Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Cultural and Social History
The Journal of the Social History Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfcs20

The redeemed life of Lena Clark, Christian missionary in the Congo Free State

Robert Burroughs

To cite this article: Robert Burroughs (2022): The redeemed life of Lena Clark, Christian missionary in the Congo Free State, Cultural and Social History, DOI: 10.1080/14780038.2022.2102564

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2022.2102564

Published online: 19 Jul 2022.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY
https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2022.2102564

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The redeemed life of Lena Clark, Christian missionary in the Congo Free State

Robert Burroughs

School of Cultural Studies and Humanities, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

ABSTRACT

I give an account of the development of church and humanitarian activity in Leopold II's Congo Free State as it shaped the life of a Congo-born woman, Lena Clark. In her movements between Africa, Europe, and America, and in and out of mission service, Lena Clark's life captures the motivations, frustrations and ironies of religious and humanitarian interventionism in the Congo. Circumstances surrounding her controversial departure from missionary service reveal pressures felt by Protestant missions in central Africa as locally based critics under public and political scrutiny. Lena Clark's story reveals new questions on Protestant missions and humanitarian campaigning.

KEYWORDS

Congo Free State; missionary; imperialism; biography; gender

Introduction

Towards the end of 1904, from the banks of Lake Tumba in central Africa, a missionary born on the west coast of the continent, Lena F. Whitman, set sail for Europe with her new husband Clarence Whitman. The couple left in disgrace, Clarence Whitman having been dismissed from service after his resignation had been refused for what he and his employees regarded as an unforgiveable 'sin', premarital relations.[1] Lena–as I will call her to avoid confusion with various relatives mentioned in this essay–would never again see the Ikoko mission, which had been her home since 1895, nor the mission's leaders, her adopted parents, Joseph and Eliza Clark. To comprehend this moment of personal crisis from all its angles of curiosity and significance entails situating her life amid missionary and humanitarian work in the Congo Free State (CFS). While the role of Christian missions in the colonial takeover of central Africa is well studied, revisiting the subject through Lena's unique experience calls attention to new interpretations of an apparent 'civilising mission' undertaken side by side, or in yet closer relations of compromise and confidence, with a regime that Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja characterises as 'primitive accumulation and crimes against humanity'.[2] It adds lived, fleshy complicatedness to a story traditionally told from the perspective of particular religious institutions or their most famous sons, the gendered noun being advised.[3] Lena's story reveals the role of conservative gender and race ideologies in suppressing knowledge of certain lives which might otherwise conceivably have been lived and remembered in the glare of humanitarian hagiography.

Robert Burroughs r.m.burroughs@leedsbeckett.ac.uk Leeds Beckett University, A214 Broadcasting Place, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS1 3HE, UK

At the heart of many missionary society archives are the executive reports by central secretaries and their correspondence with field-based missionaries. Availing a top-down vantage-point, these records help determine that historical interpretations centre on policy and politics, interactions with the state, and dominant perspectives and personalities. Traditionally, even where studies seek critical insights into missionary activity or ideology they pass over some of the gendered and racialised underpinnings of missionary authority.[4] The CFS provides a telling case in point, for the humanitarian campaign against Leopold II's colonial rule was sustained by the authoritative condemnations of white Protestant mission fieldworkers.[5] Their criticisms were invariably based not upon a thoroughgoing, radical questioning of the patriarchal values of mission and empire, but rather upon a conservative sense that these ideals had been betrayed in central Africa. Their photographs and written accounts of atrocities routinely positioned Africans as silenced victims awaiting missionary rescue and the missionaries themselves as agents of rescue and redemption, much as in traditional missionary iconography that had sought to justify imperial interventions in the first place.[6] Missionary interventions are noted in celebratory accounts of humanitarian 'heroism' in the Congo, such as Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998), notwithstanding this book's focus on secular actors, as well as lower-profile biographies of individual missionary/humanitarian figures.[7] Biographical conventions of historical retellings have therefore been implicated in recapitulating liberal arguments about the heroics of humanitarian history and the gendered, racial and sexual assumptions as to which historical actors should be the focus of that history.

Studying the life of Lena Clark, whose experiences, actions and thoughts are obscured in the negotiation of patriarchal norms and dominant imagery, helps bring conscious attention to these ideological workings. But what follows is no biographical account of a rounded inner life. The extent of available sources severely limits what can be known about Lena's own 'thoughts, language, and contests with the world', to use the terms of Alice Kessler-Harris.[8] Nonetheless, by situating her few extant writings, and mentions of her in published works and the correspondence of her missionary employers, in the broader context of Christian intervention in the early colonial Congo, it becomes possible to interpret how her 'unfolding life is called to account in different ways as the social climate changes and the political tides turn'.[9] Lena's stifled presence in the archive is itself indicative of her reckoning by the world, in particular missionary bodies in the Congo. Refracted through a localised and individual case study are institutional and international allegiances and rivalries that determined that an African woman, the story of whose redemption from slavery had inspired others to mission service,[10] and whose work exposing atrocities might have been heralded, would be unceremoniously excluded from the extension of Christianity in central Africa, as well as from later historical accounts of humanitarian heroism. Her supposed fall from grace presented risks to the American Baptist Missionary Union (ABMU), the position of which in CFS was felt to be threatened by its participation in the campaign to expose colonial atrocities in pursuit of political reform. This woman's banishment illustrates how Protestant missions survived local enmity, and the jarring recognition of their awkward involvement in an atrocious colonial regime, by carefully regulating the behaviour of the field worker, in whom the mission was felt to be embodied.

Vunga

As with most lives, Lena's was lived in chapters. And as with many women's lives, movement between the acts was marked by changes to the names by which other people knew her. In the first section, the story of a youth, Vunga, who would become Lena Clark, comes into focus against the backdrop of European pioneering missionary activity in the Congo river basin.

Far from the small coastal settlement where she was born around two years earlier, her story is set on its course by the Brussels Geographic Conference of 1876, at which Leopold II secured international support for his African International Association (AIA). On supposedly humanitarian and religious grounds this organisation supported exploration in central Africa. Between 1879 and 1884 it funded Henry Morton Stanley's pioneering work creating a transportation infrastructure and signing dubious treaties with local leaders, efforts which would be recognised by the ratification of Leopold's claims to the CFS at the Berlin Conference of 1884–5.[11] The CFS was conceived in the most general, idealistic and abstract terms as a religious duty to impose Christian civilisation upon supposedly heathen African peoples while curbing the spread of Islam. Well-endowed Protestant missions from Britain and the USA first responded to Leopold's call to extend Christian influence from the coast to the hinterland. Led by George Grenfell and Thomas Comber, the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) sailed within a year of Stanley's famous overland journey to the Congo river mouth in 1877. They were quickly followed by the Livingstone Inland Mission, which, owing to insufficient funds, ceded its missions to the ABMU in 1884. The other major Protestant bodies in the region were the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, which first arrived in 1881; the Congo Balolo Mission (CBM), as of 1889; and from 1891 the American Southern Presbyterian Mission (ASPM).

