

Biography and the Making of Transnational Imperialism:

Karl Gützlaff on the China Coast, 1831–1851

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This essay challenges the ‘methodological territorialism’ and ‘methodological nationalism’ prevalent in recent studies of imperial biographies, examining the role of the German Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1801–1851) in establishing a transnational form of free-trade imperialism in China. A native of Prussia and a missionary by training, Gützlaff was first posted in the Netherlands East Indies before associating himself with British interests on the China coast. However, his loyalty was not limited to one imperialist power. In the 1840s, Gützlaff promoted German trade with China, and at certain points of time he also supported American as well as Scandinavian interests. In addition to making a name for himself as a cultural broker and promoter of free trade and diplomatic representation, he also became involved with various forms of imperialism, from the more fluid commercial variant to the more formalised power structures of territorial rule. The case of Gützlaff therefore lends itself to a reflection about the permeable and shifting boundaries of empires. Moreover, it calls for a reassessment of German imperialism in the period before 1871, showing how Germany’s involvement with ‘Western’ global expansion was palpable and not merely confined to the realm of colonial fantasy.

Keywords: Karl Gützlaff; biography; transnational history; imperialism; China; empire; Hong Kong; Britain; Germany; German colonial history; cultural broker

The ‘imperial turn’ of the last 20 or so years has brought about a new approach to the writing of imperial biography. Using the biographical genre, historians have stressed the mobility of individuals across imperial spaces in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In mapping the ‘careering’ of men and women as they move from one imperial location to another during various phases in their lives, such studies have fleshed out the sheer scope, vastness and diversity of colonial empires in the modern era, as well as the impact of individual learning processes on the formulation and execution of imperialistic strategies. In

so doing, they have highlighted not only the exchanges between individual colonies and the metropolises, but also between colonies themselves.¹

This approach rests on three premises: To begin with, empires are seen as preceding imperial lives. Spatial career mobility within them is thought of as conditional upon the pre-existence of imperial infrastructures. Although recent biographies regularly examine protagonists moving along the fringes of empires, persons involved in the *making* of empire are not usually chosen as objects of analysis. Moreover, empires are conceived of as territorial and spatial units. There is, in other words, a ‘methodological territorialism’ implicitly operating in these studies which equates imperialism with territorial colonial rule.² This is compounded by the preponderance of a ‘methodological nationalism’. By this I mean that the ‘Western’ empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries appear as mere extensions of metropolitan (nation-)states, even though the selection of the ‘objects’ of biographical study often reflects the multiethnic character of metropolitan societies.³ The result is somewhat paradoxical: we already know that the metropolitan population in the empires – such as merchants, bureaucrats or the military – was indeed multinational.⁴ Despite the recent interest in inter-imperial interactions and transfers, however, we know a great deal less about how individuals negotiated, crossed or straddled the boundaries between different imperial interests, be it in fixed territorial settings or in more fluid conditions such as in China.⁵ Such studies are imperative, the more so as they complement existing research on individual mobility in its transnational and global dimensions.⁶

This essay presents a case study, examining the biography of the Prussian Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803–1851). It addresses his manifold roles as missionary, explorer, prolific writer, linguistic prodigy, interpreter and autodidactic scholar, spymaster and colonial official. Almost as varied as his personae was the list of names he went by: he was born Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff, but came to be known in the English-speaking world as Charles Gutzlaff. Even more importantly, Gützlaff styled himself Guo Shilie in his communication with Chinese. His Chinese pen names, *Aihanzhe* (which can be translated as ‘the China lover’ and was latinised in some Western-language texts as *Philosinensis*, transliterated as ‘Gaihan’ in others) and *Shande* (‘supreme virtue’), also suggest a play with transcultural identities that Gützlaff apparently also took up in instances of cross-dressing, for example in the famous painting by George Chinnery (1774–1852) showing him in the garb of a Chinese sailor.⁷ This appropriation of cultural symbols facilitated Gützlaff’s positioning himself as a cultural broker⁸ between the empire of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and various ‘Western’ imperial interests on the South China coast, most notably British and German.

An analysis of Gützlaff's scintillating character as well as his varied career makes an important contribution to our understanding of how individuals not only consecutively but also simultaneously (if to varying degrees) served the imperial interests of several 'Western' countries in nineteenth-century China, without presupposing that interactions between these empires were a necessary prerequisite of such a straddling of boundaries. Such an approach requires a reflection on the character and the delimitations of empires.

This is because firstly, Gützlaff became involved with various dimensions of empire. It is important that we conceive of empires less as territorial formations than as sets of political, economic and socio-cultural strategies. For the European imperialist powers, territorial colonialism was only one option among others and ever since Gallagher and Robinson's classical study on 'free-trade imperialism,' scholars have looked at the more flexible arrangements adopted by imperialist powers as part of a process drawing regions across the globe into the orbit of a 'Western'-dominated world economy. Not only through military force and legal constraints was such economic imperialism upheld, but more regularly through the quotidian flows of commodities, technology, information and capital—in sum: through the activities not only of states, but also of private actors. These various approaches to empire-formation should not be regarded as opposed to one another, but rather as a continuum of complementary options.⁹ As we shall see, Gützlaff's career encompassed both the promotion of free trade and ephemeral as well as more permanent attempts at establishing territorialised hierarchies of colonial power.

Secondly, analysing the various ways in which Gützlaff crossed, and indeed straddled, imperial boundaries requires a reflection on the nature of these delimitations. As Ann Laura Stoler has reminded us, 'imperial formations are not now and never have been clearly bordered and bounded polities'; instead, they thrive on inconsistencies and ambiguities.¹⁰ In keeping with the understanding of empire outlined above, I conceive of boundaries not so much in terms of territorial and geopolitical demarcations, although the crossing of these is implied in my use of the term. More importantly, I will draw on the observation that boundaries acquire their meaning only through concrete social practice.¹¹ My emphasis is therefore on the way various imperialist countries, through an interplay between state and private actors, demarcated their specific interests and on the strategies arising out of these, be they focused on territorial rule or economic advantages. The China coast, where Gützlaff relocated from the Dutch colonial empire in Southeast Asia, accommodated various imperial formations, allowing for a remarkable degree of overlap and convergence as well as competition between them.

Thirdly, the fact that Gützlaff was born in Germany (or Prussia, to be more precise) and at a certain point in his life involved himself with German as well as with British interests in China, calls into question some conventional assumptions about German imperialism. To speak of German imperialism in the period under study here, the 1830s and 1840s, might raise quite a few eyebrows. Undoubtedly, a politically unified Germany did not exist at the time, the German Confederation of 1815 being a highly fragmented entity. But the terms ‘German’ and ‘Germany’ continued to denote a higher-order cultural and increasingly a national belonging (and are used in the essay in this sense); moreover, the Customs Union of 1834 had drawn its member states into a common economic framework. However, German colonial historiography is still under the spell of what Sebastian Conrad has called the ‘*Schutzgebiete* (protectorates) paradigm’, with the bulk of studies narrowly identifying German imperialism with Germany’s territorial colonial empire.¹² This is compounded by what I refer to as the *Reich* paradigm—the implicit presupposition that Germany’s political unification in 1871 was a necessary precondition for its becoming an imperialist power. Even recent studies placing German colonialism into the broader expansionist patterns brought about by increasing globalisation focus exclusively on the Wilhelmine period.¹³

When looking at pre-unification Germany, it is still widely assumed that colonial activities were limited to mere fantasies reflecting a desire for catching up with established colonial powers.¹⁴ Concrete manifestations of expansion, such as the ephemeral rule of German merchant houses or princes over territories in Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa (and their concomitant involvement in the slave trade) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or the organization of German emigration to Texas and Brazil in the 1840s have at best been relegated to the status of ‘colonial test runs’.¹⁵ Instead of acknowledging these efforts, laterally, as parts of a wider and indeed transnational imperialist project, scholars have thus situated them nationally, either within a linear trajectory culminating in the establishment of the so-called protectorates after 1884, or by altogether disputing their continuity into the post-unification period.¹⁶

However, recent scholarship undermines the teleology of the political unification paradigm prevalent in the research on German imperialism. Studies on countries with negligible colonial possessions such as Sweden, without a governmental colonial policy such as Switzerland or even nations without a state of their own, such as the Poles, have highlighted the significance and dimensions of a ‘colonialism without colonies’ that required neither territorial rule nor the backing by a powerful, unified (nation-)state.¹⁷ In the case of several German governments’ emerging involvement in China, we will see that it resulted from a

convergence of initiatives from above as well as below. German merchants and their respective governments benefited from the so-called ‘open door principle’ granting access to the China market to all interested nations—a transcendence of national egotisms rooted in the British policy of free trade.¹⁸ It was underpinned by a series of so-called ‘unequal treaties,’ foisted onto China since the first Opium War (1840–1842) and enforced by ‘Western’ diplomatic representatives, with military backing if necessary. Up until the First World War, ‘Western’ imperialism in China was treaty-based, geared towards free trade and transnational.

