



Accessing Arid Lands

“Quite like a grave.”¹ These were the words of German Missionary Johannes Olpp when describing his experiences in the hinterlands of Angra Pequena. After boarding the steamer *Maria Johanna*, and following a long journey, he reached the small coastal settlement in 1865. Like many after him, he could not hide his disappointment. What he saw was not really a settlement; it was at best a clutter of run-down shacks located at the end of the world. Although guano traders working in the region at times frequented the outpost, it had taken until 1860 for the first European, English trader David Radford, to permanently settle there.² African societies in the region generally moved on. Olpp himself faced numerous logistical difficulties: first, and following a long journey, he had to get ashore. Angra Pequena was a natural harbor that provided some safety. Still, shallow waters and hidden cliffs forced him to rely on a surfboat. Once ashore he faced a lack of shelter. Camping on the beach turned out to be a terrible idea. As he put it, a major storm left me “dumbfounded.”³ Olpp had been aware of the desert landscapes that would await him. Yet seeing it all firsthand still stunned him: “There it lay in front of me, in the desert. In vain does one’s eyes search for a blade of grass. One can barely envision anything less dismal than this waded steppe land, in which even a three to four-day journey does not unearth even the littlest of vegetation. This land I am supposed to become fond of?”⁴ A sketch Olpp added to his volume paints a picture of a remote and godforsaken outpost, a frontier environment imprisoned between ever-encroaching dunes on one side, and the ice-cold treacherous waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the other.

Questions around access defined German colonial affairs in Southwest Africa. When German businessman Adolf Lüderitz claimed Angra Pequena in 1883, he wanted guano, furs, ivory, and cattle; more importantly, he hoped for the discovery of copper, gold, and certainly diamonds. Reaching such potential treasures, however, was a whole other story. As illustrated in chapter 1, those who had come before him had already looted many commodities. Plus, and as Lüderitz had written to the German Foreign Office in 1882, “Of the best bays the British have already taken possession, and so I have to be content with

some fitting landing spot.”⁵ With Walvis Bay snatched up he was at least able to claim the other entry point, Angra Pequena, later known as Lüderitzbucht. German Missionary Johannes Olpp called it “Without a doubt . . . the best among those few along the coastline.”⁶ Once German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck decided to grant governmental protection, Angra Pequena developed into what colonists ended up calling “the only entry portal for Germandom into Southwest Africa.”⁷ Over time, and within the context of nationalism and industrialization long defining European affairs, administrators and all kinds of experts arrived from beyond the horizon. For some early dreamers, this seemed like a good start. However, dangerous ocean currents remained difficult to navigate, the arid Namib Desert with its high desert dunes was hard to cross, and a lack of drinking water in and around Angra Pequena greatly limited possibilities for settlements. Central Namibia, an area situated on the central plateau and characterized by somewhat more water and more fertile lands, offered better opportunities for transformations into a settlement colony. Without claims to Walvis Bay, however, German colonists had to look for their own entry point, a logistical endeavor that defined the early years of colonial rule. In that sense, infrastructure defined rule, as did geopolitical circumstances and local resistance.

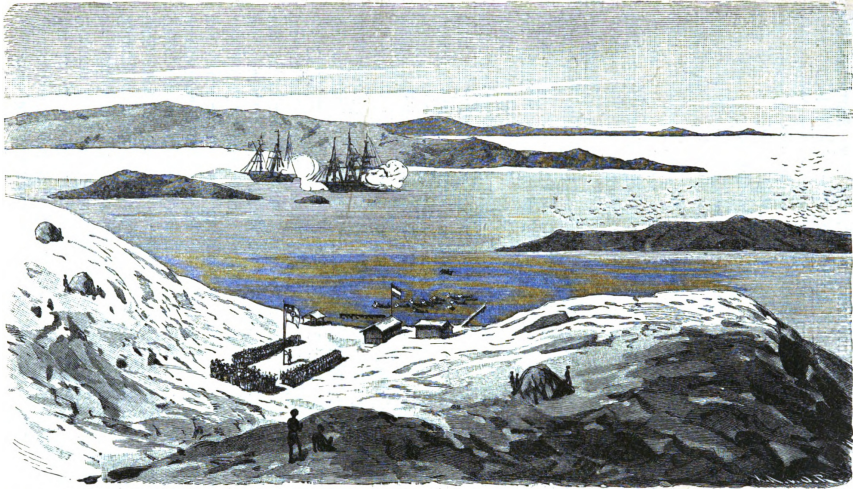
These early quests for entry points, understood as environmental infrastructure, are front and center in chapter 2. Again, aware of the fluidity between precolonial and colonial logistics, the first section begins with the creation of a German protectorate in Southwest Africa. Apart from introducing Adolf Lüderitz and broader political decisions, this part centers natural forces and existing African environmental infrastructure; it also explores the growth of missionary structures. The second section then explores changes in traffic flows following the creation of the German protectorate. After Lüderitz’s arrival in Angra Pequena efforts to find safe landing places and ways to cross the desert became essential for the future of the colony. Whereas newcomers could rely on existing animal engineering and the Bay Road, reaching beyond the Namib Desert remained a challenge. The third section then focuses on efforts to establish a beachhead in Angra Pequena. The search for an additional harbor and the subsequent reorientation toward central Namibia, discussions about the acquisition of Walvis Bay, and the foundation of Swakopmund speak volumes about the importance of a reliable gateway.

