

From Justification to Inclusion

“Using the North” in the Moravian Official Communication from Greenland in the 18th Century

◇ Joanna Kodzik

This paper examines the communication strategies of the German-speaking missionaries from the so-called Moravian Church in the earliest printed reports from their Arctic mission in Greenland. (Mettele 2017; Kodzik 2021c) The main question focuses on using missionaries’ constructions of the Far North in official publications of the Moravian Brethren. (Ruthrof 1981) During the 18th century, reading audiences became increasingly interested in the Far North hitherto relatively rarely explored. Thanks to Moravian missionaries, who went on journeys to the most distant parts of the North and established mission stations in Greenland, new knowledge about the Arctic reached Europe. (Kodzik 2019) From the earliest days of their missionary work, they communicated about their travels and actions and observed the environment and inhabitants of the Arctic regions they reached or passed through in handwritten diaries and letters sent to Germany (Borm & Seiding 2016). Excerpts from those eyewitness accounts were chosen for publication to justify the Moravians’ enterprise to political authorities and Protestant communities. In this article, I’m going to argue that the selection of published diaries and reports for print in the period 1733-1743 was determined by the missionaries’ constructions of the Far North. In

◇ Joanna Kodzik, Junior Full Professor for Arctic Humanities, Malaurie Institute of Arctic Research Monaco-UVSQ of Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Université Paris-Saclay

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the earliest years of their missionary activity, the Moravians published travel diaries and letters that present the Arctic as a space that is suitable for missionary work in many respects, a vision created thanks to a process of cultural translation turning the “otherness” of the Arctic into “similarities” according to the Moravians’ frame of mind. This was contrary to missionary travel writing from the period which tends to focus on the identification of “otherness” to transform it according to what was considered to be European civilisation and the Christian worldview as Anna Johnston has shown (Johnston 2006; Bitterli 1982, 233-234). The need to civilise the Indigenous before converting them to Christianity had been expressed in both missionary writing from other regions (Strack 1994) and reports from the Danish Lutheran mission in Greenland, in particular publications of the pioneer, the Danish-Norwegian missionary Hans Poulsen Egede (1686-1758) (Egede 1730 and 1742). The Moravians’ different approach compared to other European missionaries can be explained by their understanding of early modern society. The Moravians’ vision of community was shaped by their collective identity based on the idea of unity contrary to a model based upon hierarchies of rank and social standing. According to their theology, the Moravian Brethren refused any stratification and favoured equality between brothers and sisters coming from different backgrounds and social classes.

In the Moravians’ early missionary writings, the environment and humans were rendered in terms familiar to their congregation. Their descriptions were embedded in Moravian spirituality and referred to worldviews and material representations recognizable to the Moravian community worldwide. Thus, the Far North appears in early travel diaries as an archetype of the circumpolar regions where missionary work could be conducted (Kodzik 2020) and which provided a space defined in opposition to the South or by tracing borders. This is not very surprising if one notices that from their early days, the Moravians were keen to create a global community with members of the Unity of Brethren all over the world sharing mental loyalty, social identity and communication practices (Mettele 2009; Schattschneider 1975).

The Moravians’ communication strategy then changed some ten years after establishing the mission in Greenland as the excerpts published in the 1740s reveal. These no longer deal with evidence of

the possibility of establishing a mission and adaptation strategies. They rather focus on what is presented as their success in different domains of their missionary work, be it baptisms, religious ideas expressed by the baptised Inuit or the number of Inuit who were taught how to read. Such aspects were highlighted to refute the defamatory remarks of various opponents who presented the Moravians as a sect (Meyer 1987; BS 1742). Another purpose of these selected publications was to prove the ability of Moravian missionaries—who were not trained theologians—to carry out their missionary tasks. These publications were therefore communicative actions supposed to support the process of inclusion of the Moravian congregation in the Protestant community.