It is precisely this context in which Gützlaff thrived and carved out a place for himself as an intermediary between varied ‘Western’ interests and East Asia. The essay will trace this process in a broadly chronological manner, beginning with a brief survey of Gützlaff’s origins and early career. In the three following sections, I discuss the Prussian missionary’s involvement with British imperialism in China, addressing not only the various ways in which he rendered himself useful (as well as the limits of his influence), but also to the manner in which he professed his loyalty to the British cause. The next two sections deal with a less well-known but crucial aspect of Gützlaff’s life-story: his role in promoting German (and other) interests in China following the First Opium War. Throughout the essay, the focus will be on Gützlaff’s secular roles; I will refer to his evangelistic activities, which continued alongside these until his death, only to the extent that they were relevant for his promoting empire, in both word and deed. In this sense, the biographical approach adopted here is admittedly selective.

Gützlaff’s Early Career: From the Dutch East Indies to the China Coast

Nobody could have predicted an extraordinary career for the only son of the master tailor Johann Jakob Gützlaff (1767–1825) from the small Pomeranian town of Pyritz (now Pyrzyce in Poland).¹⁹ Gützlaff’s childhood world was self-sufficient and constrained, and although he was able to attend the local school (where he is reported to have displayed an early knack for geography and languages) for a number of years, little chance for advancement was offered him. It was a fortuitous encounter with King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (reigned 1797–1840) in 1821 that brought about a dramatic turn in Gützlaff’s life. The king, apparently impressed by the young man’s abilities, arranged for him to be accepted into Johannes Jänicke’s (1748–1827) mission school in Berlin the following year. After Gützlaff had completed the course, Jänicke placed him in the seminar of the Netherlands Mission Society

(Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap, NZG) in Rotterdam for three years of further training. Both institutions equipped Gützlaff with the modicum of formal and theological education that mission schools could offer, although intellectually the young missionary was very much self-taught.²⁰

In the summer of 1826, Gützlaff was dispatched, along with a handful of young missionaries, to Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies, from where he was to move on to Sumatra. At the time of Gützlaff's arrival, the island was an unstable and war-ridden frontier zone where the Dutch exercised little control. It is thus unsurprising that the instability of the situation prevented the German missionary from reaching his destination.²¹ Instead, he spent a rather miserable one and a half years in Singapore and on the island of Bintan in the Riau archipelago, eventually relocating to Bangkok in Siam in the summer of 1828.

Under the influence of the British missionary Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), whom he had first met in Batavia, Gützlaff took the decision that was to alter the course of his life, as he began to concentrate his evangelizing efforts on the Chinese residents of the Siamese capital and soon on China proper, acquiring in the process an impressive fluency in both written and spoken Chinese, including various dialects.²² As a consequence, he cut loose from the NZG, although this was a gradual process rather than a momentous decision, and established himself as a freelance missionary. No doubt his association with his British fellow workers Medhurst and Jacob Tomlin (1793–1880), and his consecutive marriages to three Englishwomen²³ contributed to drawing Gützlaff closer to the British cause. This had a profound impact on his involvement with imperialism and colonialism, as we shall now see.

Gützlaff's Travels and Advocacy of Free Trade

In December 1831, Gützlaff took up residence in Macao. His arrival coincided with the beginning of a decade that ushered in dramatic changes to the 'Canton system', which the Qing government had imposed to regulate foreign trade in the mid-eighteenth century. Under this system, 'Western' merchants were only allowed to trade in the one port of Guangzhou or Canton in South China; they were also restricted to transactions with thirteen Chinese firms, referred to in Cantonese as 'hong' (Mandarin: *hang*). This means that 'Westerners' could neither look for the most lucrative markets nor directly negotiate with producers to obtain lower prices—in particular for the most sought-after commodity, tea.²⁴

In the previous decades, the British government had twice tried to break new ground in its relations with the Qing Empire. But both the Macartney mission of 1792 and that of William, Baron Amherst (1773–1857) in 1816 had failed to establish a formal diplomatic representation in China and achieve a relaxation of trade regulations.²⁵ While the government in Westminster continued to appease the Chinese side in order to maintain a smooth running of the tea trade, ‘Western’ merchants became more and more impatient with the restrictions on commerce. The replacement of the East India Company’s monopoly with a trade representative of the British Crown—William John, Lord Napier (1786–1834)—in 1833–34 brought about a restructuring of commercial patterns and led to a first standoff with the Qing administration.²⁶ On the other hand, influential circles within the Chinese bureaucracy became increasingly determined to stamp out the opium imports by merchants from the ‘West’, which they regarded both as a moral evil and (in all probability wrongly) as the root cause of a severe monetary crisis that hit China in the late 1820s.²⁷ The Qing government had outlawed opium consumption repeatedly since 1729 and under the influence of the moral school of Confucianism banned the opium trade in 1821 and again in 1836, precipitating a confrontation with the British that culminated in the First Opium War.

After his arrival in Macao, Gützlaff became involved with the changes in trade relations in various ways. In 1834, he was appointed Secretary to the British Superintendent of Trade, but his informal contributions were of greater consequence. The first of these was as a companion of British merchants travelling along the China coast in deliberate attempts at undercutting the ‘Canton system’. Like ‘Western’ merchants, missionaries such as Gützlaff found the doors of China closed to their activities, Christianity having been outlawed by the Qing Emperor in 1724. Sharing a dissatisfaction with the status quo, both groups thus became natural allies of sorts, with missionaries providing the linguistic expertise, merchants the financial resources and means of transport.²⁸ Having first travelled along the China coast on board a Chinese junk, Gützlaff undertook his next and arguably most important voyage in support of a commercial venture. In 1832, the East India Company (EIC) fitted out a ship, appropriately called the *Lord Amherst*, with Gützlaff serving as interpreter to the supercargo, Hugh Hamilton Lindsay (1802–1881). The expedition was to find new markets for ‘Western’ produce, and with a mixture of persuasion, bluff, and outright provocation occasionally managed to wrest concessions from local officials. Despite the little overall progress the mission achieved, the China merchants and their supporters drew an optimistic conclusion: when met with firmness and resolution, the Chinese would yield ground to foreigners.²⁹ This

became the rallying cry of the China lobby in Parliament against a British government and public that desired nothing but to maintain normal trade relations with China.³⁰

In the following years, Gützlaff repeatedly hooked up with British opium smugglers such as the merchants William Jardine (1784–1843) and James Matheson (1796–1878), who had lured him with the prospect of donations for his mission and literary work. Gützlaff was aware of the (alleged) evils of opium consumption, having started to cure addicts already during his time in Bangkok, and he claimed to have undertaken the first of these journeys only ‘after much consultation with others, and a conflict in my own mind.’³¹ Gützlaff’s last coastal voyage, on which he embarked in 1835 with the American missionary Edwin Stevens (1802–1837), and G. J. Gordon, the secretary of the Calcutta Tea Company, was an attempt to gain immediate access to tea-growers in the Fujian hill country in southeast China. Despite resistance from local officials, the group managed to obtain some specimen seeds, which were transported to India, but proved unnecessary in the long run, after the British began cultivating native Indian tea plants in 1838.³²

There was a postscript to Gützlaff’s travels in British service when in 1837, he took part in a predominantly American venture aboard the brig *Morrison* to open Japan to free trade, using the repatriation of Japanese castaways as a pretext. The voyage ended in failure, as the Japanese authorities refused to enter into negotiations and their coastal batteries opened fire on the ship, forcing its crew to abandon the mission.³³ What the episode illuminates, among other things, is that even after formally entering British service, Gützlaff was involved with the activities of other nations and that his ambition extended beyond China. This impression is reinforced by the formal arrangements, as the Chinese secretary had to join the expedition a private person, not as a representative of the British Crown. On the other hand, the readiness with which Gützlaff’s leave was granted points to a certain convergence of diverse imperial interests in East Asia.