Catholic interest in the Congo reaches back to the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão's arrival at the Congo (then Zaire) river mouth in 1484, and had been roused occasionally in the seventeenth century by the efforts of Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Jesuits. In the years immediately prior to formal colonial rule the sole Catholic mission in central Africa was the French White Fathers, first established in 1878 by Cardinal Lavigerie, the archbishop of Tangiers and Carthage, on what would be the colony's eastern borders. The White Fathers continued their antislavery campaign under the auspices of the AIA and the CFS, inspiring some public and mission interest in the region among Belgians, particularly after Lavigerie's cooperation with Leopold's Brussels Conference of 1889–90. Belgian missions were already stretched by work in other fields and somewhat resentful of the monarch's initial religious neutrality.[12] Nonetheless, the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, also known as the Scheutist Fathers, reached central Africa in 1887, and were followed by the Jesuits in 1891, with smaller numbers of Trappists and Redemptorists following this trail. Reuben Loffman's recent study of the south-eastern Congo demonstrates that under colonial rule the relation between Catholic missions and officialdom was defined less by compliance than by complexity. Bible and flag did not always uncritically support one another's claims on the region.[13]

Besides proselytisation, which proved to be patchy, abortive work in many locations, particularly in the initial years, missionaries were vital to early-colonial efforts at travel (as owners and captains of steamships), education, the acquirement of African languages, and also to a number of amateur-scientific pursuits ranging from medicine to anthropology.[14] The missions approached these tasks with different priorities and methods. Exploration and outreach were foremost among the activities of the BMS and LIM, as they were for Prosper Philippe Augouard, the French Catholic missionary who, having considered Boma, later settled in Brazzaville. Pioneers such as Augouard and Grenfell were actively involved in exploration alongside Stanley and Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza.[15] Often hagiographic and allegorical, works by and about the Christian trailblazers emphasise their heroic exploits.[16] Their cultural encounters with Africans are represented as the meeting of Christian light and pagan darkness. As part of the broader western imagining of Africa in missionary discourse they set the tone for much of the rhetorical justification of colonialism in CFS.

'Darkness and ignorance' were defining terms for '[t]he poor people' described in Mrs JRM Stephens's *The Story of the Congo Mission for Young People* (1911). 'They were savages', she continues,

> with no idea of true God, believing only in evil spirits and witches, and thinking that all sickness, sorrow and death were caused by them. Their customs were cruel and wicked, some of them too wicked and dreadful to be described, and those "customs" were all that they had in place of religion.[17]

Misconceiving local traditions, and unmindful of ongoing changes, including those ushered in by the European arrival, such views were core to the imposition of Christianity in central Africa. One of their several ideological functions was helping insulate missionaries from the violence of colonial rule by qualifying the senses in which white and black people shared a common humanity. They also established broad areas of consensus among the various Christian bodies that sought to impose their beliefs on the numerous, diverse, and complex societies of central Africa. These included a wholesale, dismissive view of violent indigenous customs as savage, even evil; the rejection of African tradition and cultural autonomy, and an almost inescapable general view of the inferiority of African 'characteristics', morals and habits; social segregation of the races, enforced, among other means, by the newly built environment; and differentiation of labour for men and women, both mission staff and their converts.[18] Each of these attitudes and operations were reinforced by an emphasis on purity and chastity, both supposedly exemplified by the missionary and found wanting among populations of the Congo.

While these representational norms have been thoroughly decoded and critiqued in postcolonial studies,[19] their ubiquity in missionary discourse can leave researchers wanting for alternative insights. Attention to the passages of a single life can help to complicate the Manichaeanism. Lena's birth reveals some of the muddy realities in which the first mission depots were founded in the colony's seaport settlements. Because European infrastructure up-river was non-existent, the earliest missionary work took place in the Lower Congo. In rising ports such as Banana and Boma, the harbingers of

Christianity operated alongside jaundiced trading men of low repute. Transatlantic slave-trading from south of the equator was but a recent memory and many merchants had continued living in the style of their notorious forebears.[20] The ABMU pioneer Henry Craven described such men as 'whoremongers and adulterers and unholy in all their thoughts and ways'.[21] Awkwardly, Craven and his colleagues were nonetheless reliant upon their supply of goods. Close association with the trading community indeed led state authorities to suspect the ABMU of illicit trade.[22] Whether or not the authorities would consider it as trade, the missions did receive payments for taking in the mixed-race children of the European merchants. Lena was born in Banana around 1874. It is not certain how the young girl found her way to Craven's mission school, though she was apparently one of the number of 'mulatto[s]' whose upkeep was paid for by traders, or possibly the 'orphan' that Craven took in at his own expense.[23] In a very short and reticent 'Autobiography', written early in life to appear in a college newsletter, Lena recalled spending two years in the care of a woman who taught her to sew before being sent on to Palabala along with the two daughters of a Dutch trader named Youngbloed.[24] This man was surely an agent of the African Trading Co., working alongside the more famous Anton Greshoff, through whom the ABMU did its early trade. It is uncertain why Lena's fate was interwoven with that of Hannah and Emma Youngbloed, but it seems likely that it is because she too was fathered by a coastal trader.

At Palabala, Lena and the Youngbloed sisters joined a small group of girls and young women. The group included young girls whose evangelical 'redemption' bore the literal, pecuniary stamp of ransoming from enslavement. Debates about the merits of financially redeeming (or 'ransoming') slaves emerged among missionaries of various denominations in the CFS (and beyond), but in the colony's formative years it was regarded as a necessary evil, a means of generating donations, and one of the few viable ways of converting individuals to Christianity, even if it funded slavery and gave rise to suspicion among African elites.[25] In the case of young females, ransoming also removed them from one form of precarious labour, and/or marriage, to another, though in the eyes of their Christian redeemers this exchange was purely beneficial. Whether formerly enslaved or not, all were subject to the redemptive mission of Christianity. For young females, this entailed grounding in servile forms of labour, partly as preparation for marriage. Joseph Clark explained in a letter published in 1885 that he and his wife desired financial support for young girls who should become future wives to redeemed boys, removing the threat of the latter 'marrying heathen girls'.[26] Long before she could possibly have been aware of the fact, and not for the last time, Lena's life was determined by the capacity of patriarchal values to withstand the incongruities of missionary practice.