From 1733 on, when the first Moravian missionaries Matthäus Stach (1711-1787), Christian Stach and Christian David (1692-1751) were sent to Greenland, the Moravian Brethren became very important agents in reporting about the Arctic and spreading first-hand knowledge among scholars and the nobility in Europe (Jensz & Petterson 2021; Kodzik 2021a; Jensz 2012; Jensz 2021). The Moravian Church was initially created by refugees from Moravia in the Habsburg Empire who were invited in 1722 to the estate of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) in Berthelsdorf, Saxony (Germany). Having found protection, they soon built the village called Herrnhut, where other, like-minded Christians joined them. Zinzendorf became leader of the congregation and was consecrated bishop in 1737. In 1749, the Moravian Brethren, who founded a number of settlements in Europe as well as several mission stations in Danish, Dutch and British colonies while setting up a worldwide diaspora, were recognised as a Lutheran church. The sending out of the missionaries and envoys to Arctic destinations such as Greenland and Iceland was possible thanks to Zinzendorf's family connections with his cousin Sophie-Magdalene von Brandenburg-Kulmbach (1700-1770), Queen of Denmark. Until 1900, when the Moravians handed over their Greenlandic mission to the Danish Lutheran church, they established six stations in Greenland: Neu-Herrnhut (Noorliit) in 1733, Lichtenfels (Akunnat) in 1758, Lichtenau (Alliutsoq) in 1774, Friedrichstal (Narsarmijit) in 1824, Umanak in 1861 and Idlorpait in 1864. In the first half of the 18th century the Moravians made several attempts to set up a station in Lapland (Beck 1981, Kodzik 2023) and from 1740 on to create a

diaspora in Iceland (Kodzík 2022). Both of these undertakings were not successful, however, for several reasons.

In the earliest decades of missionary activity, only a few excerpts from handwritten material about Greenland were chosen for publication while unsuccessful actions in Lapland and Iceland were not communicated to the wider public. The earliest reports from Greenland – two travel diaries written by the missionaries Matthäus Stach, Christian Stach and Christian David, as well as a letter by Matthäus Stach – had been published by the lawyer and publicist Johann Jakob Moser (1701-1785) who supported the Moravians at the time in his journal *Altes und Neues aus dem Reich Gottes* in 1734 (vol. 2, Siebender Theil, 1-23; vol. 2, Siebender Theil, 24-33; vol. 2, Neunter Theil, 80-83). Six years later, a letter written by Matthäus Stach from 1733 (Marche 1740, 89-93) was published by another publicist associated with the Moravians: Christian Gottlieb Marche (1694-1768) (ADB, 299-300).

In the 1740s, the Moravian authorities decided to edit a collective volume. It contained the most important documents regarding the congregation and was dedicated also to their missions and travels in order to witness Moravian theology while rejecting acts of defamation as a sect (BS 1742). This so-called *Büdingische Sammlung*¹ appeared in three volumes in the period 1742-1745 (Brecht 2006). It was both a religious and economic justification of the Moravians' identity and practices while laying a claim to being included in the realm of Protestant churches. It contains several letters written by missionaries Matthäus Stach, Johann Beck (1706-1770) and Christian Drachardt (1711-1778), as well as diaries from Neu-Herrnhut with systematic entries presenting everyday activities from July 1740 to July 1741 and from August 1742 to July 1743.

¹ [BS] „Des acht=Jährigen Arbeiters in Grönland, Matthäus Stach, Gedancken [...] 1740“, vol. 1, 1742, p. 346-348; „Brief von Johann Beck an Herr G, 1. Junii 1740“, vol. 2, 1743, p. 181-183; „Brief von Johann Beck an Neu-Herrnhut, 16. Junii 1740“, vol. 2, 1743, p. 178-181; „Johann Beck an Matthäus Stach, Neu-Herrnhut, 14. Junii 1740“, vol. 2, 1743, p. 215-219; „Diarium der Mährischen Brüder in Grönland, von Anno 1740. den 29. Jul. biß den 14. Jul. 1741“, vol. 2, 1743, p. 433-476; „Brief von Christian Drachardt an, 24. Juli 1743“, vol. 3, 1745, p. 186-188; „Extract aus dem Grönländischen Diario von Matthäus Stach 21. Julii 1743“, vol. 3, 1745, p. 346-402.