It is important to note that Gützlaff’s travels, despite their importance, were not exactly unique. Other missionaries, such as his long-time associate, Medhurst, and one-time fellow traveller, Stevens, also ventured along the China coast. Although their journey served evangelistic purposes and they refrained from involvement in opium smuggling, they too resorted to ruse in their dealings with Qing mandarins.³⁴

Gützlaff’s second role, as a propagandist of free trade, grew out of his travels and equally served ‘Western’ and specifically British mercantile interests, addressing audiences in both Britain and China. In his English-language writings from the 1830s, he reiterated two main arguments. The first was that unimpeded commercial intercourse would be beneficial not only

to the ‘West’, but even more to China itself. This was because China, once at least on a par with Europe, had fallen far behind in the meantime, whereas the Europeans’ ‘spirit of improvement’ had made them ‘umpires of the world’.³⁵ Within this context, Gützlaff construed a special mission for Britain, which can be seen as an expression of allegiance to the British cause:

No nation on earth has done so much for the benefit of mankind, or upon so extensive a scale, as the inhabitants of the favoured British isles. Humanity and the glorious cause of Christianity have gained more since the English have spread themselves over the globe, than during all the ages since the reign of Constantine.³⁶

However, Gützlaff suggested that out of cultural arrogance and conceit, the Chinese Emperor and his officials were bent on preventing and restricting mutually advantageous relations between China and the ‘West’. This was his second argument. Indeed, as Lydia Liu has argued, Gützlaff’s published travelogue of the *Amherst* voyage was a major turning point in Sino-‘Western’ relations in being the first nineteenth-century text to render the term *Yi*, which Chinese officials had used in their negotiations with the expedition, as ‘barbarians’—whereas previous authors had opted for the more neutral translation ‘foreigners’.³⁷ Gützlaff can therefore be placed at the origin of the ‘Western’ desire to make China ‘perfectly equal’ by crushing its sense of superiority, an idea underlying much of the violent imperialist ‘pedagogy’ that effectively subjected China to foreign domination in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁸

On the other hand, Gützlaff’s suggestions on how to break the deadlock of relations with the Qing Empire varied over time. In his *Sketch of Chinese History*, published in 1834, he argues that ‘*compulsion*’ is ‘the only reasonable way of gaining advantages’.³⁹ This was very much in line with the British China merchants’ campaign for a more aggressive policy towards China in the wake of the Napier incident.⁴⁰ However, in *China Opened*, published in 1838 and very much the sum of his voyages and studies on Chinese geography, politics, society and culture, he expresses his hope

that sooner or later, an amicable and very extensive intercourse, *founded upon mutual advantage*, will be established; so that man may converse with his fellow-man, without being stigmatized, and called by opprobrious epithets, and denied admission because he is a foreigner.⁴¹

Imparting ‘Western’ knowledge will be a solution leading out of the impasse and helping realise China’s potential for ‘becoming one of the first nations in the world’.⁴² To this end,

Gützlaff took an active part in the ‘information war’ in which missionaries and merchants collaborated (again) to break the barriers allegedly erected by the Qing and enlighten the Chinese public directly about the outside world.⁴³ The Prussian missionary was a founding member and Chinese Secretary of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK), a philanthropic organisation dominated by opium merchants. He was also the first editor and later a regular contributor to its Chinese-language magazine *Dong-Xiyang kao meiyue tongjizhuan* (The East-West Examiner and Monthly Magazine).⁴⁴ Gützlaff’s most important contributions sought to enlighten his prospective Chinese readers on Europe and especially Britain, as well as on the merits of free trade. In two series of articles on ‘Commerce’ (*tongshang*) and ‘Trade’ (*maoyi*) published in 1837 and 1838, he argued that even Chinese classical texts were in favour of unrestrained commercial intercourse.⁴⁵

Gützlaff advanced similar arguments in his more elaborate publications, such as his ‘History of England’ (*Da Yingguo tongzhi*, literally: ‘Comprehensive Account of the Great British State’, published by the SDUK in 1834) and ‘A Summary Discussion of Right and Wrong’ (*Shi fei lüelun*, 1835). The former presented the United Kingdom—down to the terminology used—as a diplomatic equal to China, challenging the hierarchical Chinese view of foreign relations.⁴⁶ In a similar fashion, the latter targeted the attitudes of China’s educated elite. One of its protagonists, recently returned from a 25-year sojourn in the United Kingdom, admonishes his xenophobic boyhood friend not to call foreign nationals ‘foreign demons’ (*fan gui*) or *Yi*:

According to the Chinese statutes, the Miao, Qiang, Man, Mo, Yi and other peoples all live within the borders of China; the territory of the people of Great Britain is several thousand *li* [1 *li* = 500 metres] away from China. Do not say that the British are savages (*yeren*) of the same kind, they are physically robust and skilled in the crafts, they have no equal in the world. Moreover, one of the ancients said: ‘Only Korea is referred to as Eastern *Yi*.’ However, Britain is in the northwest, and its dependent countries are in the east, the west, the north and south, how can you call them *Yi*?⁴⁷

The impact of these texts (and others like them) is difficult to gauge. Initial reports of success may have been self-serving, and most of the writings were distributed to the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, in the hope that they would somehow find their way to China. Clearly they failed to impress the Qing authorities, and did not impact the mindset of the Chinese scholarly elite until after the First Opium War.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, by the end of the 1830s, Gützlaff had established himself as one of the most important spokesmen in both the English and Chinese languages, advocating not only free trade, but indeed a sea change in

Sino-‘Western’ relations. His aim was to incorporate China, where possible by peaceful means but where necessary by force, into ‘Western’ commercial networks and thereby—although he never used the term—into the emergent ‘Western’ capitalism.

In thus advocating a commercial version of empire, Gützlaff was not alone, and his role should not be exaggerated: it was not the flamboyant missionary, but his one-time fellow traveller, Lindsay, who returned to Britain to become one of the main mouthpieces of the China lobby. Still, not only had the eccentric Prussian, a new arrival from Southeast Asia, loyally served British interests on the China coast. Being one of only a handful of Europeans who were competent in both spoken and written Chinese,⁴⁹ he had also made a significant contribution to the shift in the British discourse on China during the 1830s. Both his voyages and his writings had made the case that the ‘opening’ of China was desirable as well as achievable; and his influence on the emerging concept of ‘making China equal’ was profound. When the British set about breaking Qing resistance, they again recruited the services of Gützlaff.

Ephemeral Empire: Administrator, Spymaster and Interpreter during the Opium War

The Qing government’s decision to clamp down on the opium trade and the Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu’s (1785–1850) confiscation of British opium in 1839 triggered a sea change in ‘Western’-Chinese relations. The First Opium War (1839–1842), initially an attempt to restore British honour and dignity, ended in a settlement that changed the terms of interaction in Britain’s favour.⁵⁰ The war equally marked a change in Gützlaff’s career, as he became directly involved in the British imperialist effort. As well as serving as interpreter, he was installed by the British high command as civil magistrate in Dinghai on the Zhoushan archipelago (June 1840–February 1841 and September 1842–November 1843) and the port city of Ningbo (October 1841–May 1842).⁵¹

As the local agent of an occupation force, Gützlaff’s authority rested on British bayonets. The measures he took can be understood as an ephemeral form of imperialism, as they were short-lived, but intruded vehemently into Chinese daily life as well as into administrative, economic, social and cultural patterns. The role of the newly-minted magistrate included direct contributions to the British war effort, such as levying substantial ransoms from local merchants and requisitioning foodstuffs, especially ‘bullocks’ (water buffaloes), from contractors in the area, taking reprisals against those who were slow to deliver. At Ningbo, he

disposed of an indigenous constabulary force of 50 men under a Chinese headman, whom he dispatched to identify and apprehend wealthy individuals.⁵²

Gützlaff also provided vital military intelligence, partly by translating written sources, but mostly by managing a network of spies, the beginnings of which may date back to the early 1830s.⁵³ Gützlaff's 'messengers,' as he called them, were a motley bunch acting out of a variety of motives; some had previously served the British as spies, secretaries or menial workers. Other information came from captured Chinese officers and even from complete strangers.⁵⁴ If we are to believe Gützlaff's reports, he received intelligence from the headquarters of the Qing commander-in-chief, Yijing (1793–1853), as well as from the Imperial court in faraway Beijing.⁵⁵

In Gützlaff's notes and reports, it is often difficult to discern who is speaking: the agents whose information is passed on or the spymaster, who filters incoming information through his own prejudices—all too visible are his contempt for the Qing troops, his fear of Chinese ruse and treachery,⁵⁶ his dislike of Chinese officials (which he suggests is shared by the Chinese populace) and his emphasis of Chinese readiness to side with the British, e.g. by fighting as militia or offering themselves as guides. Gützlaff explicitly commended educated Chinese who shared his views, not least on the importance of free trade.⁵⁷ He did take the trouble to ascertain the reliability of incoming information; interestingly, he was far more dismissive of some reports on the local situation than of the more far-fetched stories about the situation at the Qing court.⁵⁸ As Gützlaff occasionally showed a propensity for wishful thinking, it is important to note that British officers publicly acknowledged his intelligence-gathering to have been an important contribution to British victory.⁵⁹