For her language skills, Lena stood out. She spoke Portuguese, and quickly acquired English while serving as a translator to new missionaries arriving in Palabala.[27] Incorporated in mission life, Vunga was baptised as Lena Fredericka Clark in 1887, one year after the arrival of her adoptive father Joseph Clark at Palabala. She joined the Baptist church in 1889.[28] Three years later, in a letter to his biological daughter, Stephanie, who was raised in the USA, away from her parents, Joseph Clark explains 'that Lena has taken the surname "Clark". She had no father to care for her so I took her as my adopted daughter'.[29]

MissLena

As with a small number of the youths secured for Christian instruction in CFS, Lena's education continued overseas. Some children were taken to European institutes such as The African Institute at Colwyn Bay, Wales, which for a time was home to one of another of the Clark's adopted intakes, a future missionary and critic of Leopold's regime, Frank Teva Clark.[30] Lena travelled, along with one other girl, Nkebani, who had been ransomed from slavery and renamed Margaret Rattray, to the Clarks' homeland, Scotland, in 1889. In 1891 Lena and Rattray spent time in London, where they met a young African American, Nora Gordon. Gordon had recently become the first graduate of the missionary training programme at Spelman Seminary, which would become Spelman College, the African American women's institute of education in Atlanta, Georgia, named in honour of its benefactor, the wife of John D. Rockefeller, Laura Spelman, and her abolitionist family. Gordon was bound for a career in the Congo, and she recommended Spelman to Joseph Clark as the appropriate place for Lena's and Rattray's continuing development. Both reached Spelman in 1891 and were joined in the following years by Emma Youngbloed, among other Congo-born students (see Figure 1). Showing 'marked abilities as a student', Lena progressed quickly at Spelman. She graduated as a missionary and returned to Africa in May 1895, travelling with Gordon, who, while on leave, had married her namesake, the Jamaican Baptist S.C. Gordon.[31] Having followed a path to westernisation, or that of the 'evolué', as discussed by V.Y. Mudimbe, Lena was reported to have 'many American customs now & is likely to be a great help to us in our work'.[32]

For African and European evangelists alike, mission employment required long-distance migration to foreign locations, not only between Africa and Europe or the USA, but also in the vast CFS. Lena entered service at the Clarks' station in Ikoko, in the Equateur region, in around November 1895. At the time of her arrival this territory was embroiled in the so-called rubber wars in which local communities met the conquistadorial coming of European parties with armed resistance.[33] As with other missions, work at Ikoko was carefully segregated according to gender. Lena aided Eliza Clark in educating and evangelising female residents of nearby villages as well as the community of 'orphans, released slaves, and prisoners of war' who resided at the station (see Figure 2).[34] Typically the girls' day was divided between classes in reading, writing, arithmetic and recital of scripture in the mornings, with gardening, sewing and other craft-work in the afternoon. As well as forming the preparation for subservient life in and beyond the mission, this work made goods to be sold to locals, with profits helping to maintain the mission. As numbers grew the class was divided between senior and junior girls, with Eliza Clark teaching the former and Lena the latter.[35] The Ladies Committee of the ABMU paid for the majority of the girls' upkeep, with the Clarks paying for '8 or 9' and Lena two despite her modest income.[36] Men and boys at the mission spent their afternoons in carpentry, building furniture for sale. Just as it had in the Lower Congo, mission work closely aligned to colonial trade. State soldiers were among the mission's main clientele.[37] More often than not, kindly relations were maintained with colonial officials, in apparent necessity, even after the severity of military reprisals on the people became a matter of concern.

The mission established a footing at Ikoko despite limited finances and staffing, and some major setbacks. European staff suffered from numerous illnesses. In 1903 E.V. Sjöblom, the Swedish missionary at Ikoko, and one of Leopold's most vocal critics, succumbed to fever. For Lena, adversity also came from within the institution. In 1900

Figure 1. 'Vunga (Lena Clark), with Zinga (Emma Youngbloed), Nkebani (Margaret Rattray), and Sita (Nora Gordon) at Spelman Seminary. From *Spelman Messenger*, May 1895, p. 1. Courtesy of Spelman College Archives.

she was denied passage on the ABMU's steamship, the *Henry Reed*, even though it had an unoccupied berth, and despite her urgent need to return to the reopen the mission school. While other missionaries would complain of the captain's capricious use of the *Henry Reed*, this particular incident seems likely to be explained by racial prejudice, an unwillingness to allow Lena to room with 'two CBM ladies in the cabin'.[38] In the end she was forced to use another mission's more crowded steamship to return to Ikoko. In the same year Lena was engaged to be married 'to a missionary of the CBM now on furlough', seemingly in Scotland.[39] It has been impossible to substantiate any details about this relationship nor the circumstances of its premature ending. This missing information is a reminder that the very limited archival presence of Lena at this juncture in her life reflects not simply a benign process of disappearance over time but also suggests how patriarchal institutions invest less conscious energy in examining the life of an individual whose behaviours cause no significant problems. It is in a time of institutional

Figure 2. 'Miss Lena and Her Helpers', from the Joseph Clark ***Congo*** Photograph Album (1903), Clark papers, ABHS. Courtesy of the ***American*** Baptist Historical Society.

controversy and personal crisis that Lena emerges as a figure warranting the scrutiny and reaction of figures in positions of authority, be they the secretaries of mission societies, or indeed historians.

Lena Clark

Life according to the Victorian ideologies of racial and gendered separate spheres was not fully possible at Ikoko, even if some missionaries did deem it desirable. The lack of personnel ensured that Eliza Clark and Lena participated with male employees in the politics of mission life. Both are among the signatories of a vote of thanks to the BMS leader Alfred Baynes for his organisation's support during the rubber wars, for example,

and in the same month Lena also signed a joint statement bearing witness to the murder of a mission lay-worker.[40] Reports from Ikoko missionaries, including Lena's accounts of the children taken in as released prisoners-of-war, had for some time been hinting at the scale of violence in the region. In an early account of colonial violence, she also described 'fighting' in a letter to the *Spelman Messenger* in 1899.[41] The testimonial was one of the Ikoko missionaries' first public pronouncements against atrocities in the CFS, a cause to which Lena would contribute until her departure in 1904. Her abrupt exit would be intimately and complexly linked to the broader politics of Protestant criticism of Leopold.

