

'Sketching the Khoikhoi': George French Angas and his depiction of the Genadendal Khoikhoi characters at the Cape of Good Hope, c. 1847

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This article investigates the first and only visit of the British artist George French Angas to the Cape Colony in 1847 with specific reference to four Khoikhoi individuals he had sketched. These sketches were later published in his book, *The Kafirs Illustrated* (London, 1849). Although Angas had made field sketches of these Khoikhoi people which were lithographed later, these sketches are not only seen as popular works of art, but opened a window into the social and cultural world of the Genadendal Khoikhoi community during the mid-19th century. The fact that Angas supplied the names and surnames of three of the four characters, allowed historians to reconstruct a brief biography of each individual.

Key words: George French Angas, Khoikhoi, colonial art, Genadendal

'Om die Khoikhoi te skets': George French Angas en sy sketse van die Genadendalse Khoikhoi karakters aan die Kaap die Goeie Hoop, c. 1847

Hierdie artikel stel ondersoek in aangaande die eerste en enigste besoek van die Britse kunstenaar, George French Angas aan die Kaapkolonie in 1847 met spesifieke verwysing na vier Khoikhoi individue wat hy geskets het. Hierdie sketse is later gepubliseer in sy boek, *The Kafirs Illustrated* (Londen, 1849). Alhoewel Angas veldsketse van hierdie Khoikhoi-mense gemaak het, wat later gelitogeer was, bewys dat hierdie sketse nie slegs as populere kunswerke is gereken is nie, maar "n venster is tot die sosiale en kulturele wereld van die Genadendal Khoikhoi gemeenskap gedurende die middel 19de eeu. Die feit dat Angas die name en vanne van drie van die vier karakters noem, het historici instaat gestel om "n kort biografie van elke individu te rekonstrueer.

Stelutewoorde: George French Angas, Khoikhoi, koloniale kuns, Genadendal

Sketching, painting, picturing, drawing, photographing, imaging, visualizing, displaying, measuring, staging, illustrating and caricaturing the Khoikhoi and San communities of South Africa had for centuries been a major pre-occupation of several colonial artists, collectors, entrepreneurs, museum exhibitionists, explorers, travel writers, scientists and colonial officials.¹ Fuelled by human curiosity and the emergence of scientific research, notably ethnography², studying the Khoikhoi and San, "their world" and "their anatomy" had clearly become an attraction, if not an obsession. Since the earliest days of colonial contact, though often distorted and misunderstood, certain indigenous Khoisan people of South Africa nevertheless had their life-styles and culture documented, their images painted and photographed, their bodies dissected and their semi-nude bodies displayed.³ By the early 19th century, "showcasing" of indigenous peoples at "freak shows" and museum exhibitions evolved into an established and popular form of entertainment and amusement in Europe. In the words of Bernth Lindfors, displaying or staging of human beings had soon developed into some kind of "ethnological show business".⁴

George French Angas arrived at the Cape in July 1847, and his primary focus was not to sketch and study the Khoikhoi of Genadendal, but a mission to gather information for his new book that would in his view depict the "races inhabiting Southern Africa".⁵ By the time he arrived at the Cape in 1847, aged 25 he had travelled extensively and had even acquired the reputation of a published author. Born in 1822 in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, he was the son of George Fife and Rosetta French Angas. His father was a successful merchant and he soon expanded his business to Australia, where he was the co-founder and commissioner of the colony of South Australia. Despite the wealth which the Angas family amassed the young Angas was not interested in a career in the family business, but he was drawn to art and exploring the world.⁶ In order to fulfil his dream of becoming an artist, he became a student of Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, an eminent sculptor, natural history artist and lithographer of his generation.⁷ After a period of tutelage that lasted four months, Angas embarked on a journey,

which took him to the Mediterranean.⁸ In 1842, before he turned 20, he published his first book based on his Mediterranean expedition entitled *A Ramble in Malta and Sicily*.⁹



Figure 1
George French Angas in 1847 (Angas, 1849)