Indeed, the Prussian interpreter even influenced British military strategy. In one of several memoranda drawn up by him during the final stage of the war, he advocated a direct push on Nanjing—a plan eventually adopted by the British high command. Characteristically, Gützlaff argued that the objectives of this strategy were 'to shorten the war and to establish a peaceful and beneficial intercourse between Great Britain and China', as the British public demanded not only the vindication of the national honour, but also 'a more extended commerce'.⁶⁰

From a Chinese viewpoint, Gützlaff's most intrusive measures were those that interfered with established Chinese practices. The Ningbo scholar Xu Shidong (1814–1873) left a satirical poem denouncing not only the missionary-turned-official's public justification of the war and the opium trade, but even more his high-handed and arbitrary dispensation of 'justice', which ran counter to Chinese bureaucratic and judicial conventions.⁶¹ Similar complaints were made in Dinghai, especially during Gützlaff's second tenure. The literati,

local scholars holding a degree from the state examinations, forwarded a list of grievances revealing the dimensions of his interventions into local affairs: the foreign magistrate had an academy, an orphanage and an old people's home rebuilt or established and also took care of the dispensation of food. Even more offensive was his employment of female teachers instructing girls in handiwork and cooking. Gützlaff's measures antagonised the local leaders not only because they upset customary gender roles, but even more so because they challenged the leadership of the learned elites in maintaining social welfare. That the British magistrate required the literati, who were traditionally exempt from taxation, to contribute to the maintenance of his constabulary force, was the final straw.⁶²

The combination of contributions Gützlaff made to the British war effort may have been unique, but again he was not alone in this. There undoubtedly existed a certain rivalry with his fellow missionary, John Robert Morrison (1814–1843) and the interpreter Robert Thom (1807–1846), who were likewise active in translation and intelligence gathering, with the former also involved in military planning.⁶³ At the actual peace negotiations, Morrison, who as Chinese Secretary outranked Gützlaff, took over as chief interpreter, although his overshadowed Prussian colleague continued to play an active role.⁶⁴ As Jessie Lutz has suggested, the eccentric German was considered for but not awarded the British consulship in Fuzhou on account of his nationality.⁶⁵ At any rate, Gützlaff's services to the British, including his involvement in the 'ephemeral empire' of occupation, were meaningful and no doubt helped to secure him a role in the British post-war settlement.

Territorial Colonialism: Gützlaff as Chinese Secretary in Hong Kong

In the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, China not only opened a number of ports to free trade (and consular representation), but also ceded Hong Kong to the British. Appointed to the subordinate yet critical position of Chinese Secretary in the spring of 1844, Gützlaff became part of the fledgling crown colony's formal administration.⁶⁶ In this capacity, he was mainly engaged in different sets of communication flows. He corresponded or negotiated in person with the Chinese governor general in Canton and other local authorities as directed by the Hong Kong governor and other colonial officials on matters such as supplemental treaties or the apprehension of criminals, translating correspondence where necessary.⁶⁷ Over the years, he occasionally furnished information on local trade on behalf of the colonial government and in 1844 undertook a census of the Chinese population.⁶⁸

Gützlaff also mediated between the colonial administration and the Chinese population of Hong Kong. One of his activities, which has left a lengthy paper trail, concerned the conversion of paddies into dry fields as well as the removal of the Chinese inhabitants from the so-called Upper Bazaar to a new settlement in the spring of 1844. These rather intrusive measures were intended to secure the most valuable land for the expansion of the European settlement, separate Europeans and Chinese in the colony and enhance military security. Ironically, it turned out that the ‘lover of the Chinese’ was not always the staunchest advocate of their interests, as he suggested less generous terms of compensation than the other members of the committee appointed by the governor.⁶⁹ On the other hand, he also translated petitions from local Chinese, including claims for compensation, and in return communicated to them the decisions of the colonial government.⁷⁰ As well as helping to defuse potential Chinese grievances against the colonial government, Gützlaff was also directly involved in matters of security. He was entrusted with providing a character reference for Chinese watchmen, who in the 1840s were often suspected of aiding and abetting robbers. And at one point he appears to personally have prevented the outbreak of a riot.⁷¹ Finally, a report submitted by the Chinese Secretary in late 1845 became the starting point for establishing a Chinese system of education in Hong Kong, which owing to racial segregation was kept apart from European schools for decades to come.⁷²

As an administrator and broker in transcultural communication flows, Gützlaff remained involved in the exercise of territorial empire until his untimely death in 1851, reaching the culmination point of two decades in British service. Even though his affiliation with the British may be down to the Prussian’s political realism to a degree, there is no reason to believe that his anglophilia and commitment to the British cause were not genuine. However, during his lifetime the man himself had often looked beyond the interests of Britain before, and after 1842 became involved with trading interests of other countries in China, especially Germany.

Gützlaff’s Support for German Trading Interests in China

‘Western’ imperialism as it emerged after the First Opium War was transnational in character. After Britain’s hard-won military victory over the Qing empire, nationals of many countries jumped at the new opportunities for trade, bringing to bear the economic forces of imperialism. This included Prussia and a number of other German states.

In the eighteenth century, the German territories' China trade had been marginal, but in the first decades of the nineteenth century, their commercial interests in East Asia became increasingly pronounced. The Hanseatic cities on the North German coast remained Germany's gate to the wider world; but as the output of manufactures increased, entrepreneurs in the hinterland developed a keener interest in exporting their goods to China. This is especially true of Prussia, the largest and most industrialised state in Northern Germany and the dominant member of the German Customs Union established in 1834. Saxony, another member state, was the third most populous in Germany and around the middle of the nineteenth century had one of the highest population densities in Europe, an advanced level of urbanisation and a thriving industry.⁷³

Whereas in the Saxon case, the development of commercial and subsequently diplomatic relations with China appears to have been the result of short-term individual initiative, the evolution of the Prussian relationship with China was the result of long-term developments.⁷⁴ Since the late eighteenth century, woollen goods from Silesia had been exported into China via Russia as part of what has been called the Kiakhta system, after the border post that served as the hub of commercial exchange between the Russian and Chinese empires. Having weathered the storms of the Napoleonic era, the trade ground to a halt when the Russian government imposed an oppressive tariff in 1822.⁷⁵ The impact on the Silesian textile production was devastating, with many cloth makers emigrating to the Russian parts of Poland. It was as an alternative to the lost continental route that the first proposals of a seaborne commercial expedition to Canton were floated. A state enterprise, the Royal Prussian Maritime Shipping Company (Königlich Preußische Seehandlung), first sounded out the potentials of trade with China. Three times, in 1822–24, 1825–29 and 1831–33, it dispatched a ship on a circumnavigation of the globe, looking out for markets in the newly independent Latin American states, the Pacific, Southeast Asia and China. However, none of these ventures was ultimately profitable.⁷⁶

In the wake of the Treaty of Nanjing, German merchants were increasingly attracted by the allure of the China market. Private initiative now took the lead, and by 1845, there already existed 64 German firms in East India and China, with the most successful merchants coming from Hamburg.⁷⁷ At the same time, the Prussian government received petitions from businessmen and industrialists in various parts of the kingdom, who suggested to sound out the opportunities of the China market, from which Britain did not seem bent on excluding other nations. However, the Prussian administration was still divided about the potentials offered by the forcible 'opening' of China.⁷⁸

For Gützlaff, German trade with China was not an issue until after the Opium War. The German translation of his *Sketch of Chinese History*, published in 1836, faithfully repeats his praise of Britain's achievements in the name of humanity.⁷⁹ And it appears that it was Prussian diplomats in London who took the initiative, no doubt having learned of the role of their countryman during the Opium War. In late 1842, the German consul general in London, Bernhard Hebel (1815–1862), painted an enthusiastic picture of Gützlaff's value for the Prussian China trade:

The respectable appointment which Gützlaff currently holds as first secretary to the British mission in China, might offer Prussia, and through Prussia Germany as a whole, a wonderful opportunity to facilitate the establishment of trading connections with China. Mr. Gützlaff, a native of Prussia, and described by everyone as an excellent man, owes as much as any German a holy duty to the Fatherland, no matter in which part of the world he resides. There can hardly be a European who is as familiar with the Chinese language, manners, customs and needs of the Chinese as Mr. Gützlaff. And although he is currently in the service of the British, it may be assumed that if approached by our highly esteemed government, he might be induced to voluntarily render those services necessary to achieve the important purpose mentioned above.⁸⁰