While the involvement of Protestant missionaries in the humanitarian campaign would be substantial, it was by no means inevitable. To understand it, and its role in Lena's departure, requires further reflection on the political positioning of religious missions in the CFS. In the period of the colony's formation Leopold supported Protestants and Catholics alike as their presence strengthened his political claims on the region. Over time he sought to 'counterbalance' the spread of Protestants by promoting the expansion of Catholic stations, raising taxes for Protestants, and refusing their requests for land.[42] Although the White Fathers had long resisted the jurisdiction of the colonial state, Catholic missions increasingly fell in line as the White Fathers themselves became increasingly staffed by Belgians.[43] These changes brought a sense of unified purpose among the various denominations of Protestants, as voiced at the General Conference of Protestant Missions in Leopoldville in 1902.[44] Gatherings of Protestant missionaries were frequent occurrences in the early 1900s. A little-known photograph from the Joseph Clark papers captioned 'Tea Party at Londe, Matadi, 1901' (Figure 3), in which Lena features on the extreme right of the image, hints at how such meetings channelled missionary concerns towards officials, for the figure on the left of the image, singled out by his dark jacket and failure to pose as he plays with a dog (perhaps his dog, John), is the British consul Roger Casement, whose 1903 tour of the Upper Congo would instigate the international Congo reform movement.

Selective support for missions bred local rivalries, particularly in regions such as the Kasai where one mission encroached on the territory of another following Catholic expansion from 1901. Despite instances of cooperation, distinctions between Catholics and Protestants were sharpened into tools of propaganda by both supporters and critics of Leopold at the time of the 'Red Rubber' scandals, as loyalty to the monarch was contrasted with responsiveness to the emerging social catastrophe of colonisation. On his tour of the colony in 1908, the Belgian socialist Emile Vandervelde noted: 'The Jesuits claim that the Protestants are enemies of the State, who foment rebellion among the natives'.[45] For the Protestants and their liberal sympathisers, in contrast, public pronouncements by senior Catholics whitewashing the regime amid the atrocities scandal called into question the purpose of Christian intervention and its links to the politics of colonialism. '[P]osterity will say that never did the Catholic Church betray more openly the mission which it has given itself and the morality of its founder', warned the Belgian academic Félicien Cattier in 1906.[46]

Besides politics, geography in part determined missionaries' alertness to the atrocities, with individuals of all denominations pleading that they could not decry what they did not see. So too did approaches to proselytisation affect levels of awareness. In contrast to the Catholic construction of villages and *fermes chapelle* by means of the removal of children from familial influence, as instituted in the Kwango region and modified

Figure 3. 'Tea Party at Londe, Matadi, End of March 1901', from the Joseph Clark Congo Photograph Album (1903), Clark papers, ABHS. Courtesy of the *American* Baptist Historical Society.

elsewhere, the Protestant methods of territorial expansion and evangelical outreach to villages brought them more often into contact with military abuses of power.[47] Among individuals and institutions alike, however, there was also a good deal of reluctance to speak out. Praise for the regime at the time of the Red Rubber controversy won the favour of the colonial administration while criticism damaged plans for mission development. Believing in the overriding good of their religious aims, many fieldworkers of Christianity were wary of compromising their position.

In 1896, in response to an exposé published in the *Times* by the ABMU's Charles Banks, Leopold established a 'Commission for the Protection of the Natives' comprising six of the most senior missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, all supporters of Leopold. Having proven ineffective, the scheme was abandoned without the knowledge of its members. E.D. Morel, the ringleader of the Congo reform movement, regarded it sceptically as a paper exercise designed to deter criticism rather than a real measure to stop cruelties.[48] In Britain, the BMS and CBM refused to admit to humanitarian issues in the 1890s and early 1900s, leading some individual missionaries to question the institutional silence, or, as in the case of the CBM's John Weeks, to report secretly to news agencies. The CBM denounced atrocities in 1903 as the tide of public opinion turned in Britain, but the BMS only joined the ranks of Congo reform in 1905. Their reluctance contrasted the US institutions which, in permitting public criticisms by field missionaries such as Banks, created some of the earliest accounts, on which the reform crusade would be founded.[49]

When Casement toured the Upper Congo from June to September 1903 he was hosted by a number of Protestant missionaries willing to place critical views on record. One of Casement's most fruitful spells was at Ikoko where, with the help of mission staff, European and African, he compiled powerful first-hand testimonies relating to the rubber wars of the 1890s. Lena is named in Casement's report as the translator of accounts by female intakes. Not only was she well acquainted with the Ikoko girls and women, but in her travels Lena had acquired considerable language skills. As I mentioned before, in her formative years at Palabala Lena had worked as an 'interpreter' for newly arrived missionaries, and she also helped translate sermons.[50] At Spelman she studied French and Latin.[51] '[A] born elocutionist and mimic', she could recall the substance and the accents of conversations with the Clark family in Scotland years after her return to Africa.[52] More than a decade after her premature death friends from her time at Palabala would recall: '[w]hat a linguist she was'.[53] In Ikoko in 1903 these talents came to the fore in the making of powerful survivors' narratives which are among the most valuable primary sources on the regime of atrocities.[54] Her work translating for Casement was in some ways an extension of her labours with the Ikoko mission girls, some of whose stories had previously been told to raise mission funds. For Casement, however, Lena secured lengthy depositions by five mission intakes (Bikela, Sekolo, Elima, Bonsondo, and Ncongo) which depart from missionary conventions in their discussion, freed of evangelical interpretation, of personal and social traumas caused by colonisation.[55] As well as featuring in anti-Congo propaganda in the early 1900s, they have proven valuable to historical accounts of the Congolese experience of colonialism, including Nancy Rose Hunt's important, ethnographically informed re-framings.[56] Though of course they were made for a Christian-imperial cause, it is certainly possible to see Lena's translations as complicating, even resisting, the paradigmatic understanding of translation as an act of cultural colonisation.[57] By conceiving of translation itself as creative practice, 'a translingual act of transcoding cultural material – a complex act of communication', in the terms of Douglas Howland, it is evident that her translations capture Lena's agency and meaning-making, and also, to some extent, that of her interlocutors.[58] But while her work as one of Casement's translators is acknowledged, it has been no more than noted, in keeping with the traditional–and as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi note, imperialistic–view of translation as secondary, 'marginal activity', and invisible work.[59]

Lena Fredericka/Lena F. Whitman

The missionaries' participation in the humanitarian scandal came at a heavy personal toll for Lena, one which illustrates the pressures placed upon missions and their workers by the choice either to speak against or acquiesce with the colonial state. In June 1904, extra-, or perhaps pre-, marital relations between a recently installed Ikoko missionary, Clarence Whitman, and Lena led to Whitman's dismissal from service. Though pleading regret at 'the moment's yielding to temptation', Whitman accepted the decision without protest. His and Lena's attention turned immediately to concern for the wellbeing of the Ikoko mission girls.[60] Whitman and Lena promptly married before his dismissal amid 'vague hints that she was in the family way', effectively ending the hope expressed by one prominent missionary that she might be allowed to stay at Ikoko after Whitman had left.[61] Instead, life continued with Whitman in Britain and the USA. They had three sons

before the missionary calling drew them back to Africa. Stationed at Donga, Nigeria, Lena again demonstrated her linguistic skills while working for the United Soudan Mission. Under another name, C. Lena Whitman, she published a study of Jukun, as well as Jukunoid biblical translations.[62] She died of a meningitis infection while on furlough in Taunton, England, in March 1920, survived by her husband, who continued his mission work in Nigeria, and her sons, whose childhood continued in England.[63]