Using the construction of the Far North

During the first ten years, the missionaries recorded in many handwritten letters, travel journals and the diary of the mission station Neu-Herrnhut their activities, the progress of the mission as well as the description of Indigenous inhabitants and their environment. Only a few excerpts were chosen for publication. The reason for raising public awareness about some selected documents which were only a small part of what was available in manuscript form is to be found in the missionaries' construction of the Arctic environment and its Indigenous societies. In the Moravian travel diaries from Greenland, their first impressions of Arctic nature and inhabitants are clearly meant to propose a different view from the received ideas of a terrible, cold, uninhabitable and dangerous North one would notably find in whaling reports and accounts of the Danish expeditions in the 17th century (Beelen 2006, Beelen 2022, Hacquebord, Steenhuisen & Waterbolk 2003). Instead, the Moravians considered Greenland as a feasible space. This concept stands for the identification of localities and their characteristics as spaces that are suitable for missionary activities. Their narrative strategy consisted of pointing out perceived "similarities" to the Moravians' habits in Europe, their religious and cultural frame of mind, as well as the social order of the congregation, assimilated to the culture of the Inuit and their environment. This construction of the Far North under Moravian eyes was then used by their authorities to justify the missionary activities or lack of efforts to those notably who considered the establishment of missions in such conditions impossible. The aim of presenting such a view of a feasible Arctic space consisted of proving the possibility of surviving in harsh climatic conditions, reaching the nomadic indigenous population and spreading the Gospel by use of even a few Greenlandic sentences only and Moravian hymns (Woodward 2008, 126; Wheeler & Eyerly 2017).

The idea of the Arctic as a feasible space was framed within the Moravian vision of globality achieved by the worldwide communication of shared identity based on the same religious experience. (Mettele 2009) An example of this vision is the missionaries' explanation of the time difference between Greenland and Germany so that their brothers and sisters in Herrnhut can participate mentally in some of their

religious life in view of maintaining a sense of belonging to the same congregation across geographical space.

This date [May 13, 1733] was an eclipse of the sun, [...], by the occasion of this eclipse I can give you information about what time it is, that is to say, when it is noon at your place in Herrnhuth, what time it is at our place in Greenland (at the place where we are now), [...]), thus, when the clock at your place shows 12 am, then it is half past six in the morning with us in Greenland, and when it is 12 am at our place, then it is half past six in the afternoon at your place, and even if there should be a half or quarter of an hour missing, it does not matter, I write these to you only because in the morning you will be already awake together, since we would then still like to be asleep outwardly and in the evening, on the other hand, you may already rest outwardly many times and we will still be up and pray for you, so that it may encourage us all the more to pray before one another, because we know that the name of our Saviour is to be glorified by us in all places, at all times, both awake and asleep. (Stach, 1734, 9-10)²

Stach refers to religious awakening and the biblical advice to stay awake in the evening, at midnight and in the morning waiting for the Saviour according to Markus 13, 35-36 (The New King James Version). This allows the creation of a global community with all members of the Moravian church spread all over the world over time and space.

Moravian visions of the Indigenous

In narratives used in official communication, all Indigenous personalities were described within the framework of Moravian religious ideas and morality. According to Zinzendorf's missionary

² „Diesen Dat. war eine Finsterniß, [...], bey dieser Finsterniß kann ich euch auch Nachricht geben, um wie viel es austrägt an der Uhr, nemlich, wenn es bey euch in Herrnhuth Mittag ist, wie viel es bey uns in Grönland (an dem Orte wo wir sind) ist, [...], also, wenn die Uhr bey euch 12. ist des Mittags, so ist es bey uns in Grönland halb 7. des Morgens, und wenn es bey uns 12. ist, so ist es bey euch halb 7. Nachmittag, und wenn es auch sollte eine halbe oder viertel Stunde fehlen, so kommts darauf nicht an, ich schreibe euch diese nur darum, weil ihr des Morgens schon manchmal werdet in Auferweckung beysamen seyn, da wir dann noch möchten dem äusseren nach schlaffen und hingegen ihr des Abends schon manchemahl möget äusserlich ruhen und wir noch auf seyn, und für euch flehen, damit es uns desto mehr aufmuntere, vor einander zu beten, weil wir wissen, daß der Nahme unsers Heylands von uns an allen Orten, zu aller Zeit im schlaff und wachen verherrlichtet werden soll.“ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the article's author.