Eventually, however, the government in Berlin dispatched the civil servant Friedrich Wilhelm Grube (1795–1845) on a fact-finding mission to China.⁸¹ When Grube reached Hong Kong in February 1844, Gützlaff took care of him, apparently on his own accord. As Grube noted, 'Gützlaff's position requires great caution'—because openly assisting a Prussian representative might compromise him in the eyes of his British superiors—, 'yet he has assured me of his support.'⁸²

During Grube's stay in Hong Kong, Gützlaff was one of his main interlocutors, if by no means the only one, and provided his Prussian compatriot with information on China and the China trade. The Chinese Secretary showed himself rather optimistic about the prospects of German commerce and suggested which goods should be imported into and exported from China.⁸³ In his final report, compiled posthumously after his notes, Grube faithfully adopted these suggestions, despite harbouring a somewhat sceptical stance towards the overall potential of trade in China.⁸⁴

It was only when Gützlaff touched base with Germany again in 1850, after an absence of 27 years, that he began to directly promote the commercial opportunities offered by the forcible opening of China. In a public lecture *On the Condition of Trade in Eastern Asia*, delivered at the Berlin stock exchange, Gützlaff pointed out the benefits that might accrue from German trade with China:

Two days ago I was in Silesia, and I learned (as I had learned earlier), that until 1824 or 25, manufacturers used to send a considerable quantity of cloth to Russia in order to ship it through the Siberian steppes into China. One has to imagine how the factory owners have lost this trade and how the import of Silesian cloth into China has become so insignificant that only a few hundred people find their occupation in [textile production]. Wouldn't it be possible that the cloth that used to be shipped to China via the more expensive route through Russia would now be shipped there by sea, that the same quantities and the same quality would be imported and the general populace in China would buy them? [...] I do not see why this should be impossible. Certainly, importing them must be profitable, or else [Silesian textiles] wouldn't have been imported previously by way of a longer and more expensive route.⁸⁵

Drawing on the problems of the 1820s and in keeping with his previous advocacy of free trade, Gützlaff appealed not so much to the government, but to private initiative and profit-seeking. In particular, he pointed out the huge gains that British merchants were reaping from the China trade. According to Gützlaff, 20 to 30 'rich capitalists' were leaving China every year to settle down in the United Kingdom: 'Some of them are now millionaires in England, outstanding personalities wielding considerable influence.'⁸⁶

However, Gützlaff did not ignore the role of state power in supporting trade. Even before giving his talk in Berlin, he had been dispatched by none other than the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV (reigned 1840–1861) to Hamburg to sound out opportunities for the China trade with Prussia's representative in the Hanseatic city. Gützlaff suggested to send a ship, 'if possible a man-of-war,' to China and Southeast Asia 'in order to make known the Prussian flag and to become acquainted with the import and export trade, for which reason an experienced merchant would have to accompany the expedition.'⁸⁷ From a political and commercial viewpoint, this was indeed a forward-looking project, although for the time being it foundered on the resistance of the government in Berlin.⁸⁸ Only in the late 1850s would leading Prussian statesmen change their mind, dispatch a naval expedition under Count Friedrich zu Eulenburg (1815–1881) to East Asia and conclude an unequal treaty with China in 1861, which formalised Germany's imperialist interests in China.⁸⁹

Although Gützlaff was only sporadically involved in the promotion of German trade in China, it is obvious that he looked beyond the immediate requirements of his role as a British colonial administrator in this period. Drawing on his experience in British service, he was equally committed to supporting and indeed stimulating German commercial interests when the opportunity arose, aiming to secure the German states a share in the expectable profits. Although mostly advocating a 'merchant imperialism' of sorts, he also envisioned a role for

the Prussian state when he suggested a naval demonstration to back up negotiations with the Qing Empire.

Gützlaff and the Origins of German Diplomatic Representation in China

The advance of ‘Western’ trade in China in the 1840s was bolstered by diplomatic support at various levels. Following the British example, France, the United States, and a number of smaller countries had concluded ‘unequal treaties’ with China by the late 1840s.⁹⁰ Especially in the early years, other nationalities were only represented informally by consuls in the treaty ports China had been forced to open for ‘Western’ merchants. Regardless whether the relationship with China was treaty-based or not, it ultimately rested on the backing of the great treaty powers, most notably Britain. As the flexing of military muscle became only necessary in exceptional circumstances, for the most part the commercial variant of imperialism dominated treaty-port life.

In the pre-treaty period, a few German governments had already appointed foreign merchants as consuls, but these consulships had all expired by the early 1840s.⁹¹ After the Opium War, the diplomatic backing of German merchant enterprises appeared again on the agenda. As Prussia’s emissary, Grube, had deemed consular representation unnecessary, merchants took the initiative.⁹² The Saxon Richard von Carlowitz (1817–1886) became the key player, drawing Gützlaff into the matter as well. By his own account, Carlowitz had become personally interested in consular representation after having been denied support by the British consul, on account of his not being a British subject, in the summer of 1846. ‘Fortunately’, Carlowitz continued, ‘an influential person in the Hong Kong government is a fellow countryman, Mr. Gützlaff, who helped me out; otherwise we would have been treated as complete outlaws in the matter.’⁹³ Gützlaff supported Carlowitz by translating documents into Chinese, but the contacts of Chinese Secretary with local officials seem to have helped Carlowitz’s appeal for redress even more. At any rate, sometime later the latter was able to report: ‘Through Gützlaff I appealed to the mandarins and had a long correspondence with them... as a *German* merchant, and I have obtained satisfaction.’⁹⁴ This means, however, that in supporting Carlowitz, Gützlaff had violated the British policy vis-à-vis non-British nationals in force at the time, overstepping his role as a British colonial official by directly serving German commercial interests.

In view of his recent difficulties, Carlowitz organised a collective petition to the governments of the German Customs Union to establish a common diplomatic representation in China.⁹⁵ Aware that the German Customs Union was unknown to the Qing government, however, he pursued a double strategy: even before drawing up the petition on behalf of the German merchants in Canton, he had secretly sought an appointment as consul of Prussia and Saxony, probably as early as autumn 1845.⁹⁶ As this might compromise him in the eyes of the other petitioners' backs, Carlowitz let none of his fellow merchants in Canton into the secret; instead, he sought help from 'my friend Gützlaff, who is very familiar with the situation here, has a good reputation with the Prussian government and also corresponds directly with His Majesty Friedrich Wilhelm IV.'⁹⁷

Indeed, in his letter of application to the Prussian government, Carlowitz explicitly refers to 'Mr. Gützlaff, who is certainly known to the exalted Ministry, and is more acquainted with the situation in China than anybody else', a reference he characteristically omitted in his otherwise identical letter to the Saxon government in Dresden.⁹⁸ Gützlaff did write a short supporting note to the Prussian King, in which he also mentions personal gifts as well as a new translation of the Old Testament that he hoped had all reached the illustrious addressee. The note was duly forwarded to the ministers of foreign affairs and of trade, who agreed to appoint Carlowitz consul of Prussia.⁹⁹ Gützlaff's intervention no doubt was not necessary to turn the tide, given the interest in consular appointments expressed by both the German merchants and the Saxon government, but it was viewed favourably and no doubt bolstered Carlowitz's initiative.

There was, however, still one stumbling block to the appointment of a Prussian and Saxon consul. Inexperienced in the practices of the Chinese Imperial bureaucracy, neither of the governments in Berlin and Dresden had any idea of how the newly appointed consul would receive the *exequatur* from the Chinese government.¹⁰⁰ As is evident from Carlowitz's correspondence with the governments in Berlin and (to a lesser extent) Dresden, he had asked Gützlaff for advice on how to formulate the necessary letters of accreditation:

It appears that [the Chinese authorities] attach less importance to the form of the letter, because they base their decision on the Chinese translation, which must be submitted simultaneously. And this translation would have to be done on the authority of the local [i.e., Hong Kong] colonial government, by its sworn translator. In this case, this would be done by Mr. Gützlaff, who, himself a German, would take the warmest interest in the recognition of his countrymen by the Chinese government, and who, highly respected by the local Chinese authorities in Canton, would be better qualified than anybody else to take charge of the introduction of the Prussian consul.¹⁰¹

In a subsequent letter to his family, Carlowitz requested his brother's help in obtaining a note from the King of Saxony to the Emperor of China, which should be addressed to the governor general in Guangzhou, Qiyong (1785–1857). The text

will be translated here and Gützlaff will personally deliver the [letter of] introduction and guarantee its recognition. He also introduced the Danish commissioner, who had a letter from the king of Denmark, and he wrote something on behalf of the Swedish commissioner, who had no explicit credentials from his government, and obtained his recognition. The latter is a proof that the form [of the letter] is of little consequence.¹⁰²