The biographer John Tregenza wrote that Angas "soon became fascinated by the mysteries of the unexplored parts of the globe".¹⁰ Angas was a curious young man and his encounter with the indigenous peoples conquered and brutalized by British colonialism and imperialism seemed an ideal way to satisfy this curiosity. In 1844, aged 22, he set sail for Australia and New Zealand to acquaint himself with the indigenous Maoris of New Zealand and the Aboriginal people of Australia. These encounters with both societies led to the publication of two folios, namely *South Australia illustrated* and *The New Zealanders illustrated* in 1847. A more detailed account of his travels, entitled *Savage Life in Australia and New Zealand* was also published in 1847. Next on his global itinerary was "Africa.. .a country of peculiar interest"ⁿ, when he visited the Cape Colony mainly to sketch the indigenous peoples of South Africa.¹²

Displaying, staging and sketching the Genadendal Khoikhoi characters

"On 9 July 1847", recorded the Genadendal missionaries in their diaries, "an English painter, Mr Angas from London delighted us with a visit. He had been traveling in Brazil and then Australia, had stayed in New Zealand for a year and a half and everywhere he made sketches of the country and its inhabitants, which have now being published in London. Now he wanted to travel for the same purpose in the Cape Colony and adjacent territories, and thus he had come here first. He made a few sketches of Genadendal and painted the portraits of our old and young Hottentots of both sexes in the most accurate manner."¹³

Genadendal was a Moravian mission station founded in 1737 by the German missionary George Schmidt when he introduced Christianity to a small group of indigenous Khoikhoi people. When Schmidt left in 1744, evangelical activity among the Khoikhoi was only rekindled in 1792.¹⁴ Having visited Genadendal 55 years later in 1847, the mission station had evolved into a multi-cultural community comprising various social identities, which included freed slaves.¹⁵ After its re-establishment, it attracted several influential European male and female visitors, travellers, socialites and colonial officials to its location.¹⁶ European visitors were attracted to Genadendal for at least two reasons. Firstly, it was a well-known site to visit in the Cape Colony, because it had gained a reputation as a "model" missionary institution throughout the missionary world and secondly, it became a colonial attraction to behold the indigenous Khoikhoi

converts. The Cape socialite, Lady Anne Barnard, who visited Genadendal in May 1798 was curious to see and observe converted Khoikhoi. In her diaries, she wrote the following: "I had heard much, and this it was I desired with my own eyes to judge of, and to see what sort of people the Hottentots are when collected together".¹⁷ When she attended the sermon later that day, she wrote how she gazed at them and had "watched them closely".¹⁸ Thus, by the early 19th century, missionized Khoikhoi converts soon became a major attraction as they were often "displayed" to visitors by missionaries.¹⁹

If this diary entry mentioned earlier was anything to go by, then the Genadendal missionaries were clearly impressed by the credentials of the young Angas. A likeable young man, he quickly established a good rapport with the missionaries who seemed more than willing to assist the young painter as informants, translators and liaison agents in exchange for positive commentary about their work wrought among the indigenous Khoikhoi. When the Genadendal missionaries agreed to assist Angas, they had in fact agreed to "display" the four Genadendal converts, whom they thought ought to be sketched.²⁰

Within hours of his arrival, four Khoikhoi individuals selected by the missionaries were introduced to Angas. The selected four had soon become in the words of David Spurr the "object of observation".²¹ Angas, however, did much more than to observe and gaze, but had soon drawn field sketches of each Khoikhoi individual. Thus, through the eyes, paint brush and pen of Angas²², we are given a glimpse though briefly into the colonial world of four marginal Khoikhoi personalities and converts.



Figure 2
Karl Julius - Hottentot Herd boy (Angas, 1849)

The first person sketched by Angas was Karel Julius. He then authored the following text regarding Karel Julius:

"Peculiarity of the Hottentot features is strongly marked in the countenance of the boy who forms the subject of this sketch. The high broad cheek bones, the flat nose narrow chin and small sunken eyes set wide apart are all the characteristics of the Boroan descent. Most of the Hottentots lads in the Cape colony are either herd-boys or wagon-leaders. The South African bullocking-wagons are usually drawn by a team of some twelve to twenty oxen... . It is astonishing how dexterously these little Hottentot boys manage the oxen; running and shouting with

outstretched arms, like mad dervishes, and never appearing to get tired. When the wagon stops, they lie down and roll in the sand, then they start again, amid sun and dust, running and shouting and perspiring, from morn till night".²³