Our Place in the Desert

A telegram dated 24 April 1884, a Thursday, marked the inauguration of German colonialism. Colonial fantasies and stints in empire had, of course, long defined German history.⁸ But that day an endorsement of activities in South-

west Africa marked the official beginning of the Second Reich's colonial efforts. That had all to do with the fact that the German Imperial government granted businessman and adventurer Adolf Lüderitz its protection. Based in Bremen, Northern Germany, and following the death of his father, Lüderitz had been mostly interested in the acquisition and trade of guano and tobacco. By 1881 he already owned a trading post in the port of Lagos in British West Africa.⁹ In April 1883, his twenty-two-year-old agent Heinrich Vogelsang then cruised into the bay of Angra Pequena on the brig *Tilly*. Rhenish missionary and supporter of German colonialism Johannes Bam accompanied Vogelsang as the latter negotiated a treaty with Captain Joseph Fredericks.¹⁰ A group of Oorlam-Nama, later known as Bethany people, had settled in the region. They had migrated between the coastline and the Fish River around 1780. Some, the !Nami-Inūs, had stayed temporarily near the bay.¹¹ According to one settler *storie*, local groups wondered why Germans would build a house where there is no water. "They will die quickly."¹² In any case, Lüderitz "bought" the land by agreement on 1 May 1883. He knew about the rich guano deposits on the coast and had a report pointing to copper deposits; he also wanted gold and was confident that he could find diamonds.¹³ The German flag was thus raised on 12 May 1883. About a year later, in April 1884, the endorsement of the German government would provide the needed protection. Two ships, the *Leipzig* and *Elizabeth*, arrived in the harbor, and soon surfboats pushed toward the shoreline. The family magazine *Daheim* later described the scene in detail, including the proclamation declaring the takeover of the area and the twenty-one-gun salute that echoed over a seemingly empty bay (Figure 2.1).¹⁴

Several weeks after the initial German proclamation, Captain Fredericks agreed to a second sale. For the price of 600 pounds, probably paid in goods, and 260 rifles, that treaty included territory stretching from the Orange River, the border to the neighboring Cape Colony in the south, all the way north to the 26th parallel, and inland for twenty geographical miles. There had been no explanation that a geographical mile is about 4.5 times the size of an English mile. According to two scholars, "Even by the low standards of European colonialism, . . . [this agreement] was exploitative and one-sided. It is even suggested that Vogelsang may have plied Joseph Fredericks with liquor during the negotiations."¹⁵ Merchant and agent Theophilus Hahn, the son of Rhenish missionary Johannes Samuel Hahn, had acquired a doctorate on the Nama language. He now advised Vogelsang on how to best gain such concessions. In October 1884, Fredericks signed a treaty of "friendship and protection" with Gustav Nachtigal, at the time the German Consul-General for the west coast of Africa. Fredericks was the first African leader in the region to sign such a treaty, soon followed by Chief Haibib of the Topnaar Nama and Hermann von Wyk of the Rehoboth Basters. Nachtigal, prior to his death at sea in 1885, appointed Vogelsang temporary German consul, later replaced by jurist Heinrich



Kaufstation der deutschen Flagge in Angra Pequena, am 7. August 1884 durch S. M. Schiffe „Elisabeth“ und „Leipzig.“ Nach der Spitze eines Augenzeugen vom Bord der „Elisabeth.“

Figure 2.1. “Hoisting of the German flag in Angra Pequena, 7 August 1884,” Reinhard Zöllner, *Der schwarze Erdteil und seine Erforscher* (1887), 386, HathiTrust/public domain.

Ernst Goering, the father of the Nazi Hermann Goering. As the first imperial commissioner of Southwest Africa, Goering concluded additional “protective treaties” with leaders at Warmbad, Keetmanshoop, Berseba, Hoachanas, Rehoboth, Omaruru, and Okahandja.¹⁶ One protection treaty signed by Herero leader Kamaharero in 1885 included a valley known by its Dutch name Windhoek (windy corner). Located at a strategic juncture between north and south, German commander of the colonial troops, Curt von François, saw the whole area as “deserted,” empty of people.¹⁷ Of course different groups had long lived there. At the time Oorlam captain Jonker Afrikaner, known among the Herero as Kakuuko Kamukurouje, settled “at the fountains of Otjomuise ([Klein-]Windhoek)” in 1840.¹⁸ In that sense, these were not empty spaces, no *terra nullius*, although colonial discourses at times saw them as exactly that or at least did not think the inhabitants mattered much.¹⁹ At the same time, Africans had their own motives for working with the Germans. Herero Maharero, son of Tjamuaha, had originally expected help from the British against Nama groups; by 1885 he eventually accepted German “protection.” His son Samuel later aimed to extend his power with the help of the Germans by becoming the next Herero paramount chief. To succeed in this ploy he welcomed German assistance on some level, and that came at a price: land, labor, cattle.²⁰ For the Herero, trade also mattered, especially during ecological crises such as drought. At those times they more directly depended on the export of

indentured labor for goods and firearms.²¹ Others resisted. Nama chief Hendrik Witbooi, for example, forced Germans to rethink and reorganize their attempts to wedge their way into Southwest Africa after refusing to surrender to German control.²² Of course, German claims to large territories, more than 2.5 million square kilometers by the end of 1884,²³ meant little on the ground even if officially endorsed by the Berlin Conference in February 1885.