theology, this was understood as the “identification of a community of true believers” (Schattschneider 1975), rather than simply transferring Western Christianity to the missionary field—a practice Zinzendorf strongly resisted. The purpose of choosing descriptions projecting elements of Moravian identity shared globally onto the Indigenous culture was meant to be part of a process of consolidation of the congregation. The proof of the Greenlanders’ capacity to be baptised and thus become members of the Moravian congregation was provided in descriptions envisaging the “disposition to a righteous being” (Bintz 1979, 26) or the capability to love what is good. For example, the first Greenlandic person mentioned in the travel diary from 1733 was a girl who passed away on the ship. The short sentence witnessing her death focuses on the question “whether there is anything good in her” (Stach, David & Stach 1734, 24), a question the missionaries had no answer for.

The Greenlanders’ disposition to share Christian ideas of brotherly love was deduced from the Inuit’s willingness to help them by accepting to carry heavy pieces of wood (Stach 1734, 19; Stach, David & Stach 1734, 28) or to join in the singing (Stach, David & Stach, 1734, 26) were also a point published descriptions focused on, in allusion to the Moravians’ understanding of what the unity of brethren meant (Vogt 2020, 54-87) and the importance of singing hymns as one of their main religious practices (Havsteen 2018). The main aim in the first months of the missionary work was to distinguish between baptised and non-baptised Greenlanders and to understand their mental loyalty. This proved to be quite a difficult operation as the missionaries realised that Greenlanders who claimed to be baptised had no or only a vague idea about religious matters as they saw it. The Greenlanders were therefore portrayed in detail in relation to the question of “whether they believed in God?” The behaviour of baptised Inuit who confirmed their faith was then assessed according to Moravian moral values. The missionaries quickly understood that their expectations regarding the moral habits of Christianised Inuit didn’t correspond to reality. Trying to apply their Christ-centred missionary methods, they drew the conclusion that the baptised Inuit were actually worse than “heathens”.

On the 27th, two of the heathens visited us, and I asked one of the baptised who had been in Copenhagen: if he had told the heathens anything about the Lord Jesus. But he did not understand what it was. I then asked him if he had not heard anything about the Lord Jesus?

He said: No. Then I asked him what he had been baptised for, but he did not know. At last, he remembered that he had heard of him, but he only wanted sugar, tobacco and brandy from us. So, we have seen, both on the ship and here, that the baptised are worse than the unbaptised. (Stach/ David and Stach, 1734, 26-27)³

Publishing such explanations, the Moravian Brethren justified both their missionary methods and the long process of preparing potential new members for voluntary conversion.

The Moravians' first longer description of the Inuit and their culture depicts those aspects that were important for the missionaries' survival and success, such as Greenlandic alimentation, healing practices, language characteristics, housing, mobility, and protection against the cold with adequate clothing in view of showing that they could survive in the Arctic climate by applying Inuit' adaptation strategies while being successful in spreading the Gospel (Stach 1734, 21-23). All of these aspects were presented to the wider audiences in order to persuade donors of the interest in supporting their missionary efforts in Arctic conditions, rejecting the accusations of their opponents at the same time.

Moravian views of the Arctic environment

The practice of quoting phenomena familiar to readers' frame of mind characterises also the process of constructing Moravian representations of the Arctic environment. Like many European travellers, the missionaries acted by drawing on knowledge shaped by their own European culture, additionally introducing elements associated with their religious beliefs. They therefore often referred to what they knew from Herrnhut (Gascoigne 2006). This fact reveals an identity-building process—described by Mettele (2010) in her comprehensive article—

³ „Den 27sten besuchten uns 2. Von denen Heyden und dann auch einer von den Getaufften, der in Copenhagen gewesen ist, den fragte ich: ob er den Heyden was von dem Herrn Jesu sagte? Er verstund aber nicht, was das war. Ich fragte ihn denn weiter: ob er denn nichts vom Herrn Jesu gehöret hätte? Er sagte: Nein. Da fragt ich ihn, worauf er dann getauft wäre: aber er wuste es nicht. Endlich befann er sich doch, daß er gehöret hätte von ihm, er aber wollte nur von uns Zucker, Toback und Brandtwein haben. Wir haben also gesehen, sowohl auf dem Schiff als auch allhier, daß die Getaufften ärger sind als die Ungetauft, [...]“

based on European cultural values and their Moravian faith defining them and their readers as European Christians (Mettele 2009, Peucker 2022).