The Genadenal missionary museum has proved to be a valuable source of information to trace and reconstruct brief biographical accounts of three characters. Tracing their respective pasts was made possible because Angas recorded their name and surname below each sketch, except in the case of the "old woman" who, unfortunately remains anonymous. According to the baptismal records²⁴, Karel Julius was born on 10 February 1837 and he was the youngest child of Frederik and Elisabeth Julius. He had two sibling sisters, namely Louisa and Amalia. The entire Julius family had been baptized and were as a result, converted Moravian Christians. Karel's parents were born and bred near Appelskraal, before they moved to Genadendal. Karel was baptized as an infant aged two months on 12 March 1837. Frederik Julius was a woodcutter by trade and his mother Elisabeth a domestic servant. Karel's father owned a garden and some livestock. Karel Julius, like his parents, attended school and could read and write.²⁵ At the age of 25, he married Judith Snyder on 22 June 1862. Their union produced 8 children and all his offspring were baptized shortly after birth. As an adult and parent, Karel and his wife Judith endured many sad moments in life. Virtually all his children experienced a difficult childhood and most had died young. Even Judith, his wife, died aged 37, eight months after her last born, named Isaak had passed away in April 1879. He was three. The second youngest son, named Renatus, born 12 January 1875, was only eight months old when he died, while Godfried Jonathan, the third youngest died when he had barely reached the age of ten months. Karel Julius died on 4 August 1899, three months before the Anglo-Boer/South African War commenced between British forces and the Boer republics. He was 62.

At the time Angas sketched Karel Julius, he was a boy of 10 years old and, according to Angas, he was working on a nearby farm as a herder. The field sketch was said to be an accurate depiction of the child even though his face looked much more mature than a boy aged 10. This field sketch together with the other three, were lithographed at a much later stage in London. In this case, the lithographer was one M.N. Hanhart.



Figure 3
Christiaan Matthei - a half-caste Hottentot (Angas, 1849)

The second sketch as found in his book is that of another young boy, named Christiaan Matthei.

"The Griqua and Bastaard are colonial terms for the mixed races of Dutch and Africa origin. The former is less mongrel than the latter; and numerous of them reside at a settlement of their own called Griqua-town or Klaarwater, beyond the Orange River; they possess guns and horses, and lead a half-civilized existence. The Bastaards comprise every shade and variety of Half-casts throughout the colony. They are very numerous; mild and gentle, but indolent and dissipated: intoxicating liquors are too strong temptation for them to resist, and they are proverbial for drunkenness, especially in the towns, where brandy and inferior wines are to be obtained at very low prices. The subject of our sketch is a young Griqua dressed in the usual costume of leather jackets and 'crackers' as these skin trousers are termed, with a Dutch felt hat, ornamented with black and white features of the ostrich. In his hand is a small 'tschambok' or whip made of hippopotamus hide."²⁶

Once again, further investigation into the Genadendal missionary records revealed that Christian Matthei was born on 21 June 1835 and was one of five siblings. He was the second youngest child of Efraim and Eva Barbara Matthei. His father was born in the Hexriver Valley and his mother near Bot River. Christian's parents were only married on 22 February 1840 which suggests that he and his five siblings (two sisters and two brothers) were born out of wedlock. He was baptised on 3 September 1835. At the time Angas sketched Matthei he was 12 years old. Christiaan Matthei attended school and could read and write. Efraim Matthei was a farm labourer and his wife a domestic servant. None of his parents were literate, but they owned a garden and six cows.²⁷ Christiaan was a farm labourer and married Sofia Achilles on 7 August 1853 when he was 18 years old. His wife, Sofia Waalie Achilles, was ten years older than her husband. He died aged 57 in 1892 and his wife in 1895 aged 70. There is no other concrete evidence to suggest that Matthei was indeed a person of Griqua descent or that he was born in the region of Klaarwater. Both his parents were born in the Overberg and Matthei could therefore not have been a Griqua. Suggesting that Matthei was a Griqua Khoikhoi implies that Angas was either misinformed about the boy's identity, or that Angas wished to explain to his audience to what extent Genadendal had developed into a multi-racial and multi-cultural Christian community, which invariably included people of Griqua descent. If his primary focus was to portray Matthei as "half-caste", then he could have done this without reference to the Griqua people.