Individuals such as Englishman William Coates Palgrave had long framed the potential for transforming the region into a productive settler space. Heading the Palgrave Commission instituted by the Cape Colony government to hear from local leaders in Southwest Africa, he had traveled to central Namibia first in 1876. Whereas the reluctance to sign protection treaties with Maharero were in large part tied to differences in the vision of the empire between the Cape Colony and the British government, his Photo Album offers insights into outside fantasies about the region. Made up of snapshots taken by an experienced photographer,²⁴ the album sketches out potential transformations. Take one photo showing a barren, partially rocky, and arid desert landscape. A closer look reveals a small figure with his rifle gazing toward the horizon of this unknown and seemingly endless hostile land at the edge of civilization; a similar image showcases the rocky, sandy, and barren panorama much closer yet with a similar underlying message.²⁵ In contrast, we also see roads crossing those landscapes. According to historian Jeremy Silvester, that dichotomy points to larger opportunities for development.²⁶ The same applies to water. Silvester claims that “Palgrave’s argument that the land has the potential for agricultural development required an emphasis on the water sources that could be tapped in an arid land.”²⁷ A stunning nineteen of the eighty-five photographs show rivers or some watering hole, an emphasis neglecting realities on the ground and inviting Western colonial fantasies tied to future development.

Missionaries within the region had shaped environmental infrastructure in an effort to make such transformation a reality. The London Missionary Society, which employed missionaries from England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and Germany, originally moved into the area north of the Orange River in 1805–1806. According to one contemporary voice, the Society carried God’s word “in a waterless world where they were expected to become self-supporting little havens of piety.”²⁸ By the 1840s, the German-based Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft (Rhenish Mission Society, RMG) took over, quickly becoming the largest organization in Southwest Africa. Soon missionaries such as the aforementioned Johannes Olpp became the first German “experts” regarding place, people, and potential transformations. Take Carl Hugo Hahn, who worked for the RMG in central Namibia between 1842 and 1873. As visible in his writings, he saw himself as a pioneer at the frontier not just regarding religious work but also when it came to logistics and the cultivation of landscapes.²⁹ According to fellow missionary Carl Gotthilf Büttner, not magic but persistence and hard

work were required for transforming the land and turning an arid wasteland into spaces with hundreds of thousands of date trees.³⁰ “Therefore this desert, which one has to cross before reaching the rich interior, offers people a variety of rich and desirable products, plus that the mountain ranges, whose naked rocks lay exposed westward towards the coast, still have some treasures in ores and rocks in their interior to retrieve.”³¹ Once Lüderitz arrived later on, Büttner stated that missionaries, just like Robinson Crusoe, had for fifty years colonized what they saw as the *Urzustand* (primitive or original state).³² Büttner, like other missionaries, had a complex view of Africans, and he actually supported intermarriage.³³ Plus, and as some of the scholarship indicates, missionaries were also not too enthusiastic about the German colonial project.³⁴ Yet colonial narratives more broadly soon spoke of a local African population as nomadic, without religion, and disconnected from trade. One report noted, “The Hottentots are . . . nomads, but they are not even competent herdsmen. . . . Their instability [*Unbeständigkeit*] . . . [is due especially to the fact] the Namaquas don’t know how to make anything orderly out of their country.”³⁵ In a sense, such rhetoric was not surprising. For one, missionaries had to learn, and that took time. And, misrepresentation of sophisticated pre-colonial structures in a way justified missionary and colonial presence. Missionaries also began pushing local populations to become sedentary farmers. Johannes Samuel Hahn, for instance, wrote after nine months, “The economic endeavor has not worked in our favor” given cold weather and African laziness.³⁶ Many local populations had little interest in such systems. Those reactions then frustrated missionaries, confirmed their existing biases, and only motivated them to expand their efforts. And although sources remain largely silent about what Germans learned from the local population in that process, it is clear that missionaries “appropriated ‘heathen’ cultures through their studies of cultural artifacts” such as language, rituals, religious beliefs, myths, oral history, and natural environment,³⁷ learning much about locality and environment along the way.

Discussions around the potential for transforming nature are most visible in descriptions of environmental infrastructure such as missionary stations. By the end of 1883, the RMG had a total of sixteen mission stations in Namibia, eight each in Namaqualand and Hereroland.³⁸ In their view, and in line with colonial officials later on, missionaries had created little hubs in the middle of hostile, harsh, uncivilized, and ungodly environments, doing pioneering work at the frontier.³⁹ These “islands of the civilized,” to follow such narratives, those lonely outposts days if not weeks away from fellow countrymen, were made-up of European-style houses and shined like beacons of light within inhospitable sceneries. Missionary Olpp’s journey inland tells such a story: “I told myself that older brethren and profit-searching traders existed in the interior, once shaking my head when looking at the monotony of the



Bethanien.