Even after her husband's dismissal, Lena deposed evidence before Leopold's Commission of Inquiry on 18 November 1904. The Commission of Inquiry would prove to be a major reference-point in the debate on humanitarian abuses. By Royal Decree, in July 1904 Leopold commissioned an international, three-person party to investigate allegations of systematic violence in CFS. Between October 1904 and February 1905, the investigators undertook a relatively thorough investigative tour of central Africa. The testimonies they gathered, which include 258 statements by peoples born in the Congo, are one of the clearest indictments of the colonial regime. They are a multi-vocal, multi-ethnic, and multi-regional account of sexual violence, corporal violence, intimidation, theft, false imprisonment, and other abuses of power. The commissioners did ultimately criticise aspects of colonial rule in a rather tepid and apologetic published report. Yet the testimonies would be hidden from public view in an act of silencing which, I have argued, still resounds through twenty-first century Belgium's attempts to reckon with its colonial past.[64] In Berber Bevernage's excellent analysis, the Commission's denial of its own primary evidence in its published report precipitated an epistemic crisis that encouraged the rise of race sciences in Belgian colonial culture.[65]

Before the Commission, Lena signed her sworn statement with her Christian forenames, Lena Fredericka, and was noted as 'espouse Whitman'. She detailed eight charges. Some of her statements simply corroborated the preceding testimony by Joseph and Eliza Clark, but in other moments she noted visceral first-hand encounters with atrocities. She had seen 'the wound in [Bolondo, a wood-cutter's] head, his brain escaping through the hole that had been made by the bullet', 'the corpse of an old woman', children's corpses removed from the river by Eliza Clark, a 'mutilated little girl', a woman's dead body with its hand removed.[66] Fearful that such details might be whitewashed by the commissioners, Protestant missionaries leaked their evidence to Morel, which he duly published.[67] Lena herself prepared a report on her statement to the Commission for the press.[68] Her testimony might conceivably have featured in the propaganda of Morel, then, had not the political climate made mission leaders react nervously to her private life. In a letter sent in August 1904 the chief field missionary Aaron Sims expressed alarm at the ABMU officially joining the 'Congo campaign', actions which he thought would lead to its expulsion from the colony. In the same letter he complained about the mission's too-kind treatment of Clarence Whitman.[69] The Secretary of the ABMU also heeded the dangers of Whitman's relations with Lena, anticipating that the controversy might be used 'in opposition to action for the relief of the sad conditions in the Congo State'.[70] After leaving Africa, Whitman himself wrote in private letters of the need to stop rumours spreading for fear of harming the cause of reform.[71] Their participation in that cause would then need to be concealed.

Revealing the commingling of private lives, religious values, and humanitarian politics, in correspondence missionaries worried about the reputation of the mission should knowledge of the affair come into the possession of the pro-Congo State propagandists

and opponents of Congo reform. Lena's life comes to the fore of their correspondence as senior missionaries pondered their position vis-à-vis the colonial state, identifying in patriarchal values a shelter from the storm of political commitment. Their solution demanded that Lena's work as a Congo missionary, translator and eyewitness should be quietly forgotten. To the humanitarian hero Casement would go the plaudits for giving voice to the girls and young women of the Ikoko mission.

Conclusion

Though Morel was uneasy with their prioritisation of spiritual arguments over humanitarian ones, church leaders came ever more to prominence in the reform debate. In John and Alice Harris of the CBM, above all, Morel found missionaries whose perspective tallied in large part with his own, relatively secular brand of humanitarianism. As Kevin Grant shows, after the Harrises were seconded to Morel's cause, theirs and others' photographs, lantern lectures and publications were vital to the spread of Congo reform in Britain and the USA.[72] Mission-based propaganda such as Morel's unofficial account of Leopold's Commission of Inquiry into abuses in 1904 exerted pressure on Leopold and his associates. Yet more important to debate in Belgium was the publication of the Jesuit Arthur Vermeesch's *La Question Congolaise* (1906), the fullest expression of public criticism from a Belgian religious leader, which appeared alongside liberal politicians' calls for direct Belgian rule, and was followed by concerted Catholic opposition to the moderate reforms proposed in 1906 by Paul Smet de Nayer. Tensions were eased by a concordat signed by the state and Holy See in 1906, establishing the closer ties between the Catholic Church and state that would outlast Leopold's rule.[73] Though Casement's report mentions only her work as a translator, it was also as a witness and critic that Lena Clark had contributed to these major re-routings of colonialism in the Congo.

On the one hand, the attention of this essay to a single life's tale reveals a quite particular and perhaps unrepresentative configuration of the racial, national, institutional, and gendered determinants of mission work in CFS. On the other hand, it suggests some of the fundamental aspects of Christian belief, which united all missions, Protestant or Catholic, for and against the colonial regime. Missionary life required far greater levels of moral constancy than could be claimed by many individuals whose livelihoods were made in the colonies. As controversy became a watchword in the CFS missionary behaviour was placed under further levels of scrutiny. Morel warned against the evangelisation of Congo reform because of his secular outlook and political priorities, certainly, but also because he perceived that religious rivalry could lead to claims of partisanship and hypocrisy in the context of international relations. Apologists for the CFS indeed conflated the aims of Congo reform with the ambitions of Protestantism.[74] If faced with accusations then the Church would seek primarily to defend its interests, as Lena's case affirms. By the time of the scandal concerning Lena the Protestant missions were so fully embroiled in the anti-Leopold campaign that defence of their interests was one and the same as protection of the Congo reform campaign. It served religious and humanitarian interests to treat her situation with caution.