Figure 4
Leveregt Ari - Hottentot Herdsman (Angas, 1849)

Like Karel Julius, the depiction of Christian Matthei was definitely a posed sketch. Matthei was either standing or leaning against a wall. He is sketched wearing a jacket, a waistcoat, a shirt and trousers. A scarf is tied around his neck in the shape of a cravat. He also wore shoes or boots. The fact that Matthei appeared warmly dressed is not an exaggeration, but a fair reflection of what the boy could have worn, especially since it was winter.

The third character sketched by Angas in his book²⁸ was Lebrecht Ari. In addition to the detailed sketch, Angas penned the following brief description:

"the sketch is a portrait of an old man at Genadendal, Leveregt Ari, a pure Hottentot, about eighty years old. There were but few remaining within the Cape Colony of this enslaved and persecuted race that are without some admixture of European or Negro blood. Those commonly called Hottentots are most Creoles and half-castes, retaining in part only the characteristic features of the original Hottentot race. Nowhere within the limits of the Cape Colony are these people now to be met with existing in a wild state.... At Genadendal and several other mission stations much has been done for the amelioration and benefit of this oppressed and timid race; and the old man before us, often a life of servitude and slavery has found an asylum where he may lay his bones in peace in the soil once his own".²⁹

Lebrecht Ari was born in 1774, near Klein River in the Overberg. As a member of the Chainouqua Khoikhoi, he arrived in Genadendal in 1799 aged 25. On October 1st 1800 he became a baptism candidate. Seven years later, he was baptised on 22 February 1807 and confirmed on 20 January 1810. He celebrated his first communion on 15 February 1812.³⁰ Ari was married, but their union was childless. When his wife died, Ari never remarried. In 1816, Ari met Christian Latrobe, the Secretary of the Moravian Church, and later accompanied him along with other Khoikhoi converts into the interior to found a third Moravian mission station in the Eastern Cape named Enon. In January 1855, Ari and another Khoikhoi convert, Sebastian Hendriks, were introduced to Governor George Grey and identified as the only living individuals in Genadendal that could converse fluently in their mother tongue, namely Khoikhoi.³¹ With the assistance of a translator, Ari engaged in a personal conversation with the Governor Grey, who himself was very interested in studying indigenous languages.³² Lebrecht Ari was therefore not an unknown figure in Genadendal and his name featured prominently and consistently in colonial written records. Ari died on 17 March 1864, aged 90. He is depicted here in a seated position wearing semi-tattered western clothes which no doubt represented the "new world" and colonial influence, while the calabash in the forefront represents his "Khoikhoi-ness" and his original roots.

The fourth person sketched by Angas is an unknown person simply described as an "old Hottentot woman".

"Here is a sketch in the interior of one of the Hottentot huts at Genadendal - the oldest woman in the settlement - so old, that she can remember when the hippopotami tenanted the adjoining river of Zonder-Einde, and the Valley beyond was scattered over the flocks of ostrich and *hartebeeste* - sitting by her humble fireside, in peaceful security, surrounded by her children, even to the fourth generation. They say she numbers nearly one hundred summers; and despite her skeleton and bony frame, and the deep wrinkles that furrow her countenance, she had worn well through life of Dutch slavery and thralldom; and has lasted out, a solitary, sapless trunk, to witness the flag to freedom hoisted over the once accursed land of the Hottentot and the slave. That little boy with dark bright eyes, has white man's blood flowing in his veins, he is beautiful in his ragged blanket. His mother and grandmother are dead, and there in only that dear old soul of a great grandmother to hush his baby head to sleep upon he knee. Youth and age in strong contrast; a young and tender plant sheltering itself beneath the fostering ruin from whence it sprang".³³

Rather uncharacteristically and unlike the other three Khoikhoi characters, Angas does not mention the name or surname of the "old woman". Angas had either forgotten to record her name next to the portrait, or he had not bothered to enquire after her name. Her identity is therefore unknown and she is simply described by Angas as "the oldest woman in the settlement". The elderly lady was said to be 97 years old. This suggests that she was born around 1750, near Rivier-Sonder-End, an area originally inhabited by the Chainouqua Khoikhoi.³⁴ Other than that, we have no further information available to reconstruct a brief life history of the woman.