Figure 2.2. “Bethanien,” Olpp, *Erlebnisse im Hinterlande von Angra-Pequena*, 2nd ed. (1896), 14, HathiTrust/public domain.

sand desert.”⁴⁰ A couple of sketches illustrate his trek, with one capturing the remoteness as he traveled along barren rocks. A second one then displays the mission station of Bethanien as an island in this sea of emptiness: a church and a home, like an oasis, surrounded by trees and bushes, beautifully embedded into its surrounding landscape (Figure 2.2). “Most pleasing to me was the nice little church with its two little towers and within that a devotional parish [that had been] summoned.”⁴¹ Countless other accounts highlight the lush green of trees and bushes calling travelers from afar. Carefully tended vegetable gardens, providing sustenance for mind, body, and soul, formed repeating themes and pillars in such colonial frontier narratives. An article in a geography bulletin pointed to the labor put into the creation of such a garden after describing the difficulties in crossing the Namib Desert: “It must be pointed out that figs, pomegranates, grapes, apples, pears, peaches and more thrive in the missionary garden here; even corn, grain, vegetables and more are grown there. The lack of water in the area makes large scale cultivation of the mentioned crops impossible though the soil would be perfect for it.”⁴² A British explorer noted that missionary Heinrich Schmelen “labored upwards of thirty years in the wilderness.”⁴³ Expeditions commented on these hubs as well. Take Francis Galton, a half-cousin of Charles Darwin, who described the missionary station Schepmansdorf as “prettily situated on a kind of island in the middle of the Kuisip [Khuseb] River bed near a clump of fine trees, somewhat resembling elms.” Two houses and “the white-washed chapel” marked the center of this

hub.⁴⁴ “The lot of a missionary in Africa is a hard one,” commented explorer James Chapman, defined by trial, self-denial, and deprivation.⁴⁵ Over time, descriptions and sentiments of missionaries as creators of civilized spaces within hostile environments became a stable reference in most European travel accounts, often hiding existing environmental infrastructure while serving as markers that pointed toward a promising future.

The inception of German colonialism in 1884 marked somewhat of a turning point. Bismarck seemingly had little interest regarding German involvement in Southwest Africa. For him, and to follow historian Christoph Nonn, this episode had all to do with domestic politics. The chancellor hoped to box in a more liberal and Anglophile Friedrich, the successor of Wilhelm whom the iron chancellor feared. A geopolitical moment defined by the Three Emperor’s Agreement, Russian and British rivalries in Asia, and conflicts between France and Britain regarding Africa gave Bismarck the opportunity to act. The chancellor’s move excited the masses, increased frictions with the British thereby limiting Friedrich’s policy options, and gave Bismarck the chance to burnish his own image of an honest broker at the Berlin Conference. In this sense, the chancellor achieved his objectives.⁴⁶ His disinterest and lack of support to colonial investments and endeavors thereafter has to be understood in this context. Of course what might have been a shrewd and successful domestic ploy in line with Bismarck’s overall *Realpolitik* would have real consequences in Southwest Africa. After all, Lüderitz, along with many in the German public saw the government’s protection of German interests just as the beginning.

Reaching Southwest Africa

Landing in Angra Pequena could be a nightmare. The harbor consists of two natural bays: Robert Harbor and the bay of Angra Pequena, later known as Lüderitz Harbor. Both can provide safe refuge from unpredictable ocean waters. Yet reaching them was not child’s play. In 1884, Adolf Lüderitz, accompanied by Swiss botanist Hans Schinz, a mining inspector, and a couple of others had begun taking stock of the region. On the hunt for diamonds, they hoped for easy access along inlets such as the Orange River in the south. One such inventory trip fell short: a captain simply refused to steer the ship into the rough waters and land at the river’s mouth.⁴⁷ In a letter to his mother, Schinz spoke about the dangers to life and limb once landing in Angra Pequena: hurricane-like winds had “ripped our sail while the angry ocean waters hid the underwater cliffs.”⁴⁸ German reports soon collected all kinds of knowledge about natural forces shaping the region. “The approach of the coastline is made more difficult due to the foggy air along exactly that,” noted a maritime bulletin in 1884. “The impact of cold southern winds with the exceedingly warmed land

form very intensely moist precipitation which concentrates along the coastline into fogbanks and lingers above the water, making estimates of the distance away from the beach impossible, meanwhile the mountain ridges and peaks are visible, soon the latter are hidden, only freeing reefs and surf along a rather uniform shore [to the viewer's gaze], based on which again any orientation turns out to be rather difficult, most of the time impossible. A lack of sea markers and identifiers of any kind makes all that even more apparent."⁴⁹ Whereas that publication added that Angra Pequena provides "suitable anchorage for larger ships,"⁵⁰ approaching the harbor remained tricky. On 1 February 1885, Lüderitz's brig *Tilly* ran into reefs nearby. Fully loaded with drilling devices, agricultural equipment, and other resources, it sank quickly right behind Penguin Island.⁵¹ This loss was a devastating blow, leaving expert hydrologist Ludwig Conradt stranded.⁵²