This passage helps to put Gützlaff's engagement for his countrymen into perspective. What is interesting about the episode is that first of all, Gützlaff seems to have used the contacts he owed to his position as Chinese Secretary to the British colonial government in Hong Kong on behalf of fellow Germans. Second, however, although Gützlaff was later to express his concern for the German China trade, by 1846 that unofficial assistance was not restricted to Germans, but granted to persons of different nationalities. It would appear that Gützlaff did not translate the document on behalf of the Danish commissioner, but it is probable that he acted as an intermediary between Qiyong and the Danes, as he is known to have done on other occasions.¹⁰³ Finally, in assisting his German countrymen, Gützlaff was now in accordance with directives from Whitehall instructing Hong Kong's Governor John Francis Davis (1795–1890) to assist a number of smaller states having no treaty with China.¹⁰⁴ Gützlaff thus continued to mediate between the Hong Kong colonial government and Carlowitz, who in May and July 1847 was eventually appointed consul for Prussia and Saxony respectively.¹⁰⁵ We have no way of knowing to what extent Gützlaff was involved in the accreditation of the new consul with the Chinese authorities. He may have translated Carlowitz' letter to Qiyong, which followed Chinese bureaucratic conventions as modified by the Treaty of Nanjing, but we know for certain that the same does not apply to the governor-general's reply.¹⁰⁶

The establishment of German (Prussian, Saxon and subsequently Hanseatic) consulates in the Qing empire was an important step and the development of the German China trade as German states, and later unified Germany, played an active role in China's willy-nilly incorporation in the 'Western'-controlled, capitalist world economy. For the first time, German commercial activities enjoyed some sort of diplomatic backing and official Chinese recognition. In the accomplishment of this step, Gützlaff was not a driving force, but took on the role of an advisor and cultural broker acting mostly on request. On the whole, his engagement with Germany was limited to his native Prussia, and even that was more sporadic

than his continuous and systematic involvement with British interests on the China coast. Gützlaff was far from being a narrow-minded nationalist and extended his help to citizens of other countries where the opportunity arose. Before the support of other nations became official British policy, the German-born Chinese Secretary of the Hong Kong administration operated in the grey area that his job description afforded him and at times acted in contravention of established policy and practice. In so doing, he bridged various imperial interests on the China coast.

Conclusion and research perspectives

Karl Gützlaff's career was both exemplary and extraordinary. His multifaceted, often downright chameleonic interests, activities and talents set him apart from more middle-of-the-road characters. They enabled him to make the transition from the Dutch colonial empire to a close involvement with British commercial and political interests on the China coast and finally to straddle his employment by the British colonial government in Hong Kong by supporting fellow Germans and nationals of other countries in obtaining a share of the transnational, free-trade imperialism practiced in China. In the German case, as much as in any other, such efforts were substantive and pragmatic contributions to the commercial variant of imperialism, in which German states became actively engaged, far beyond the mere realm of fantasy. Throughout his time in Asia, Gützlaff became a practitioner of empire (indeed, of various imperial interests) in its different forms: of the territorial version grounded in formal state-building (in British service) as well as of the commercial, treaty-based variant (in all other cases). It is important to note that both versions complemented one another and both were ultimately based on differentials of military power. Gützlaff played a supporting yet critical part in the making of both.

Gützlaff's case also highlights the importance of communication flows in the emergence of transnational imperialism in China. His cultural brokerage between East Asia and various European sides included strategically placed publications aimed at broader audiences, the management of oral informants as well as the handling of administrative and diplomatic documents, all of which required language and translation skills. Clearly this was something in which the Prussian missionary excelled: inasmuch as he had success as a transnational figure (despite his reputation never being untarnished), this lay in his ability to address

different audiences while retaining some fundamental principles, such as the conviction that free trade would be beneficial to all parties, including China itself.

There can be little doubt that British policy of supporting free trade and equal access to the Chinese market created a transnational imperialist setting on the China coast that lasted, albeit with declining intensity, until the carving out of territorially demarcated spheres of influence during the ‘scramble for concessions’ in the late 1890s and in many ways even beyond.¹⁰⁷ While this offered opportunities for direct cooperation between empires, the case of Gützlaff shows that straddling the imperialist projects of various countries required minimal coordination at most. It is equally important to note that such crossings were not limited to ‘free-trade imperialism’. Even large territorial colonies were not hermetically sealed off to people from other European (or North American) countries. Merchants, travellers, scientists, or missionaries from smaller colonial powers (such as Denmark) or countries without a territorial empire (such as Switzerland or Germany prior to the mid-1880s) regularly depended on the goodwill of a foreign colonial administration to reach their commercial, scientific or religious objectives, all of which made them part of a larger, and to a remarkable extent transnational and transimperial venture. This is implicit in a number of studies, although it is rarely spelled out.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, larger imperialist powers were often equally ready to recruit foreign nationals temporarily or permanently if it suited their purposes.¹⁰⁹ The crossing of imperial boundaries, both literally and metaphorically, must therefore have been a more widespread practice than is commonly acknowledged.

In further elucidating this practice, the biographical method has an important part to play, as it promises interesting insights in how individuals negotiated and bridged divergent imperial interests. In so doing, it can pick up impulses from the emerging field of mobility studies.¹¹⁰ What will result from this is a better understanding of how European empires in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries interacted at the fringes and how the boundaries separating them, in both the territorial and commercial variants, were permeable. By highlighting this dimension, we will better appreciate what these empires were and how they worked.

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Notes

1. For example, Lambert and Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives*; Lambert, 'Reflections on the Concept of Imperial Biographies'; Norris and Sunderland (eds.), *Russia's People of Empire*; Rolf, 'Einführung'; Buchen and Rolf (eds.), *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich*; from the perspective of the colonised Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*.
2. For the term see Brenner, 'Beyond State-centrism?', 46.
3. For a substantial critique of 'methodological nationalism', as well as the term itself, see Beck and Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism', 2–6. A stimulating discussion of the complex relationship between nation and empire is in Dickinson, 'The German Empire', 143–6. For individual biographies see, for example, Laidlaw, 'Richard Bourke'; Woodworth, 'The Imperial Career of Gustaf Mannerheim'; Hofmeister, 'Der Halbzar von Turkestan'.
4. Markovits, 'How British was British India?', 73–5; Davis, Schulte Beerbühl and Manz, 'Introduction: Germans in the British Empire', esp. 5–6; Bossenbroek, *Volk voor Indië*, 79, 105, 123, 132–3, 161, 184, 225, 237, 250.
5. Rare examples are Veres, 'Unravelling a Trans-Imperial Career' (for the eighteenth century) and Brown, 'Gregor MacGregor'. For inter-imperial relations Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, and 'Encounters Over the Border', Barth and Cvetkovski (eds.), *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer*; for knowledge transfer Coghe, 'Inter-Imperial Learning and African Health Care'; Kamissek and Kreienbaum, 'An Imperial Cloud?'.
6. Deacon, Russell and Woollacott (eds.), *Transnational Lives*; see also Panter, Paulmann and Szöllösi-Janze, 'Mobility and Biography'.
7. For Gützlaff's Chinese aliases see Li Wuzhe, *Guo Shilie xingming kao*, 138–42.
8. See Raj, 'Go-Betweens, Travelers and Cultural Translators'; Schaffer, *The Brokered World*; Rothman, *Brokered Empires*.
9. Gallagher and Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade'; Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 26–33; Barton, *Informal Empire*, 53–65; Winseck and Pike, *Communication and Empire*, 5–12. For a critique of terms such as 'indirect rule' or 'informal empire' see Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', 136.
10. Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', 127–8, 135–7; the quotation is on p. 128.
11. Panter, Paulmann and Szöllösi-Janze, 'Mobility and Biography', 9–10.
12. Conrad, *Rethinking German Colonialism in a Global Age*, 545.
13. Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*; Conrad and Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational*; Naranch and Ely (eds.), *German Colonialism in a Global Age*.
14. Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*; Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*. But see now Kamissek, 'German Imperialism before the German Empire,' esp. 199.