Figure 5
An old Hottentot woman with half-caste great-grand children (Angas, 1849)

Angas as colonial artist, travel writer and scientist

Kenneth Parker has identified George French Angas, along with Samuel Daniel, William Burchell and John Semple, as British artists who represented a particular group of colonial travel writers and artists who visited the Cape during the first half of the 19th century.³⁵ Angas is therefore singled out as an influential travel writer and colonial artist of his generation. His British background and worldview suggest that he sketched and painted for a particular European audience. Like most artists, Angas believed that his work should be exhibited to an appreciative if not an inquisitive, audience. In order to reach his audience, Angas often exhibited his sketches at public exhibitions. Throughout the 19th century, the "exhibition business" as Richard Altick called it, had become an established commercial enterprise in London, especially since such exhibitions invariably secured the sale of portraits, paintings, books and other curios.³⁶ In 1846, on his return from Australia and New Zealand, at the Egyptian Hall in London, Angas exhibited a wide selection of sketches illustrating landscapes and indigenous life of New Zealand and Australia.³⁷ In 1848, Angas and his new publisher J. Hogarth exhibited all his recently-sketched, South African portraits at a London exhibition hall.³⁸ The impact and interest in his artwork were soon translated into yet another publication. The fact that the book was published a year later in 1849 implies that the exhibited sketches presumably attracted considerable attention.

That four characters were selected and sketched by Angas suggests that they could have represented different generations, identities, pasts, histories, heritages, ages and genders. This theme seemed to have formed part of his repertoire as an artist as he also sketched indigenous characters in New Zealand and Australia with similar historical backgrounds. In 1845, he sketched two elderly indigenous individuals, namely, "old Queen Gooseberry, the Widow of Bungaree, said to be the "King" of the Sydney Aborigines".³⁹ The other was an individual called Tamara, known for his skill in manufacturing boomerangs.⁴⁰ He then went on to sketch young

boys and girls from different historical and cultural backgrounds. Tao, the Moari girl from New Zealand, is but one example.⁴¹

As far as an analysis of the Khoikhoi sketches is concerned, each sketch and individual however, in my view, represented something different. Lebrecht Ari and the "old woman" for example, sketched in a seated position, seem to have represented the plight of the colonial Khoikhoi population. Angas pitied Ari and the "old woman" and saw them as part of the dispossessed and displaced generation, who lost their freedom and identity when the Dutch colonised the Cape. As members of the dispossessed generation, Lebrecht Ari and the "old woman" lived in three "worlds", namely, their own Khoikhoi world, the Christian missionary world and the colonial world. The younger generation represented by the two boys seems to have been absorbed into the colonial society much easier. They spoke Dutch, wore western-style clothes and were also literate. They appropriated Christianity and were baptized in the Moravian church. The boys are depicted as "happy" and "joyful", indicative of their innocence and childhood. On the other hand, Lebrecht Ari and the unidentified "old woman" seem to have represented a different generation and colonial past.

Colonial representations of Khoikhoi individuals at the Cape during the 19th century appeared prejudiced and patronizing.⁴² Early colonial commentators, travellers and colonial artists often portrayed Khoikhoi men and women in a bad light, except maybe in the case of a collection of drawings made by an unknown Dutch artist during the 17th century. These sketches are to be seen as a fairly accurate reflection of the cultural, social and economic lifestyles within the context of 17th century Khoikhoi as well as Cape-Dutch society. According to Andrew Smith and Roy Pheiffer, who studied these drawings, "so few depictions of this period have come down to us in the artists' own hands without interference by European engravers and publishers. We can see here that someone 'on-the-ground' who was a competent artist could regard his subjects as 'real' people and not allow the pre-conditioned image of 'savages' to colour his view".⁴³ During the 19th century, Khoikhoi women were often depicted as perverse or promiscuous, or both, while Khoikhoi men were depicted as drunkards. European artists and travel writers went out of their way to portray or describe how "uncultured" and "uncivilized" the Khoikhoi behaved in public. Colonial artists, such as Charles Bell, whom Angas may have met in Cape Town⁴⁴ and Frederick I'Ons have often depicted the Khoikhoi people as drunks and useless people, incapable of becoming respectable human beings. As Robert Ross has written, "this sort of representation, in drama, in drawing.. was stereotyping of the most blatant variety".⁴⁵