Those safely entering the colony described Germany's only beachhead and supposed gateway to colonial glory with mixed feelings. At least Ernst Walter Wegner, an employee of Lüderitz who spent about six years in the area, was not impressed. In a letter home dated June 1883 he wrote, "The land in which we currently live is a complete desert. As far as the eye can see it only spots rocks and sand, and we have to get any drop of water from Cape Town. It only rains here about once a year and of actual vegetation there can be no say anywhere. Just a few dry bushes and cacti make a scrawny living. It really does look like as if a curse of the Lord is laying on this land."⁵³ Drinking water was simply not available in Angra Pequena. As Olpp had pointed out, "One is looking for a water source along the beach in vain and yet water is the main need for settlers. It has to be brought in from Cape Town."⁵⁴ He had added elsewhere, "With a continuing lack of rain these [river beds] run dry completely and the amount of constant [flows of water] in the land is so little that no 1,000 European settlers, all of whom need [water for] their own and for their cattle, could exist. Deep interior ponds, that never run dry, are missing completely."⁵⁵ Riverbeds nearby only held a brackish and salty liquid. Without water holes or springs on the west side of the Namib Desert newcomers had to bring it in all the way from far away Cape Town, a logistical nightmare and expensive undertaking. Explorer archeologist and chemist Waldemar Belck, who arrived in the region in 1884, still remained confident in German ingenuity when noting that "Mr. Lüderitz is already digging wells energetically, and even if accessing water that way should not work, installing larger cisterns and reservoirs should solve the misery completely or at least in part."⁵⁶

Whereas access to drinking water might have been solvable, having to cross the Namib Desert seemed a terrifying prospect with less apparent answers. Belck wrote in 1884, "In the surroundings of the bay absolutely nothing is growing."⁵⁷ Mine manager Hermann Pohle noted in his early descriptions that "the eye is searching in vain for a green spot, even just a bush or a tree. A

dismal wasteland, just tempered by a moving yet always beautiful ocean.”⁵⁸ Schinz painted a similar picture when writing, “So we were now at the edge of the wilderness . . . —if calling sand and rocks allows for such a description.”⁵⁹ That expedition had brought water from Cape Town for a whopping 30 Marks per barrel only to then get stranded in Angra Pequena: crossing the Namib Desert in January, the hottest time of the year, was impossible.⁶⁰ At that time, ox wagons, which had been imported from the Cape Colony, widely defined transport inland. Those animals seemed the only ones capable of making the arduous journey. Whereas horses and maybe donkeys were at times also available, those were much more prone to diseases and certainly more expensive.⁶¹ German newcomers were often skeptical. Max Buchner, for instance, was uncertain about such means of transport but quickly convinced otherwise once he saw the abilities of these animals.⁶² As a geologist and mining expert exclaimed when talking about oxen, “which other animals would be capable of dealing with such a harsh land!”⁶³ Finding healthy oxen and a four-wheel cart was difficult, however. Treks generally relied on sixteen to twenty oxen to pull one wagon, with at least a couple as potential replacements coming along as well. With little knowledge about these animals, local traders at times took advantage of German newcomers by selling them less healthy animals.⁶⁴ The wagon itself was made out of massive wood and required axles strengthened with iron. Described as “traveling apartments,”⁶⁵ the carts carried virtually everything: kitchenware, food, clothing, weapons, bedding, along with much else, and, of course, water. For contemporaries these vehicles felt more like locomotives or chariots than carriages.⁶⁶ Although able to handle a lot, problems with axles and wheels still slowed down treks: sinking into desert sands or crossing rocky surfaces did much to wear out even the sturdiest of materials. Such animal structures, in themselves sophisticated environmental infrastructure, did certainly not please German ambitions. The timing of a journey mattered as well. During the summer months heat and a lack of water made travel increasingly difficult. Countless accounts describe “screaming oxen” desperately trying to reach the water, or dying of thirst in the desert.⁶⁷ “Animals have no place in your heaven,” noted one ox in Uwe Timm’s novel *Morenga*.⁶⁸ The expertise of local guides, familiar with landscapes, water holes, wagons, and animals, was essential. Not that newcomers acknowledged it much. To the contrary, many German descriptions questioned local manners, their treatment of the animals, and even overall abilities of drivers and herders. There are many early firsthand accounts that capture the dangers of such treks, with one German magazine later quoting Gustav Nachtigal, “I’d rather travel through the desert where I can at least find oases than travel through this land [Southwest Africa] again.”⁶⁹ Most point to the need to move quickly once allowing the oxen their last drink of water at the coastline—otherwise the trek might not reach the next watering hole in time. An account from 1887 points

to the steep path into the dunes from here forward; it also underscores how easily inexperienced travelers could get lost in the ever-changing Namibian desert landscapes.⁷⁰ “Masses of flying sand have created the chaos of water and mainland,” wrote a geologist and mining expert in this context, a trek into a “horrific landscape” and “the world of death.”⁷¹ Once travelers had crossed the Namib then they reached an arid landscape, still far away from the central plateau and more fertile lands. It was thus not surprising that some reports about the area that reached Germany were kept secret for some time.⁷²