The Moravians tried to achieve their main goal of community building by comparing Arctic natural phenomena to what their readers knew from their settlements. These associations can be found in most descriptions of the environment. For instance, in order to stress “similarities” between the Arctic and (central) Europe, the Moravians described aurora borealis seen from the ship close to Greenland’s coast. Indeed, Northern lights could also frequently be observed in Europe in the 18th century (Friedmann 2012). Their accounts of aurora were therefore supposed to refer to a familiar spectacle, pointing out nonetheless differences between Germany and their location, accounting for the difference in form by spatial distance, believing, as they did, to be closer to these lights up North.

On the 26th of the evening, we saw how the northern light looked like, it was very large and bright; In Germany, it looks like a fire when it burns from afar and you see it, but when you are close to it, it is not like that, but like the rainbow, when it is right in its clarity after the rain, also in the colour green, yellow, blue, white and red, and is quite beautiful to behold; it was right above our ship, not high, but close to the upper sails; it fetches so fast among each other, as if one should fence with swords, that one can hardly see so swiftly. (Stach, 1734, 5)⁴

The whales—an emblem of Arctic wildlife the missionaries initially saw from the ship—were depicted in Moravian travel diaries as visual representations of the Biblical description of Leviathan—the sea monster in the book of Job (Book of Job, 38-41):

Then the whales came from above. We saw four of them, it is what God said to Job, certainly so, that they stir the sea among themselves, as one mixes ointment and what looks particularly very cruel. They have two large holes on the top of their foreheads, from which they spray the

⁴ „Den 26sten des Abends sahen wir echt, wie der Nordschein aussiehet, denn er war überaus sehr groß und lichte; in Deutschland siehet er sich so an, wie ein Feuer, wenn es von weiten brennet und man es siehet, aber wenn man nahe dabey ist, so ist er nicht so, sondern wie der Regen-Bogen, wenn er recht in seiner Klarheit stehet nach dem Regen, auch in der Farbe grün, gelb, blau, weiß und roth, und ist recht schön anzusehen, er hat recht über unserm Schiff, auch nicht hoch, sondern nah an denen obern Seegeln, er fährt so schnell unter einander, als wenn mann sollte mit Schwerdtern fechten, daß man kaum so geschwinde sehen kann.“

water out of the holes over the sea as if smoke were coming out of the fire, they can be heard rather than seen, even if they are still as far as Herrnhuth is in length, they make such a noise. (Stach 1734, 5-6)⁵

The association of their observations with contents of the Bible is supposed to enhance the readers' understanding of the Arctic environment and the Bible by empirical method. This leads to a physico-theological vision of nature transferring the ever-present danger—a common *topos* in 18th-century descriptions of the Arctic as Schmidt (2011) has shown—to Divine providence (Mandelbrote 2020, 72; Trepp 2020, 130). Relating knowledge about the Arctic to the Bible thus becomes a prevalent practice in Moravian writing. Additionally, this description is another example of the effort to identify “similarities” between the Arctic and Herrnhut by assimilating the length of whales to the Moravians' original settlement (Stach 1734, 6). It also concerns descriptions of icebergs expressed in terms understandable for the Moravian community, the smallest one they noticed being compared to the inn in Herrnhut (Stach 1734, 8).

When describing the Arctic environment and indicating its significance for Indigenous culture, the Moravians transferred images and values of their European culture and Christian symbols to their descriptions. For example, the seals—basic nourishment for Greenlanders—had been connected to daily bread: “We also saw a lot of seals, large flocks together, and we said together that this is the Greenlanders' bread.” (Stach, 1734, 10-11) Hence: “They all live on the water and the islands because they have to look for their bread on the water” (Stach 1734, 22). The selection of such descriptions for publication reveals the Moravians' need to justify their missionary methods.

