value of these non-Europeans was multiplied by the Moravians' media strategy, notably through the use of visual media. Their portraits hung beside those of other members of the congregation on the walls of meeting halls or the rooms used by Zinzendorf. The effect of their presence – both real and virtual – can hardly be overestimated in the context of a baroque culture that comprehended the world through allegories, parables and analogies. To underline the significance of the function of these living symbols, I will introduce the concept of 'representation labor'. The task of these Africans, West Indians, Native Americans and other 'exotic' foreigners in the Moravian communities in Europe was to increase the status of the community and to represent the ideal of worldwide community, both for outsiders and for Moravians themselves. There may have been a distinct spatial component to the way this worked: while a West Indian couple like Maria and Andreas probably did not cause much of a stir in places like eighteenth-century London or Amsterdam, their representative value may have been much higher in the European periphery, in places like Marienborn and Herrnhag in the Wetterau, or in Herrnhut and Niesky in Saxony. This idea should not be overstated, however; after all, even in very cosmopolitan environments, the presence of non-European converts could effectively transport a message of missionary success. Nevertheless, the impression created was surely different and probably more intense in the 'newly globalized' peripheries.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that members of mission congregations in the West Indies were especially interested in learning about fellow black Moravians doing important work in Europe. This was something actively fostered and encouraged through the reading of diaries and letters from far-away congregations during community meetings. In this sense, non-European sisters and brothers presented a sort of imaginary link between colonial and European peripheral regions of the Moravian Atlantic World.

As far as the individual men, women and children themselves are concerned, their significance increased the ambivalence of their own positions. They were highly visible and highly regarded – though this regard was not necessarily for who they were but for the role they fulfilled, a role that they had little choice but to accept.

Moravian sources pose a methodological challenge, since they maintain a peculiar silence regarding the legal status of non-Europeans and the perception of slavery. In the cases of many brothers, sisters and children brought to Europe from the West Indies, Suriname, Berbice, or British North America by the Moravians, it hardly seems possible to say with any certainty who was a slave and who was free, where and when the latter may have gained that freedom, or what it meant. This veil of silence can be partly lifted by comparison with other contemporary cases, as well as through a close reading of texts and rhetorical analysis. As was often the case at the time, not everything was deemed worthy of being committed to paper, and matters of legal and social status may

have been perfectly clear to the contemporaries concerned. Therefore, we must always ask ourselves what was left unsaid or remained outside the discourse represented in sources.

The presence of unfree persons within Moravian communities in Europe vividly demonstrates the existence of practices and routes of slavery and slave trafficking in early modern Europe, even in regions far removed from the Atlantic seaboard. In a very real sense, Moravian mobility across American and European (as well as Asian and African) spaces meant that Moravian communities and their *Gemeinorte* everywhere became slavery hinterlands.⁶⁴ Whether this extends the boundaries of the Atlantic World into regions like eastern Saxony or challenges the Atlantic paradigm in favor of a global one remains an open question, however.

64 F. Brahm and E. Rosenhaft, 'Introduction: Towards a Comprehensive European History of Slavery and Abolition', *Slavery Hinterland*, ed. Brahm and Rosenhaft, pp. 1–23, here pp. 3ff.