

Matthew Unangst Research Report  
Columbia University Library Research Awards, 2013-2014

I spent three weeks in July and August conducting research for my dissertation at Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary. My dissertation explores German conceptions of space and race in today's mainland Tanzania at the outset of German colonization there. For many people living in German East Africa, missionaries were their primary contact with the European presence. Missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, became imbricated in local social and political networks. Missionary publications and reports are therefore the best source for learning about local societies, at least for the first decade of German colonization. I spent most of my time at Burke Library reading the library's extensive collection of German missionary publications from the period. The library's collections are especially excellent in the area of German Protestant missionary publications. The library's staff, especially Matthew Baker and Anthony Elia, were extremely helpful in getting settled, and finding and acquiring all of the materials I needed, many of which were stored off-site. Among the publications I was able to examine were the *Berliner Missionszeitschrift*, the *Allgemeine Missions Zeitschrift*, *Die katholischen Missionen*, the *Missions-Blatt aus der Brüdergemeine*, and the *Evangelisches-Lutherisches Missionsblatt*. I also took advantage of the library's collections of German missionary pamphlets and books from the period, among them some written by the leading figures in German mission work in East Africa, to further explore German missionary thought about East African peoples. The missionary sources at the library were richer than I expected to find. I anticipated relatively brief excerpts from missionaries' reports and a lot of broad articles about missionary work in East Africa, but many of the periodicals included reports from missionaries in the field in their full detail. The periodicals' level of detail may obviate a trip I had planned to a missionary archive in Germany. I am now integrating my research into my writing as a major part of the source base for every

chapter of my dissertation. Missionaries and mission societies were probably the most prominent voice (sometimes) arguing against the colonial state's attempts to remake East African societies. Missionaries often took a more long-term view of the political situation on the ground than did the colony's administration, and were certainly more attuned to how policies would work on a local level.