15. Van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt*, 49–53.
16. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, 15–21.
17. See Lüthi, Falk and Purtschert, ‘Colonialism without colonies’. Fur, ‘Colonial fantasies’ (Sweden); Rhode, ‘Zivilisierungsmission und Wissenschaft’ (Poles); Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné, ‘Introduction’, Schär, *Tropenliebe*, and Zangger, *Koloniale Schweiz*, 27–39, 58, 433–6 (Switzerland).
18. Osterhammel, *China und die Weltgesellschaft*, 170–1, 208–12. See also van der Putten, ‘Small Powers and Imperialism.’
19. For Gützlaff’s family and upbringing see Tiedemann, ‘Missionarischer Einzelgänger oder Visionär’, 195–7.
20. Lutz, *Opening China*, 28–31.
21. Erdbrink, *Gützlaff, de apostel der Chinezen*, 19. For the context see Dobbin, ‘Islamic Revivalism’, 128–87; Hadler, ‘A Historiography of Violence’, 980–7.
22. See Lutz, *Opening China*, 38–50. For Gützlaff’s mastery of Chinese dialects see Smith, *A narrative of an exploratory visit*, 72–7.
23. Maria Newell (1794–1831), Mary Wanstall (1799–1849) and Dorothy or Dora Gabriel (1821–1888).
24. Vries, *Zur politischen Ökonomie des Tees*, 88–9.
25. Hevia, *Cherishing Men From Afar*, and Hillemann, *Asian Empire and Western Knowledge*, 34–45 and 75–81.
26. Melancon, *Britain’s China Policy*, 35–40.
27. Klein, ‘Rethinking “Western” Imperialism’, 790–1; Lovell, *Opium War*, 32–54.
28. Klein and Zöllner, ‘Einleitung: Karl Gützlaff als Kulturvermittler’, 12; cf. Lovell, *Opium War*, 26–7.
29. See Hevia, *Cherishing Men From Afar*, 230. All authors quoted there were writing from the perspective of the China coast and after the 1832 voyage of the *Lord Amherst*.
30. Melancon, *Britain’s China Policy*, 49–62 and 116–9, and Lovell, *Opium War*, 103–7.
31. Gützlaff, *Journal of Three Voyages*, 257. Gützlaff’s treatment of opium addicts is mentioned in Tomlin, *Journal of a Nine Months’ Residence in Siam*, 33–54 and passim.
32. ‘Expedition to the Tea-District of Füh-kéen’; J. B. Carnac et al. to India Revenue Department, 23 Aug. 1837, British Library, India Office Records, IOR/E/4/752, fol. 325–414.
33. Beasley, ‘Japanese Castaways and British Interpreters’; Zöllner, ‘Gützlaff und das *Bojutsu yumemonogatari*’.
34. Bickers, *Scramble for China*, 51–5; Lutz, *Opening China*, 85–7.
35. Gützlaff, *China Opened*, vol. 1, 8.
36. Gützlaff, *A Sketch of Chinese History*, vol. 2, 291.
37. See Liu, *The Clash of Empires*, 40–2.
38. See the two publications by Hevia, ‘Making China Perfectly Equal’ and *English Lessons*.
39. Gützlaff, *A Sketch of Chinese History*, vol. 2, 358 (emphasis in the original).
40. Melancon, *Britain’s China Policy*, 41–44.
41. Gützlaff, *China Opened*, vol. 2, 114–5 (emphasis added).
42. *Ibid.*, 181.
43. The term is from Chen, ‘An Information War’, 1708–9 and 1725–6.
44. ‘Proceedings relative to the formation of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China’; Philo-sinensis, ‘The Diffusion of Knowledge in China’. For an overview of the magazine see Chen, ‘An Information War’, 1727–8; Lutz, *Opening China*, 182–92; Lazich, ‘The Diffusion of Useful Knowledge’.
45. ‘Tongshang’ [Commerce], in *Dong-Xiyang kao meiyue tongjizhuan*, 301–2; ‘Maoyi’ [Trade], in *ibid.*, 314–6, 331–2, 344, 382–83, 407–8, 417–8 (editor’s pagination).
46. See Zhuang Qinyong, ‘*Wu shang’ de wenming gu guo*, 66–78, and the annotated edition of both versions in *ibid.*
47. Aihanzhe, *Shi fei lüelun*, 295.
48. Cf. Chen, ‘An Information War’, 1711, 1722–3.
49. *Ibid.*, 1716, 1734; Su, *Zhongguo, kai men!*, 192.
50. Melancon, *Britain’s China Policy*, 99–130; Lovell, *The Opium War*, 95–103, 107–08.

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51. Lutz, *Opening China*, 103.
 52. Gützlaff to Gough, 13 and 14 Dec. 1841 and 31 Jan. 1842, National Army Museum, Letters and papers of FM 1st Viscount Hugh Gough, 1804–1852 (hereafter: Gough papers), 8303-105-788, 789 and 802; confession of Yue Dechang, in *Yapian zhanzheng*, vol. 4, 276.
 53. An example of translation work is ‘Extract from the Peking Gazette 13 Nov. 1840’, 19 Dec. 1840, Gough papers, 699. For Gützlaff’s early use of Chinese informers see ‘Sanshan juren tongzhi [A note from the provincial graduates of Sanshan]’, in *Yapian zhanzheng*, vol. 1, 33.
 54. Some of the spies were apprehended and interrogated by the Qing authorities; see ‘Bu Dingbang gongci [Confession of Bu Dingbang]’, in *Yapian zhanzheng*, vol. 4, 215–21; memorandum by General Yangwen (appendix), Daoguang 21/10/26 = 27 Nov. 1842, *ibid.*, 274–9. For the questioning of Chinese prisoners see Gützlaff, ‘A Chinese officer’s Ching’s ideas of the present war expressed in repeated conversations’, 6 Jan. 1842, Gough papers, 719 and *id.*, ‘Memorandum of conversations held with the Chinese Government Agent (Wangtuchwan), seized near Ningpo, and of the information obtained from him’, 23 Dec. 1841, The National Archives (hereafter: TNA), Foreign Office (hereafter: FO) 17/56, fol. 32–8.
 55. Gützlaff to Gough, 25 January, 2 and 3 Feb. 1842, Gough papers, 8303-105-796, 805 and 807.
 56. E. g. Gützlaff to Gough, 30 March and 29 April 1841, *ibid.*, 786 and 787.
 57. Gützlaff to Gough, 28 Jan., 7 Feb. 1842 and n. d., Gough papers, 799, 811 and 830. Militia: Gützlaff to Gough, 3 and 11 Feb. 1842, *ibid.*, 810 and 818.
 58. See, for example, Gützlaff to Gough, 23 Jan., 8 and 22 Feb. 1842, Gough papers, 795, 825 and 828. Situation in Beijing: Gützlaff to Gough, 28 Jan., 2 and 3 Feb. 1842, *ibid.* 799, 805 and 807.
 59. Murray, *Doings in China*, 98-99; Loch, *The Closing Events*, 41–3, 53, 88, 108, 174; Ouchterlony, *The Chinese war*, 48–49, 224–30, 248–9.
 60. ‘Remarks upon the Occupation of Nanking’, Gough papers, 856; ‘Thoughts upon the next campaign’, *ibid.* 854. For Gützlaff’s authorship see Nicolson, ‘The Reverend Charles Gützlaff,’ 360.
 61. Xu Shidong, ‘Lin gao tai [Ascending the podium]’, *Yapian zhanzheng wenxueji*, vol. 1, 24; English translation in Waley, *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes*, 230–1.
 62. Qiying to Pottinger, Daoguang 23/01/11 = 9 Feb. 1843, TNA, FO 682/1009. Cf. the doctored account in *Gaihan’s (Carl Gützlaff’s) Chinesische Berichte*, 32–3, 37–40, 45–6.
 63. Morrison, ‘Precis of information regarding the movements of the Chinese Authorities and Forces [!] in Chekiang’, 14 Dec. 1841, TNA, FO 17/56, fol. 26–31; Morrison to Pottinger, 6 Jan. 1842, TNA, FO, Pottinger papers. CHINA 1840–1845, FO 705/61, fol. 2–9. Cf. Wong, ‘Translators and Interpreters’, 49–51, and Su, *Zhongguo, kai men!*, 191–5.
 64. See the records in TNA, War and Colonial Office (hereafter: CO) 129/1; Lutz, *Opening China*, 101.
 65. See Lutz, *Opening China*, 114–5.
 66. Woosnam to Gützlaff, 25 March 1844, TNA, CO 129/10, fol. 713-14.
 67. Qiying to Pottinger, Daoguang 24/05/30 = 5 July 1844, TNA, FO 682/1977/100 (in Chinese); Davis to Palmerston, 4 Feb. 1848, CO 129/23, fol. 135–36; Qiying to Davis, trans. Gützlaff, Daoguang 27/12/20 = 25 Jan. 1848, *ibid.*, fol. 137; Gützlaff to Davis, 16 Feb. 1848, *ibid.*, fol. 138.
 68. Rd. M. J. Martin, to Davis, 17 June 1844, TNA, CO 129/6, fol. 306–14; Gützlaff, ‘Remarks upon the Native Trade of Hongkong’, Blue Book of Statistics 1845, CO 133/2, fol. 112–3; Gützlaff, ‘Remarks upon the present State of Native Trade with this Colony’, 6 Jan. 1846, CO 129/16, fol. 236–49; ‘Return of Local Trade in Hong Kong as reported monthly by K. Gützlaff’, 1847, FO 682/1980/67; a report on Russian Trade is in Gützlaff to governor, 3 Feb. 1847, FO 1080/11.
 69. Caine, Gützlaff and Gordon, to Woosnam, 2 April 1844, TNA, CO 129/6, fol. 440–1; see also Davis to Lord Stanley, 26 July 1844, *ibid.*, fol. 435–8.
 70. Cf. the enclosures in Woosnam to D’Aguilar, 15 April 1844, TNA, CO 129/10, fol. 740–3.
 71. Lutz, *Opening China*, 119; Hamilton, *Watching Over Hong Kong*, 18–9. See also Grube, *Friedrich Wilhelm Grube und seine Reise nach Indien und China*, 256.