Early concerns about access to and transportation from the coastal outpost of Lüderitzbucht were somewhat defused with hopes of what lay inland. Wegner, for example, pointed to a promised land beyond the dunes, ostensibly shielded from the gaze of European empires: “Roughly 80 (Engl.) miles away from the coast, however, it is very different. The land is fertile and fresh water widely available and those tribes living there, own thousands of cattle and horses.”⁷³ Famed German explorer and one of the founders of the Colonial Society, Gerhard Rohlfs, agreed with the assessment when stating that “anything that grows in temperate and subtropical zones could be grown further inland.”⁷⁴ For some proponents, Angra Pequena seemed to provide the doorway to colonial glory. Many opportunities were virtually awaiting any persistent colonist just beyond the sand.⁷⁵ Soon speculations about hidden treasures ran wild. Yet according to one description published in the magazine *Globus*, “The complete absence of atmospheric precipitation and the lack of drinking water only available at some spots limits any effort at colonization. The survey of mineralogical correlations provided entirely no yield worth mentioning to make the transport to Germany worthwhile because only precious metals such as gold, silver, platinum—and those are available also only in very little amounts—would give a monetary profit.”⁷⁶ Then, in 1887, came the news: gold had been discovered! But such rumors turned out to be a fraud, likely pressed by a colonial proponent who had loaded a musket and fired small pieces of gold into a rock.⁷⁷ Countless *stories* speak of similar tales as seemingly unwitting fools got sucked into the purchase of worthless lands and rocks over a beer.⁷⁸

For Lüderitz himself dreams of riches beyond the dunes turned into a nightmare. Put simply, he overly invested in exploring the area. Then, the loss of the brig *Tilly* set him back even more; delays in the discovery of raw materials did not help either. Although efforts tied to copper mining had gone on for some time,⁷⁹ the Germans had little role in that. Speculations about additional deposits or the discovery of silver, gold, and diamonds, did not materialize either. Lüderitz’s financial troubles grew. By 1885 he faced bankruptcy. Bismarck’s efforts to assist somewhat resulted in the creation of a consortium, the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika (German Southwest Africa Company), an organization supported by leading German businessmen that would profit greatly from colonialism in future years. Bismarck’s maneuver

had much to do with his belief in private entities as the driving force behind the development, exploitation, and even administration of the protectorate. In April 1885, the German Southwest Africa Company acquired Lüderitz's assets. A year later, Lüderitz drowned somewhere on the Orange River.⁸⁰ That he was trying to determine if that inlet could serve as a shipping route speaks volumes about the role of logistics and access for early colonialists.

Meanwhile the types of investments needed to deal with natural forces and improvements to animal transport were apparent, at least to those that would listen: European and maybe specifically German expertise, technology, hard work. Steeped in white supremacy and a broader belief in progress, numerous accounts speak about German abilities to turn outwardly arid and barren wastelands into blooming *Kulturlandschaften* (man-made cultivated and cultured productive landscapes). Belck noted that “[t]he soil is not infertile, [and] the reasoning for this drought is rather the lack of rain.” Wells, cisterns, and reservoirs would easily solve the issue. In a different section, Belck wrote that “with ease, a significant amount [of trees] can be planted.”⁸¹ That would help provide shade and firewood; it would also protect water sources and boost the groundwater. Others agreed and pointed to the need for drilling as the solution to what soon became known as the *Wasserfrage* (water question).⁸² Rohlfs approved, stating, “And if until now there has been no drinking water then that has to do with the fact that no one has seriously looked for it.” Dry riverbeds must surely yield water, if only one dug deeply enough, he believed. “Where there is a sun in Africa, water and soil, even if ‘desert sand,’ anything grows.” Germans could easily construct wells as they had done in French Algeria. That would certainly “uncover the loveliest and cleanest spring water.”⁸³ The *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* newspaper tried its best to defuse concerns about a lack of water by simply noting that colonists could easily employ condensers to “make” their own.⁸⁴ As the mouthpiece for colonial interests, that paper most loudly pushed for investments. In 1887, it referred to Heinrich Petersen as “one of the first German pioneers along the right riverbank of the Orange River”; it also directly questioned the “sad image” presented by some voices about that region. In Petersen's experiences, so the story went, setting up irrigation systems for cattle farming and agriculture offered endless possibilities.⁸⁵ These were “healthy lands” with lots of opportunities, another voice added.⁸⁶ In 1890 the same paper stated that “There is no lying about the fact that nature has put up enormous barriers between Angra Pequena and the hinterland”—a lack of water, a sixty or so kilometer desert strip, and elevated table-mountain ranges. Yet the same article also pointed to steam condensation machines to get drinking water, the digging of wells along the route to the interior, and even the blasting away of whatever barriers. “With a goodwill and prudent cooperation, all these hurdles are easy to overcome,”⁸⁷ especially for Europeans, and more so for Germans. As early as 1884 the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* newspa-

per also blazed ahead when featuring an article by a California-based expert writing about “the value of artificial irrigation of West Africa.”⁸⁸ Some had long seen what seemed possible when visiting Farmer Hällich: clean and organized vegetable beds, a sophisticated irrigation system, cultivated garden spaces full of onions, cucumbers, potatoes, lettuce, peas, beans and more, all reminders of places close to his heart back home.⁸⁹ Optimism defined discussions to such an extent that those just describing landscapes as arid were at times defamed as spreading British propaganda and conspiracies meant to keep German colonists at bay.⁹⁰ The way forward thus became clear: “Everything must be awakened and created,” noted Rohlf, ⁹¹ a task that would not be easy but rewards would be plenty.