Finally, their identifying Greenlandic fauna and flora as resources given to humans to survive corresponds to the old testamentary wisdom of *dominium terrae*: peat to heat, animals to produce food but also fur, skins and other parts for clothing and boat construction, as

⁵ da kamm die Wall-Fische von oben, wir sahen ihrer 4. Stück, it is what God said to Job, certainly so, that they stir the sea among themselves, wie man Salbe menget und was sonderlich sehr grausam aussiehet, sie haben oben auf der Stirne 2. Grosse Löcher, da spritzen sie das Wasser heraus aus den Löchern über das Meer, als wie wenn ein Rauch aus der Feuer-Esse ziehet, man kann sie noch eher hören als sehen, wenn sie gleich noch so weit seyn wie Herrnhuth in die Länge ist, ein solch Gerusch haben sie.

well as plants for healing purposes were listed to give ample proof of the favourable conditions to conduct the mission and survive even without material support from Europe.

Mission as success

Excerpts selected for publication in the volume *Büdingische Sammlung*—up to ten years after establishing the first mission station, at a time when a larger group of Inuit had been baptised (more than 50 by 1743)—create a vision of missionary success. These narratives changed the perspective from depicting potential opportunities for missionary work to showcasing missionary results. They no longer used the vision of the Far North created by “similarities” to the Moravian frame of mind identified in the Arctic “otherness” to achieve their communicative goals. In Moravian narratives published in the 1740s, Greenland appears as a living space of an established Moravian congregation (Israel 1969). The missionary Johann Beck admitted in 1740 that Greenland became one of many places where “the empire of our mighty king [...] begins to expand” (BS 1742, 178). This idea put the Far North into a global vision of shared religious consensus of the Moravian Brethren.

The selection of excerpts recognizing the Moravians’ success was determined by the principal goal of the volume. To ward off scepticism about their missiological ideas, methods and even the very existence of the missions (BS 1744, 178), they were keen to prove that they taught the Greenlanders according to the principles of the Protestant faith and to document the success of their actions. The fact that Moravian missionaries were not trained theologians and not ordained by any Lutheran church caused a lot of criticism from adversaries and revealed the need for them to provide further evidence of the authority of their eyewitness accounts (Friedrich & Schunka 2017, 12). Therefore, texts chosen for this volume focus on practices of overcoming language barriers which enabled the missionaries to spread the Gospel and any action to create a Moravian congregation in Greenland, detailing in particular certain aspects of their missionary work, religious practices, and the spiritual state of their community. Whatever they did as missionaries was driven by their conviction that their missionary work was their destiny and this unshakable faith created hope for solutions.

The letters and diaries from the *Büdingische Sammlung* contain some positive reactions by the Inuit to Moravian doctrine, the missionaries' comments on the good condition of the soul of baptised Inuit and a number of descriptions of baptisms. These narratives witness the role the Indigenous members of the Greenlandic congregation played in the process of Christianisation as assistants and by helping out with translations, identifying for instance words in Greenlandic for religious phenomena not known in their culture. The Greenlanders' reading skills were considered essential in Protestant missions. Therefore, information about a number of Inuit introduced to reading was mentioned several times. To enhance the credibility of what they were claiming, the Moravians gave precise information about the Inuit and places of their origin—mentioning all the names of the Greenlanders who had been touched by Christian emotions and tracing their religious development as well as noting names of places the Inuit came from or the missionaries visited (BS 1743, 216). In published narratives, letters dictated by the Inuit addressed to the congregation in Germany and some basic theological discussions between Greenlandic assistants can also be found. Such assisted writing functions as proof of missionary efforts and the veracity of the Moravians' doctrine and writing. Some information about the Moravians' religious practices was also provided, like the reading of reports from the Moravian days of prayer held in Herrnhut or initiating the choirs (Pettersen 2021a) in 1745, according to the model of the social structure in German Moravian settlements. And, finally, the translation of fragments of the Bible into Greenlandic fits into the concept of communication of success.