The sanctimony of the vocation, coupled with a pardoning sense that different codes of conduct, law and record-keeping applied in central Africa, ensured that seldom were missionary misdemeanours aired in public. Comparison of Lena's moment of crisis to

those of other missionaries is telling. Whereas she would be marginalised from the mission, and the historical record, others' personal difficulties have been absorbed into historical knowledge despite their crossing norms of conduct. Prior to the anti-Leopold crusade, for example, interpersonal violence between missionaries and their charges may have been quietly pardoned, if not accepted. In a revealing letter from 1903 Eliza Clark recounts that squabbling between the girls was resolved by Joseph Clark giving 'six of the ring-leaders . . . a good sound whipping'.[75] John Harris rose to the fore of Congo reform movement while never fully refuting the rumour that early in his career he had asked a rubber company official to beat his mission employees with a 'chicotte' whip made of hippopotamus hide.[76]

More directly relevant comparison to Lena's case is found in that of George Grenfell, who had resigned from the BMS in August 1878 having impregnated his young housekeeper Rose Patience Edgerley, a Jamaican stationed in the Cameroons, only to return to mission service after two years, with Edgerley and their children in tow, and rise to fame as a paragon of missionary service.[77] Or again, comparison might be made to the African American W.H. Sheppard, who quit APSM service in disgrace for his extra-marital affairs with African women and the fathering of their children having earlier penned public criticisms of the state. Sheppard's personal life was downplayed in personal and biographical accounts seeking to extol his religious and/or humanitarian virtues.[78] In the instances of these men, breaches of the missionary codes of purity and chastity were accommodated in a dominant narrative of heroic opposition to darker forces, whether those forces be the supposed 'heathenism' of Africa or the savagery of the colonial state. It might be contended that it was their eminence rather than their gender and/or race that helped rehabilitate their reputations, in contrast to Lena and indeed her husband. But eminence was itself often determined by gender, as well as race, in the missionary movement. Patriarchal values proved supple enough in moments of difficulty to defend strong voices.

These processes of rehabilitation and exclusion find their way into the present as popular histories such as *King Leopold's Ghost* credit individuals such as Harris and Sheppard with 'heroism' for their efforts. It is undoubtedly worth reflecting on whether recovering Lena's story in an essay focused on one moment in her life reproduces the very power structures I have identified here, of feminine exceptionalism contrasted within masculine normativity. But I hope that recalling her story in a critical fashion exposes these processes, which are often overlooked or unconsciously reinforced in historical research of missions, not least in the CFS, where much focus has been on missionaries' humanitarian heroics.

Looking across various personal narratives that might complicate dominant narratives of missionary activity in Central Africa, it is clear that denomination, gender, race and nationality played their roles in individual experiences. Ultimately, however, the many points of divergence ought not to obscure the essential beliefs that united all Christian missions in CFS, and sustained them through difficulty. If it is indicative of tensions arising from the atrocities scandal, then Lena's exit from the Congo also illustrates how the missions could adapt to periods of crisis. Emergencies, in fact, could lead the missionaries to renewed faith in their mission and its core ideologies. The family papers of Joseph and Eliza Clark make few references to their adopted daughter after her supposed fall from grace. Yet the impact of the situation can be sensed from

a hardening in Joseph Clark's racially determined opinion on Spelman graduates, for example, when considering the need for reinforcements at the station.[79] An evangelical fervour stirred by the inherent sinfulness of 'man' is evident in one of the few personal letters to mention the scandal: 'We have had lots of proof that the heart of man is full of evil and that we are constantly liable to temptation'.[80] Other pages from this letter, which would seem to discuss Lena or her husband, have been lost. Their absence advises once more how missionaries might have removed or censored complications to their core beliefs, clarifying those beliefs in the process.

While the intensity of the suffering in CFS places it among the worst human catastrophes in modern history, in his book of 1992 the historian of the Baptist Missionary Society Brian Stanley writes that it was not until 'the full enormity of the Nazi holocaust came to light' that 'missionary thinking entered a period of profound re-evaluation which has continued to the present day'.[81] This comparison of colonialism and the Holocaust might seem insensitive to the horrors of the former, yet this appears to be precisely Stanley's point. The faith of individuals may have been shaken by exposure to Leopoldian colonialism and its ironic and materialistic reassessment of the western 'progress' and 'civilisation' offered by Christian instruction, for example, but the missionary movement continued unabated. From Brazzaville in 1900, Augouard could denounce colonial land-acquisition as 'theft' and acknowledge that more Africans had died at the hands of Europeans than in precolonial warfare, yet maintain that civilisation and Christianity provided 'compensation' against all excesses.[82] As John Harris wrote confidently to the Council of the CBM, the involvement of Protestants in the Congo reform cause might engender in the public 'greater confidence in missionaries and in missionary enterprise … Do you not think it highly probable that the near future will demand a considerable advance in missionary effort on the Congo?'.[83] Whether or not the public would be roused, Lena's case shows how missions steeled themselves in their conviction as to the value of a redeemed life. In her own 'Annual Report for 1903' Lena had noted that girls who had married despite the wishes of the mission would not be allowed back to school.[84] Even if only in the form of unspoken memories, or vicarious whispers between roommates, might her life have become a cautionary tale among the new converts to Christianity at Ikoko?

Notes

1. Barbour to Whitman, 13 July 1904; Whitman to Barbour, 4 October 1904, Whitman papers, American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS), Atlanta, GA.
2. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed, 2002), p. 5.
3. For example, David Lagergren, *Mission and State in the Congo*, trans. Owen N. Lee (Lund: Gleerup, 1970); Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992); Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa: The 'White Fathers' during the Colonial Scramble (1892-1914)* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006).
4. One major exception is the extensive, interdisciplinary research of Nancy Rose Hunt. For example, see Nancy Rose Hunt, '"Single Ladies on the Congo": Protestant Missionary Tensions and Voices', *Women's Studies International Forum* 13.4 (1990): 395–403; Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalisation, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Hunt, 'An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition', *Cultural Anthropology* 23.2 (2008): 220–52;

Hunt, *A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo* (Duke University Press, 2015). See also the study of family archives and wider histories in Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, 'Vivre (à) la mission: Mémoires individuelles, histoire collective', in Vincent Viaene, Bram Cleys and Jan de Maeyer (eds). *Religion, colonisation et décolonisation au Congo, 1885–1960* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 209–37. Away from the central African context, Emily J. Manktelow's *Missionary Families: Race, Gender and Generation on the Spiritual Frontier* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2013) illustrates the importance of the family in understanding missionary history.

