Shifting frameworks for understanding otherness
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Publication date
2020

Document Version
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Shifting Frameworks for Understanding Otherness

The Cape Khoi in pre-1652 European Travelogues,
an Early Modern Latin Letter,

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde
commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen
op dinsdag 2 juni 2020, te 14.00 uur

door
Tycho Aäron Julius Maas
geboren te Eindhoven
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Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen

Dit onderzoek is mede tot stand gekomen dankzij financiële steun van de Europese Commissie (Eurosa+: Europe and South Africa Partnership for Human Development), het Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Hendrik Muller’s Vaderlandsch Fonds, de Van Ewijck Stigting (Kaapstad), en de Suider-Afrikaanse Vereniging vir Neerlandistiek (SAVN).
Acknowledgements

One of the pitfalls while writing this thesis was for me to avoid all too dissident theory at the cost of the material at its centre: text. My supervisors’ resourcefulness and continuous support and honest confidence in the project have been, quite frankly, indispensable. Four years of supervising an extranaeus based in ‘the other’ hemisphere seemed hardly a challenge to the versatility of prof. dr. Ena Jansen and prof. dr. Esther Peeren.

I wish to thank the Erasmus Mundus EUROSA Partnership (‘Europe & South Africa Partnership for Human Development’) for its generous financial support in the incipient stages of this research. It would not have come to further fruition without the aid of the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Hendrik Muller’s Vaderlandsch Fonds, Van Ewijk Foundation, Suider-Afrikaanse Vereniging vir Neerlandistiek (SAVN), and a UvA385 Scholarship. A finishing fellowship at the University of Amsterdam granted me peace of mind during the final stages of the PhD programme.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Stellenbosch University, its staff at the International Office and the library’s Special Collections, and to its department of Afrikaans and Dutch, particularly then-associate professor Ronel Foster. Her encouragement during my MA provided an important impetus for me to start this project. The staff at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, and the Special Collections of the National Library of South Africa proved astute and tireless when it came to my repeated and extensive requests for files, folders, and photocopy permits. The students of the Dutch School in Cape Town and Hout Bay International School offered me an escape into the outside world as their voices put the silent wisdom of the ancients into perspective.

Many other people played a role in bringing this research to bloom, through proof-reading parts of it, by offering valuable critique of my ideas, but first and foremost by bearing with me as I went on a journey that took me to the ends of the earth (and of my stamina), and back. A word of thanks is more than due to Annemarie and Maurits as well as to my friends throughout the bountiful republic – your warm presence nurtured my sense of feeling at home instead of walking alone. Potchefstroom has welcomed me into the world of Living Latin, and the Boytjies & Girltjies and Wacky Weekenders were always there to support my soul with wining and fine dining – we have never let our schooling interfere with
our education. My final thanks goes to my parents and sister, to Hannah, my family, and my friends back home in the Netherlands. Your patience and understanding waxed and waned over time more than I realise, I am sure. Your support means more than I can say.

It has been a privilege to live at the footstep of a mountain and of great advantage to this thesis to be able to work in situ. The Cape has provided a relaxing and invigorating environment for me to work on this project and brought an urgency to its argument. A final year in Amsterdam allowed me to fine-tune it.

_Caveat emptor._

Amsterdam, April 2020
A Note on Nomenclature

In this thesis, I use terms that form part of the history of racial classification in South Africa without any implication that such terms have a scientific basis or that they can be employed unproblematically.

European settlers called the pastoral people of the western and northern Cape, nowadays referred to as ‘Khoikhoi’ (‘people of people’), ‘Hottentots’, and referred to hunter-gatherers present throughout what is now South Africa, commonly called ‘San’ now, as ‘Bushmen’. These peoples are closely related and are known collectively as the ‘Khoi-San’ or ‘Khoisan’. Only small populations survive in South Africa today. In discussing historical sources, I use the source’s terminology in referring to native peoples, adding quotation marks to register their status as stigmatising or ‘othering’ colonial labels. The colonial historical sources use many different names for the same tribe or people. The Goringhaicona, a cattle-less people, are, for example, referred to as ‘Strandlopers’ by Van Riebeeck in the Daghregister, but also called ‘Watermans’ or ‘Vismans’. Their leader (captain) is referred to as Herrij, Harry, and Herrie, or called by his indigenous name, Autshumao.

I use the term ‘Khoi’ to collectively refer to the native inhabitants of the Cape whom the Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries typically called ‘Hottentotten’. The word ‘Khoe’ is first found in Van Riebeeck’s Daghregister, in January 1653, as ‘Quena’, where –na is the plural suffix. In South African scholarship, a variety of spellings are used across academic disciplines. I use the modernised spelling ‘Khoi’.

More information about the tribes that inhabited the Cape peninsula and what they were called by the colonisers can be found in, among others, Richard Elphick’s Kraal and Castle. Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa (1977) and Gabriel Nienaber’s Khoekhoense stamname (1989).
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