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72. Gützlaff to Davis, 13 Dec. 1845, TNA, CO 129/16, fol. 29; Davis to Gladstone, 22 June 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 505–6; Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, 132–43, for educational segregation see Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 75–6, 86–8.
73. Feuerstein, ‘From the Zollverein to the Economics of Regionalism’, 369; Retallack, ‘Introduction’, 2.
74. For the following see Wendt, *Schlesien und der Orient*, 187–8 and 19–4; Eberspächer, ‘Profiteure des Opiumkriegs’, 28–31.
75. See Kube to Beuth, 20 Dec. 1822, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (hereafter: GStA PK), I. HA Rep. 120 C XIII 18, no. 1, vol. 1, fol. 83–84.
76. Beuth to Bülow, 26 Jan. 1823, *ibid.*, fol. 63–64; Rother to Bodelschwingh, minister of finance, 9 Jan. 1843, *ibid.*, fol. 178–79. See also Rother, *Die Verhältnisse des Königlichen Seehandlungs-Instituts*, 14–5; Wagener, *Die Rhederei der Königlich Preußischen Seehandlung*, 6–8.
77. Schramm, *Kaufleute zu Haus und über See*, 349–54.
78. Petition of the chamber of commerce in Cologne, 30 Nov. 1842, GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 120 C XIII 18, no. 1, vol. 1, fol. 175–77 (probably the copy of a newspaper article); Henrici to Prussian Foreign Ministry, 20 Oct. 1845, III. HA, II, no. 5046, fol. 31; see also Schramm, *Kaufleute zu Haus und über See*, 326–7 and 348–9; Eberspächer, ‘Profiteure des Opiumkriegs,’ 33–4. For the differences of opinion cf. Eichmann to Bodelschwingh, n. d., GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 120 C XIII 18, no. 1, vol. 1, fol. 181–83; Rother to Bodelschwingh, 9 Jan. 1843, *ibid.*, fol. 178.
79. Gützlaff, *Geschichte des chinesischen Reiches*, vol. 2, 186.
80. Hebler, Memorandum, 29 Nov. 1842, GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 5063, fol. 3–4; Bülow to Bodelschwingh, 29 Jan. 1843, *ibid.*, fol. 7–9.
81. Eberspächer, ‘Profiteure des Opiumkriegs’, 37–9.
82. Grube, *Friedrich Wilhelm Grube und seine Reise nach Indien und China*, 138.
83. See *ibid.*, 136–9, 154–6, 176–7.
84. Cf. the list of articles suggested by Gützlaff *ibid.*, 137, with the recommendations in *Bericht des Herrn Kommerzienrath Grube*.
85. Gützlaff, *Ueber die Handelsverhältnisse im östlichen Asien*, 18.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Staegemann to Prussian Foreign Ministry, 29 Aug. 1850, GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 5064, fol. 167–8.
88. Von der Heydt to Prussian Foreign Ministry, 30 Nov. 1850, *ibid.*, fol. 170; see also Stoecker, *Deutschland und China*, 43.
89. Steen, ‘From Resistance to International Diplomacy’; Martin, ‘The Prussian Expedition to the Far East’.
90. Klein, ‘Rethinking the Origins of “Western” Imperialism in China’, 795.
91. Eberspächer, ‘Profiteure des Opiumkriegs’, 31–2; Eberstein, *Hamburg – China*, 66–8.
92. *Bericht des Herrn Kommerzienrath Grube*, 32–3.
93. *Briefe Richards v. Carlowitz*, 70: Carlowitz to his family, 22 June 1846; Carlowitz to his German business partners, 22 June and 23 July 1846, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SHStA), Foreign Ministry no. 3847.
94. *Briefe Richards v. Carlowitz*, 76: Carlowitz to his family, 23 July 1846.
95. ‘Denkschrift der deutschen Kaufleute in China,’ Aug. 1846, GStA PK III. HA, II no. 722, fol. 38–9 and SHStA, Foreign Ministry no. 3847.
96. Falkenstein to Saxon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 Dec. 1845, SHStA, Foreign Ministry no. 3847; Carlowitz to Saxon Ministry of the Interior, 22 April 1846 GStA PK, III. HA, II no. 722 fol. 28–31; Zeschau to Minckwitz, Saxon minister to Prussia, 31 Oct. 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 25–6. See also Carlowitz to his brother and to his family, both 23 May 1846, *Briefe Richards v. Carlowitz*, 64–6.
97. *Briefe Richards v. Carlowitz*, 85: Carlowitz to his brother Victor, 20 Sep. 1846.
98. Carlowitz to Prussian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 Sep. 1846, GStA PK, III. HA, II no. 722, fol. 40–41; cf. Carlowitz to Saxon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 Sep. 1846, SHStA, Foreign Ministry no. 3847; both also in *Briefe Richards v. Carlowitz*, 77 and 83.

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99. Gützlaff to Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 28 Sep. 1846, GStA PK, III. HA, II no. 722, fol. 50; Canitz and Duesberg to Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 14 Jan. 1847, *ibid.*, fol. 52–4.
 100. Canitz to Bunsen, 31 Oct. 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 32–33; Bunsen to Canitz, 12 Dec. 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 44–5; Canitz and Duesberg to Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 14 Jan. 1847, *ibid.*, fol. 52–4.
 101. Carlowitz to Prussian Foreign Ministry, 29 March 1847, GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 722, fol. 72; see also Carlowitz to Prussian Foreign Ministry, 27 Sep. 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 40–41; Carlowitz to Saxon Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 Sep. 1846, SHStA, Foreign Ministry no. 3847.
 102. *Briefe Richards von Carlowitz*, 101: Carlowitz to his family, 18 April 1847.
 103. According to *Steen Bille's Bericht*, vol. 2, 23–8, the document was translated by the interpreter at the British consulate in Guangzhou, Thomas Taylor Meadows (1808–1876).
 104. Davis to Palmerston, 27 Feb. 1847 (enclosure), GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 722, fol. 57–9; see also Palmerston to Bunsen, 11 Dec. 1846, *ibid.*, fol. 46; Bunsen to Canitz, 1 May 1847, *ibid.*, fol. 55.
 105. *Briefe Richards von Carlowitz*, 95–6: Carlowitz to his family, 28 March 1847; Certificate of appointment for Richard von Carlowitz, May 1847, GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 722, fol. 67; Friedrich Wilhelm IV to Canitz and Duesberg, 31 May 1847, *ibid.*, fol. 76; Friedrich August of Saxony to Carlowitz, 15 July 1847, SHStA, Foreign Ministry no. 3847; Zeschau, Instructions for the Royal Saxon consul Carlowitz, 15 July 1847, *ibid.*
 106. Carlowitz to Qiying (in Chinese), Daoguang 27/10/12 = 19 Nov. 1847, GStA PK, III. HA, II, no. 722, fol. 97; Qiying to Carlowitz (in Chinese), Daoguang 27/10/22 = 29 Nov. 1847, with English translation by John A. Meadows, *ibid.*, fol. 93–4, 99.
 107. Hevia, *English Lessons*, 158–66.
 108. See, for example, Neill, 'Science and Civilizing Missions'; Schär, *Tropenliebe*; Zangger, *Koloniale Schweiz*; Quartey, *Missionary Practices*.
 109. Markovits, 'How British was British India?'
 110. See Panter, Paulmann and Szöllösi-Janze, 'Mobility and Biography.'

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