As a travel writer, Angas was simply subsumed into existing and established colonial stereotypes. He therefore hardly challenged existing views of Khoikhoi representation as held by his predecessors nor did he introduce an alternative interpretation of Khoikhoi identity at the Cape. He had merely reinforced old colonial stereotypes. For example, reference to liquor abuse in his description of the Griqua people is one case in point. Angas insinuates that all Griqua people were by nature drunks and incapable of resisting alcohol, a vice that eventually became their master. His comment, that "intoxicating liquors are too strong temptation for them to resist, and they are proverbial for drunkenness", illustrates this point all too well.⁴⁶

Angas too subtly focused on negative descriptions of Khoikhoi society. His comment regarding the "little boy with dark bright eyes, has white man's blood flowing in his veins" is another case in point. Angas subtly discredits Khoikhoi women for allowing themselves to be seduced and impregnated by white men. In the written text, Angas insinuates that Khoikhoi women were "easily" seduced. He did not, for example, argue that sexual intercourse was not always consensual and that many Khoikhoi women could have been raped.

Like most of his British predecessors and contemporaries, who visited the Cape since the early 1800s, Angas too was obsessed with ethnicity, race and genetic make-up. As a result, he categorised his characters into "pure" Hottentots and "half-castes" or those described by

Angas as "bastardized". Lebrecht Ari and the "old woman" are depicted as "pure" Khoikhoi, whereas her grand children and great grand-children were of mixed race. The reader is constantly reminded of their mixed race and multiple identities. Angas had therefore drawn a clear distinction between what he called "pure" Hottentots and "half-caste" Hottentots. One is not sure how Angas arrived at this conclusion, but one suspects that the missionaries had a hand in this. By harping on race and race-related matters, Angas thus reinforced age-old colonial images, descriptions and colonial stereotypes of Khoikhoi individuals that date back centuries.⁴⁷ By the 1840s and 1850s there were hardly any "pure" Khoikhoi residing in Genadendal. Many of the Khoikhoi inhabitants were of Khoi-descent rather than being "pure" Khoikhoi. Lebrecht Ari and the old "Hottentot" woman aged 80 and 97 respectively were "pure" Khoikhoi. By the 1860s, Ari and a Khoikhoi named Sebastiaan Hendriks, were for example, singled out by the missionaries as the only persons alive in Genadendal that were able to converse fluently in the Khoikhoi language.⁴⁸ This suggests that the generation represented by Matthei and Julius were unable to converse in the Khoikhoi vernacular even though they were completely literate and fluent in Dutch.

Angas's fascination with race is fortified by his constant referral to the physical descriptions of his characters. Like his contemporaries and predecessors, notably John Barrow, the travel writer and private secretary to the Cape governor, Lord McCarthy, Angas too focused on the facial and physical features of his subjects. Angas's description of Karel Julius illustrates this point all too well when he asserted that, "peculiarity of the Hottentot features is strongly marked in the countenance of the boy... . The high broad cheek bones, the flat nose narrow chin and small sunken eyes set wide apart". Ironically, nearly fifty years earlier, the colonial official John Barrow penned a similar description of Khoikhoi facial features, describing them as people with "flat noses, high cheek-bones, prominent chin.. .".⁴⁹ The nearly verbatim physical description of the Khoikhoi suggests that Angas could have read a well-known text at the time, authored by Barrow, namely, *An Account of Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (volumes 1 and 2) published in 1801.⁵⁰ As Kenneth Parker has suggested, most European readers regarded it as an authoritative work in describing indigenous societies of the Cape Colony because it was based on the personal observation of Barrow.⁵¹ These were therefore atypical descriptions of how travel writers depicted and described Khoi individuals. Angas therefore simply cottoned on to these descriptions to align himself with an established, yet biased opinion of Khoikhoi society.