But major investments were hard to come by. There had certainly been public support for colonial endeavors back home in Germany—even if views evolved as more information trickled in. One contemporary summarized the mood when writing, “Like a spring breeze full of excitement it blew through the nation. Dreams of golden mountains; the stream of emigration would be steered into that direction now; jabbering about a German India.” That source added how “[d]isillusionment set in right away” once more information became available, mentioning public warnings “that instead of an Indian paradise Angra Pequena is almost a completely barren sand desert, in which it never rains and as a result drinking water has to be brought in with [their] own small ship *Meta* from Cape Town, resulting in costs per ton of around 30 marks.”⁹² Some wondered if Germany had just acquired a “colonial *Streusandbüchse* (sandbox).”⁹³ At least the satirical weekly magazine *Kladder-datsch* noted shortly after Lüderitz’s original acquisition that interested settlers should bring everything with them, including flora and fauna.⁹⁴ The *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* newspaper responded to such critics that the true benefits of this German acquisition would be its “raw materials.”⁹⁵ Maybe the British had just overlooked an opportunity? Missionary Büttner at least wrote that “The ‘sandbox’ of Angra Pequena had been missed or [the British] [were] . . . under the impression, that no one would dare to grab it because the English colonies were ‘nearby.’”⁹⁶ A binary took shape, to follow historian Birthe Kundrus: on the one side stood proponents of colonialism such as Adolf Lüderitz and Heinrich Goering. For them, Southwest Africa, defined by a mountain climate and virtually free of tropical diseases, might become a wonderful spot for agriculture in some regions, but certainly cattle farming. The area had a suitable climate for Europeans for settlements and the space to deal with a growing German population. They pointed to missionaries and their gardens, as well as Herero, Boers, and neighboring South Africa, to sustain their claims. On the other side stood skeptics such as Gustav Nachtigal, Hans Schinz, meteorologist Karl Dove, among others. They dismissed such possibilities. For them, the arid and desert landscapes spoke to broader problems.⁹⁷ Some voices even

advocated for abandoning Germany's claims to the protectorate altogether. To them, the sands of the Namib Desert seemed not worth the effort. Belck just hoped to cut through colonial fantasies about the creation of an agricultural colony around Lüderitzbucht. Experienced men know better, he stated.⁹⁸ Perceptions of landscapes, and imperial fantasies more broadly, would continue to play a major role in the colony's future.

In the late nineteenth century such muddled mindsets and understandings of the colony also shaped views in Germany. Diplomatic relations and international politics of course played an important role for decision-makers. How should Germany position itself in the world? Some saw the early years still as an "experimental phase."⁹⁹ Neither Bismarck nor his successor Leo von Caprivi had much interest in direct government investments. Instead, both favored the British model, defined by private corporations such as the German Colonial Society. The influence of the Chief of the General Staff Alfred von Waldersee on Emperor Wilhelm II, and discussions around trades involving Zanzibar, Heligoland, and possibly other possessions, did not help either.¹⁰⁰ As a result, it was left to private companies to invest. According to historian Dirk van Laak it is not quite clear if those did not want to or could not develop what the German government had hoped for.¹⁰¹ And so German colonialism was off to a rough start. With a protectorate forming between the Cape Colony, British Bechuanaland, and Portuguese Angola, access remained arduous and crossing the Namib Desert difficult, all but making Southwest Africa a colony on paper only.

Germany's Own Entrance

A high-ranking British administrator in Cape Town knew the value of Walvis Bay. One of the only two natural harbors along a rugged coastline, German colonialism had turned this British possession into an enclave surrounded by German Southwest Africa. Yet to officials in Cape Town ceding the harbor did not make much sense. The said official wrote in 1891, "My belief is that the time is coming when Germany will recognise that the interior [of Southwest Africa] without the port [of Walvis Bay] is of no value. That the two should belong to one Power is manifest; and that the Cape Colony will never surrender Walwich Bay [*sic*] is absolutely certain."¹⁰² At the time the local Magistrate in Walvis Bay, John James Cleverly, agreed. With a front row seat to German efforts in the region, he was well aware "of the value of Walfisch Bay [*sic*] to the [Cape] Colony"; he also became increasingly assertive that there was "no intention whatever of relinquishing possession of Walfisch Bay [*sic*]."¹⁰³ German efforts to acquire Walvis Bay ultimately failed,¹⁰⁴ which meant that for the time being new arrivals hoping to reach central Namibia were at the mercy of the British.