5. Kevin Grant, 'Christian Critics of Empire: Missionaries, Lantern Lectures, and the Congo Reform Campaign in Britain', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29. 2 (2001): 27–58.
6. Among the many studies of Congo reform iconography from which this point might be drawn, see Kevin Grant, 'The Limits of Exposure: Atrocity Photographs in the Congo Reform Campaign', in Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (eds), *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 64–88; Grant, 'Anti-slavery, Refugee Relief, and the Missionary Origins of Humanitarian Photography, ca. 1900-1960', *History Compass* 15.5 (2017): 1–24.
7. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1999); see also Pagan Kennedy, *Black Livingstone: A True Tale of Adventure in the Nineteenth-Century Congo* (New York: Viking, 2002); Óli Jacobsen, *Daniel J. Danielsen and the Congo: Missionary Campaigns and Atrocity Photographs* (Brethren Archivists and Historians Network, 2014).
8. Alice Kessler-Harris, 'Why Biography?', *American Historical Review* 114.3 (June 2009): 625–30 (626).
9. Kessler-Harris, 'Why Biography?', 630. The primary sources for this study are mainly located in the archives of the American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, GA, and Lena Clark's alumnae folder in the archives of Spelman College, Atlanta, GA.
10. Rev. E.E. Jones, 'Why Am I a Missionary?', *Baptist Missionary Magazine* [*BMM*] 84 (1904): 131.
11. For a fuller account of the history of the Congo Free State see: Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*; David van Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People*, trans. Sam Garrett (London: Fourth Estate, 2015); Kevin Grant, *The Congo Free State and the New Imperialism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017). For an account centred on the disruptions to and adaptations by pre-existing societies, see Robert Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500-1891* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
12. Catherine Ann Cline, 'The Church and the Movement for Congo Reform', *Church History* 32.1 (1963): 46–56 (46).
13. Reuben A. Loffman, *Church, State and Colonialism in Southeastern Congo, 1890–1962* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). On Jesuits' little-known criticisms of colonial policy, see Wim Francois, 'De onderzoekscommissie voor Congo (1904-1905) en de missies van de jezuïeten', *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 1–2 (2007): 79–142; and Anne-Sophie Gijs, 'Les droits des autochtones: Un enjeu dans les relations jésuites-Etat, fin 19e-début 20e siècle', in *Religion, colonisation et décolonisation au Congo*, pp. 91–114.
14. Language acquisition was vital to mission outreach. For example, Ruth Slade states that by learning Tschiluba the ASPM's W.M. Morrison potentially unlocked a catchment of some 2 million speakers. *King Leopold's Congo: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Congo Independent State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 157. Far from neutrally observing pre-existing systems of communication, however, missions actively reworked them, leading in turn to new developments of defiance and autonomy which themselves shaped the language. Michael Meeuwis, 'Involvement in Language: The Role of *Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae* in the History of Lingala', *Catholic Historical Review* 95.2 (2009): 240–60.
15. Stanley, *Baptist Missionary Society*, p. 122.

16. For example, Henry Richards, *The Pentecost on the Congo* (New York: Middleditch, 1891); W. Holman Bentley, *Pioneering on the Congo*, 2 vols. (London: Religious Tract Society, 1900); Harry H. Johnston, *George Grenfell and the Congo*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1908).
17. Mrs JRM Stephens, *The Story of the Congo Mission for Young People* [1911] (London: Carey Press, 1917), p. 7.
18. On the latter point see Sylvia M. Jacobs, '"Their Special Mission": African American Women as Missionaries to the Congo, 1884-1937', in Jacobs (ed), *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa* (London: Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982), pp. 155–76; Hunt, '"Single Ladies"'.
19. For example, V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (Yale University Press, 1995).
20. As described in Théophile Conneau, *Captain Canot: An African Slaver*, edited by Brantz Mayer [1854] (New York, Arno Press, 1968); Richard Drake, *Revelations of a Slave Smuggler* [1860] (New York: Metro Books, 1972). See also Bruce Chatwin, *The Viceroy of Ouidah* (London: J Cape, 1980).
21. Craven to Guinness, 9 May 1883, Craven papers, ABHS.
22. Clark to Guinness, 3 April 1883, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS.
23. Craven to Guinness, 13 January 1883, Craven papers, ABHS.
24. Lena Clark, 'An Autobiography', *Spelman Messenger*, May 1895: 2. Craven's correspondence records the bills for the Youngbloed girls without mentioning Lena. Craven to Mrs Guinness 5 July 1883, Craven papers, ABHS. Lena reached Palabala in July 1883 according to Craven to Guinness 23 July 1883, Craven papers, ABHS. Besides her 'Autobiography' for the *Spelman Messenger* Lena also penned 'The Value of Missionary Training to Any Young Woman', *Spelman Messenger*, Jan 1896, and 'From Ikoko Station, S.W. Africa', *Spelman Messenger*, May 1899.
25. William Clarence-Smith, 'The Redemption of Child Slaves by Christian Missionaries in Central Africa, 1878-1914', in Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller (eds.) *Child Slaves in the Modern World* (Athens, OH.: Ohio University Press, 2011), pp. 173–190; Jelmer Vos, *Kongo in the Age of Empire 1860–1913: The Breakdown of a Moral Order* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), p. 72; Phyllis M. Martin, *Catholic Women of Congo-Brazzaville: Mothers and Sisters in Troubled Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p. 46.
26. *BMM* 64 (1885): 75-6. See also *BMM* 65 (1886): 106; *BMM* 70 (1890): 76.
27. Lena Clark, 'Autobiography'.
28. Lena Clark, 'Autobiography'; *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly* 17–18 (1895-96): 399; Clark to Gregory, 12 September 1889, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS.
29. Joseph Clark to Stephanie Clark, 14 December 1892, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.
30. See Zana Aziza Etambala, 'Congolese Children at the Congo House in Colwyn Bay (North Wales, Great-Britain) at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *Afrika Focus* 3.3-4 (1987): 237–85; Robert Burroughs, *Black Students in Imperial Britain: The African Training Institute, Colwyn Bay, 1889-1911* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022).
31. Nora Gordon to Duncan, 21 May 1895, Nora Gordon papers, ABHS; 'Congo Mission Circle', *Spelman Messenger* 14.7 (1893): 2–3.
32. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988), pp. 65-6; Eliza Clark to Stephanie Clark, 1 January 1896, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.
33. Lagergren, *Mission and State*; Samuel H. Nelson, *Colonialism in the Congo Basin, 1880-1940* (Athens, OH: Ohio Center for International Studies, 1994).
34. Clark to Barbour, 11 April 1900, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS; Lena Clark, 'Annual Report for 1903', Spelman College Archives, Atlanta, GA, Lena Clark Alumnae folder.
35. Clark to Mrs Safford, n.d. [loose insertion in letter-book 1888-1910]; Eliza Clark to Stephanie Clark, 14 September 1898, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.