His depiction of the Khoikhoi wearing western-styled dress was not an exaggeration, however. By the 1840s, the standard of living of the Khoikhoi converts had improved considerably at least as far as their attire was concerned. Since the early 1800s, second hand clothes were obtained from Europe on a regular basis and given to Khoikhoi converts. Had Angas sketched the Khoikhoi of Genadendal wearing loincloths, animal skins and similar attire, it would have been highly inappropriate and incorrect.⁵²

This brings us to another matter, namely accuracy. In her critique of Angas's depiction of the Zulu, the eminent art historian Sandra Klopper has questioned, challenged and critiqued Angas's depiction of the Zulu. She concluded that his images "are thus more a reliable record of the aesthetic concerns, cultural assumptions and imperialist aspirations of his own society, than they are a document of the people they purport to depict".⁵³ As mentioned earlier, Matthei's Griqua identity could not be verified in the missionary records. Angas's written texts and commentaries in the case of Matthei and the Griqua people are in need of serious deconstruction.⁵⁴ With regard to the accuracy of the portraits, the missionaries verified this when they wrote that Angas sketched the Khoikhoi characters in a "most accurate manner".⁵⁵ While we can accept that the sketches were fairly accurate depictions of what he observed, the accompanied texts were not so reliable. It appears that these were based upon other sources and were not eyewitness descriptions. Moreover, the accuracy and authenticity of these field drawings became,

however, questionable the moment they were lithographed. As far as Angas and his portraits are concerned, it must be emphasized that there existed a difference between what he observed, what he sketched and what he wrote. Angas may also have misled his audience as far as his travels were concerned. During his extensive travels, which were essentially confined to the Cape Colony and colonial Natal, it is highly unlikely that he ever visited Griquatown, yet he gave readers the impression that he had.

One could also perhaps argue that Angas provided his audience with a romanticized image of the Khoikhoi and underplayed the real challenges faced by Khoikhoi in Cape colonial society. Angas gives the impression that the incorporation and absorption of Khoikhoi individuals into colonial society was an easy and uncontested process. Even though all these portraits were "posed", "staged" and even "idealized", it does not detract from the fact that Karel Julius, Christian Matthei, Lebrecht Ari and the "old woman" were not a "fabrication" of Angas's imagination, but that they were in fact real persons with real identities.

Unlike established colonial artists such as Charles Bell and Frederick I'Ons who portrayed Khoikhoi characters in the worst possible way, Angas steered clear of blatant negative imaging when he sketched the Khoikhoi. As an artist, he portrayed the Khoikhoi in a positive light and not as objects of ridicule or freaks. He certainly did not depict any of his characters *per se* as drunks, lazy, "uncivilized" or as an embarrassment to their community. In fact, Angas's sketches in this context are to be seen as counter images of the many anatomical depictions of nude, lifeless and usually dissected Khoisan individuals.⁵⁶ But then again his style was such that he virtually portrayed all his characters in a positive light. As John Trengenza has noted: "his pictures never convey fierce energy: his people rarely sweat, shove or jostle or suffer comic accidents or wear muddy clothes. At the same time, they are never mocked or caricatured. Angas respects his fellow human beings too much to diminish them, whatever their race or social background ...[and] his portraits of Maories, Aborigines and [Kafirs] Africans his subjects are almost always invested with dignity".⁵⁷ Angas thus sketched and presented all his characters with a great degree of respectability.

The message(s) that Angas wished to convey in my view was three-fold. Apart from the fact that these portraits were in the first instance, works of art, he portrayed the four Genadendal Khoikhoi as representatives of a community in transition. The "old woman" and Lebrecht Ari maintained aspects of their indigenous identity and at the same time, they acquired additional identities along the way. On the other hand, the younger generation, represented by Karel Julius and Christiaan Matthei, were forced to distance themselves from their original indigenous identity, practically since birth. Angas could thus portray all his indigenous subjects as completely "westernized" in virtually every sense.