The Moravians' vision of the Far North—Greenland's inhabitants and their environment—created in the discourse of missionary success in the publications mentioned above envisaged the transformation of Inuit culture according to the Moravian view of Christianity, their spirituality and the social order that resulted from it. The destruction of the Indigenous culture was therefore seen as evidence of their missionary success. The missionaries were anxious to keep baptised Greenlanders and the candidates with them at the mission station because they were convinced that intensive communication with themselves and other members of the congregation guaranteed religious development (Israel 1969, 56-60, Pettersen 2021b, Kjærgaard 2005). For the Moravians,

the creation of the Greenlandic congregation connected to a limited physical space was an indisputable success while the Greenlanders' leaving their own community of work and nutrition was a controversial and risky decision with consequences for both the baptised individuals and the abandoned group. The declaration of the Greenlanders' decisions to stay at the mission station despite the temptation to return was a clear case of justification for the Moravians' religious and social ideas. The most prominent example of missionary success showing the rejection of Indigenous culture was the refusal expressed by baptised Greenlanders to participate in the Greenlandic feast of the sun. In the account, the first baptised Inuit Samuel Kajarnak is quoted as having said to his family and friends in this context that "he had another joy in his heart" (BS 1742, 447). Other examples of successful Christianisation focus on the denial of the role of shamans. Even if the Moravians didn't force the Greenlanders to convert, they systematically tried to reduce the influence of the shamans by means of exposing them to public shame. In the diary, we can read the following example:

On the 14th, Samuel and Sarah went back to Kangerne: the Saviour gave us the grace to talk to them quite thoroughly about the circumstances of their hearts, and some confessed their witchcraft: Kassiak the sorcerer is ashamed before me, his sorcery is disgraced by us before the eyes of others. In the evening one of them began to sing and dance, so I went to him and asked him if he knew what the Saviour had done to redeem us. Then I told him how he had his hands and feet pierced with nails, and how his mouth had been soaked with vinegar. And he was very impacted. (BS 1742, 452)

Such narratives met, however, the expectations of political and religious authorities and were therefore deliberately chosen for publication.

Unlike the earliest excerpts from travel diaries and letters published in the volume *Büdingische Sammlung*, these writings from the 1740s don't describe the Greenlandic environment or climate. References to the Greenlanders' hunting practices are framed in the religious idea of Divine providence. Accounts of the missionaries' travels do not focus on the environment. Mobility is rather turned into a success story of reaching the Greenlanders' outpost in the fjords around Neu-Herrnhut and spreading the idea of the Saviour.

The strategy of choosing only success stories for publication comes even more into light by comparing published narratives with other

handwritten material from Greenland from this time. Many letters sent to Herrnhut by Matthäus Stach or Christian David created a contrary vision of the Far North to what the public audience was told in printed sources (Müller 1926). The Arctic environment and climate appear as obstacles to Moravian activities. Stach mentions many difficulties in daily life, for example: the missionaries had no food and had to eat seagrass and mussels, they had no meat and were therefore lacking strength, their journeys were risky and occurred under harsh climatic conditions like strong winds or storms. The handwritten narratives like the diary of Neu-Herrnhut (March 31, 1734) reveal both difficulties and doubts about missionary success (Olsthorn 2022, 44) as well as comments indicating even the slightest semblance of criticism about Danish missionaries which were never published of course (diary of Neu-Herrnhut from April 8, 1735, quoted by Olsthorn 2022, 45, McLisky 2015, Kodzik 2021b). Even in the 1750s, letters with requests for food were sent to Germany because the missionaries had trouble becoming successful hunters (Hahn & Reichel 1977, 365). Additionally, Stach describes conversations with Greenlanders who were not interested in Moravian religious ideas and retells the Greenlanders' explanations about their natural religion and shamans (diary of Neu-Herrnhut from April 8, 1735, quoted by Olsthorn 2022, 45). Such information was not presented to a larger audience in official communication. To end, their choice to publish only successful is confirmed by the fact that no information about the unsuccessful missions in Lapland and travels to Iceland was published in the 18th century.

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