36. Clark to Safford, 11 October 1899; see also Clark to Safford, 25 February 1898, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS. Lena's salary was one quarter that of the white, male mission leaders in the Congo. *BMM* 79 (1899): 467.
37. *BMM* 81 (1901): 468-80 (478-9).
38. Clark to Barbour, 30 January 1900, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS.
39. Clark to Barbour, 11 April 1900.
40. Joseph Clark to Baynes, 23 July 1896, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS; deposition 76, Eliza Clark, Ikoko, 18 November 1904, African Archive, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels, Commission d'enquete de 1903-04, AE528 (349), liasse II.
41. Clark, 'From Ikoko Station'.
42. L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of Belgian Africa, 1884-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 27; Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo, 1908-1960* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), p. 3.
43. Perhaps the surest sign of a Catholic preference was Leopold's invitation to the English Catholic Mill Hill Fathers to enter the Congo in 1904, just as British official policy was hardening against the monarch. David Northrup, 'A Church in Search of a State: Catholic Missions in Eastern Zaire, 1879-1930', *Journal of Church and State* 30.2 (1988): 309–19 (316); Ruth Slade, 'King Leopold II and the Attitude of English and American Catholics Towards the Anti-Congolese Campaign', *Zaire* 11 (1957): 593–612 (596).
44. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p. 6.
45. Qtd. in Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, p. 7.
46. Qtd. in Cline, 'Church': 50.
47. Ruth M. Slade, *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State (1878-1908)* (Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, 1959), pp. 170–5. On the *ferme chappelle*, see Northrup, 'Church', 315; Bruno de Meulder, 'Mavula: An African Heterotopia in Kwango, 1895–1911', *Journal of Architectural Education* 52.1 (1998): 20–9.
48. Robert Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 75.
49. Burroughs, *Travel Writing*, pp. 75–7. Hunt examines the pressures on one BMS station, at Yakusu, to remain tight-lipped in *A Colonial Lexicon*, pp. 46, 57–8.
50. Lena Clark, 'Autobiography'.
51. *Spelman Messenger*, May 1895: 4.
52. Eliza Clark to Mrs Stowell, 6 August 1896, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.
53. Mathilde Frederickson to Miss Read, 16 May 1933, copy, SCA, Lena Clark Alumnae Folder.
54. Roger Casement, 'The Congo Report' [1903], reprinted in *The Eyes of Another Race: Roger Casement's Congo Report and 1903 Diary*, ed. Séamas Ó Síocháin and Michael O' Sullivan (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003), pp. 45–177, 141–58.
55. I explore these testimonies at length in Robert Burroughs, *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform: The Burden of Proof* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 62–8.
56. Hunt, 'Acoustic Register'; Hunt, *Nervous State*.
57. See Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, 'Introduction: of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars', in Bassnett and Trivedi (eds.), *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–18.
58. Douglas Howland, 'The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography', *History & Theory* 41. 1 (2003): 45-60 (45).
59. Bassnett and Trivedi, 'Introduction', 3. Lawrence Ventuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995).
60. Whitman to Barbour, 4 October 1904, Whitman papers, ABHS.
61. Sims to Barbour, 13 June 1904, Sims papers, ABHS; Barbour to Whitman, 1 November 1904, Whitman papers, ABHS.
62. C. Lena Whitman, *Litafi wa fyẽ Karatu Jukun: Reading Lessons in Jukun (Donga)* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1915).
63. Whitman to Miss Tapley, 14 April 1920, SCA, Lena Clark Alumnae Folder.

64. Burroughs, *African Testimony*, pp. 75–103. I presented this case at the Belgian Parliament's Special Commission on the colonial past hearing on 'The role of the monarchy', 25 April 2022. The transcript is available at Dekamer.be, https://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/pdf_sections/pri/congo/2022%2004%2025_Burroughs_Janssens.pdf (accessed 23 June 2022).
65. Berber Bevernage, 'The Making of the Congo Question: Truth-telling, Denial and "Colonial Science" in King Leopold's Commission of Inquiry on the Rubber Atrocities in the Congo Free State (1904-1905)', *Rethinking History* 22. 2 (2018): 203–38.
66. Deposition number 75, Lena Fredericka, Ikoko, 18 November 1904, African Archive, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels, Commission d'enquete de 1903-04, AE528 (349), liasse II. My translation. In this text Lena's age is given as 30 hence my earlier assertion that she was born in 1874.
67. Congo Reform Association, *Evidence laid before the Congo Commission of Inquiry [. . .]* (Liverpool: J. Richardson, 1905).
68. See report by Lena Clark for Editor of Christian Herald, 30 November 1904, which appears to have been forwarded by Joseph Clark to the ABMU Secretary, Barbour, Joseph Clark Congo papers, ABHS.
69. Sims to Barbour, 29 August 1904. See also Barbour to Sims, 1 November 1904, Sims papers, ABHS.
70. Barbour to Whitman, 1 November 1904, Whitman papers, ABHS.
71. Whitman to Haggard, 19 July 1905, Whitman papers, ABHS.
72. Grant, 'Christian Critics'.
73. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword*, pp. 14–15.
74. Cline, 'Church': 51.
75. Eliza Clark to Stephanie Clark, 3 February 1903, Clark personal papers, ABHS.
76. Lagergren, *Mission and State*, p. 279.
77. Stanley, *Baptist Missionary Society*, pp. 119–21.
78. For example, W.H. Sheppard, *Presbyterian Pioneers in Congo* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, n.d.).
79. 'There is a "half-caste" girl from Spelman Seminary who wishes to come to us . . . But generally speaking a white woman would be better.' Joseph Clark to Stephanie Clark, 17 December 1905, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.
80. Clark to Gordon, 3 May 1905, Joseph Clark personal papers, ABHS.
81. Stanley, *Baptist Missionary Society*, p. 167.
82. Qtd. in Cline, 'Church', 52. Augouard would later straightforwardly support Leopold, as discussed in Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, 'King Leopold II's Last Laugh: The Evolution of Mgr. Augouard's Attitudes towards the Congo Free State (1890–1908)', *The Catholic Historical* Review 105. 4 (2019): 673-706.
83. Harris to Council of CBM, 1904. Qtd. in Grant, 'Christian Critics': 35.
84. Lena Clark, 'Annual Report for 1903'.

Acknowledgments

In its latter stages, this research benefitted from The Leverhulme Trust under Grant RF-2019-200 \3. I am thankful to Rachel Rich and Charlotte Mertens for reading earlier drafts of this work, and to Angus Mitchell for discussing with me of one of the images in this article. Thank you to Holly A. Smith and Kassandra Ware for sharing information from the Spelman College Archives. I acknowledge permission to use images and quotations from the collection of the American Baptist Historical Society. I am grateful to Liverpool University Press for allowing me to use parts of my forthcoming monograph in this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Robert Burroughs is Professor and Head of English at Leeds Beckett University, UK. His books include Travel Writing and Atrocities (Routledge 2011), The Suppression of the Atlantic Slave Trade (co-edited, Manchester UP 2015), African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform (Routledge 2018), and Black Students in Imperial Britain (Liverpool UP, 2022, forthcoming). Burroughs's articles have appeared in leading journals including Victorian Literature and Culture, Journal of Victorian Culture, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Slavery & Abolition, and Postcolonial Studies. He is a recipient of funding from the AHRC, The Leverhulme Trust (Early Career Fellowship), and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, and in 2019-20 was a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellow.

ORCID

Robert Burroughs http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8048-1312