Secondly, the key driver behind this rapid transition of these Khoikhoi characters into colonial subjects and Christian converts was the Moravian church, Christianity and its agents, the missionaries. Angas, for example, praised the Genadendal missionaries for being instrumental in "civilising" the Khoikhoi. As Angas had put it, "Christianity and civilization go hand in hand".⁵⁸ The four characters that Angas had sketched were examples of indigenous people who had appropriated Christianity and had become "civilized" Christian converts.

Thirdly, besides being an explorer, author, colonial artist and collector, Angas wished to make another statement to his peers. An ambitious and privileged young man as he was, Angas had operated and lived in an era when the production of scientific knowledge, the collection of plant and animal specimens and the display of humans, seems to have captured the interest of individuals, associations and societies around the world.⁵⁹ In this context, he increasingly saw himself as a man of science, or in his words, an "ethnologist" to be exact. Having travelled and explored Australia and New Zealand during the early 1840s and having published his findings exhibiting its aboriginal peoples, their cultures and customs no doubt enhanced his reputation

as a published scholar, colonial artist and "travelling scientist".⁶⁰ A self-proclaimed and self-made "scientist", his sketches of the Genadendal Khoikhoi and the Zulus of King Mpanda were seen as his contribution "towards History of the human-race, - that grand science of Ethnology, which teaches us more and more that 'the noblest study of mankind is man'".⁶¹ Through the combination of drawings, accompanied by brief biographical descriptions, he had in fact brought Africa and certain African societies to the British Imperial world.⁶²

Epilogue

Khoisan images be they sketched, photographed or even filmed, continue to feature very prominently in the psyche of South Africans and those abroad.⁶³ As South Africa evolved into becoming a "rainbow nation" since 1994, greater credence was given to "first nation" people as their status and place in the "new" South Africa were re-assessed. The incorporation of the Khoisan peoples in the new Coat of Arms, the national symbol of South Africa, foregrounds the Khoisan people in a major way. Amongst other things, it depicts South Africa's diverse histories, cultures and traditions.⁶⁴

Even in post-apartheid South Africa, the obsession and fascination with the Khoikhoi and San images continues.⁶⁵ At several Khoisan cultural villages in Kagga Kamma and the Kalahari Gemsbok Nature Reserve, for example, many modern-day Khoisan individuals are often photographed and filmed by curious tourists. Present-day Khoisan communities and individuals of Khoisan descent are therefore still very much under "surveillance" and "gazed upon".⁶⁶

The encounter between George French Angas and the four characters he sketched was brief, yet significant. Through the curiosity of Angas and his artistic ability to sketch colonial characters in colonial settings, he had in fact brought to life the identities of four very different Khoikhoi individuals. Wittingly or unwittingly, Angas had not only documented the pasts of four relatively unknown and very different characters, but he had in fact presented us with a brief pictorial or visual history of four Genadendal Khoikhoi converts. It also allowed historians to track, trace and then reconstruct some kind of visual biography of indigenous Cape colonial communities. Nevertheless, in their lives are mirrored the forgotten voices and histories of many "unknown" Khoikhoi individuals. In the context of reconstructing the past of marginal indigenous characters, these four individuals had undoubtedly represented a much wider constituency than the Genadendal Khoikhoi. The historical value of these sketches should not be underestimated, however. Though distorted, misinterpreted and misrepresented by others, these sketches and images must invariably be seen as what Janell Hobson called "artistic productions"⁶⁷, aimed at remembering and revering the Khoikhoi, rather ridiculing them. Sketches such as these, argues Gail Collins, "can be used to place people in contexts and tell stories of humanity".⁶⁸

Finally, by the late 19th century, the introduction of the camera had to a great extent replaced hand-drawn field sketches. The use of portrait photography by anthropologists, scientists, missionaries and colonial officials soon led to the emergence of what Nuno Porto calls "native portraiture".⁶⁹ Within this new genre of colonial photography and portraiture, 'racial type' photography" as the historian Andrew Bank has recently alluded to it, became the preferred method of categorising and reinforcing racial and cultural differences between people.⁷⁰

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