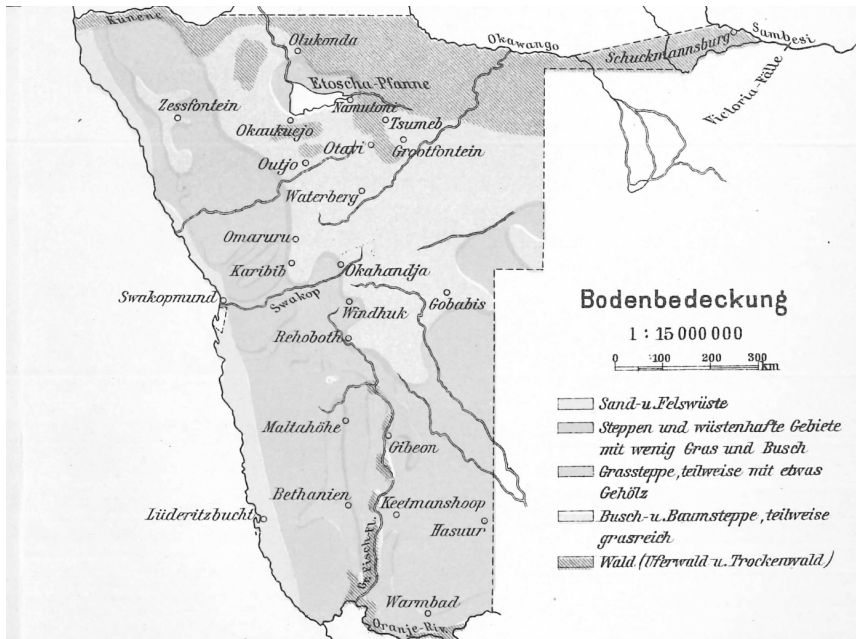


Figure 2.3. “Ground cover,” *Deutsches-Kolonial-Lexikon*, 1920, courtesy of the Universitätsbibliothek J. C. Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main.

German colonialists were fully aware when it came to the importance of accessing the high plateau. Namibia is generally categorized along three main geographical regions: the Namib Desert, the Kalahari Desert, and the Great Escarpment (Figure 2.3).¹⁰⁵ With fertile parts namely located in Central and Northern Namibia, aridity is widespread along the coastline and in the south and east. Unreliable and seasonal precipitation rates tend to rise moving north and east. Although maximums of 550–660 millimeters in the wettest areas are possible, most of the country receives much less.¹⁰⁶ More fertile areas generally exist in central Namibia. Angra Pequena (renamed Lüderitzbucht), although a good harbor, thus had little value when trying to reach such prized lands. A lack of water in Germany’s only entry point further narrowed settlement possibilities. As a result, few ships stopped for long. Why would they? Without water and opportunities for trade given difficulties crossing desert landscapes, it made little economic sense to anchor on site. According to one estimate, in the 1890s at best thirty to forty oxen wagons of missionaries, traders, farmers, and locals arrived each year to trade goods in Lüderitzbucht. More of them picked the British competitor farther south, the harbor of Port Nolloth. That landing space also had a more stable water supply along the route inland.¹⁰⁷

Meanwhile, the British enclave of Walvis Bay developed into the main entry point into central Southwest Africa. The lagoon harbor is protected by a peninsula and Pelican Point. The Khuseb River also forms a delta just south of town. Plus, there was drinking water at nearby Sandfontein.¹⁰⁸ Natural forces—primarily “bothersome West and Southwest winds so prominent on all other locations, including Angra Pequena”¹⁰⁹—also made logistics easier. Even Hugo von François eventually had to admit that. As a result, and well before German arrival, Walvis Bay had already begun shifting into a trade hub.¹¹⁰

Environmental infrastructure linking Walvis Bay to the interior sustained commerce. African societies previously connected to the Cape Colony by inland trade across the Southern border had established a transportation system linking to its natural bay. Oorlam Jonker Afrikaner, who resided in the area of Windhoek, decided to construct a road from his domicile on the central plateau, the area best suited for cattle farming and agriculture, to Walvis Bay. This was by no means the only route.¹¹¹ Yet it increasingly became an important connection to the coast, especially once Oorlam migration had introduced the ox wagon as a means of transport to the region.¹¹² According to scholar Henning Melber, the so-called Baiweg (Bay Way or Bay Road) “was one of the more prominent examples of ‘modernisation’ brought about by a modification of the local economy through interethnic and external trade relations.”¹¹³ Reaching that point in 1844 had not been easy. According to historian Brigitte Lau, “construction of roads was time-consuming and labour-intensive,” yet necessary to facilitate trade.¹¹⁴ Roads such as this one became essential. To follow Melber again, the export of cattle and the import of commodities such as guns and ammunition dominated trade; such trade also underscores the importance of cattle for groups such as the Herero when it came to maintaining “a dominant position in the local economy.”¹¹⁵ Copper mining defined this main route as well. San had long mined copper in Tsumeb in the north, which later resulted in the short-lived creation of the Republic of Upingtonia by Boer groups known as Thirstland Trekkers.¹¹⁶ Other locations had easier access to the Baiweg. Melber mentions one mine under operation in 1840 and run by South Africans on concession by Jonker Afrikaner that was “allowed use of this innovative infrastructure to transport ore to the coast. In return for this service the South African concessionaires, including those miners who had assisted in the construction of the road by lending appropriate tools, had to pay taxes to Jonker Afrikaner.”¹¹⁷ That Afrikaner had long initiated the cultivation of plants such as figs further underscores pre-colonial efforts and disrupts colonial narratives of introducing “advanced agriculture.”¹¹⁸ The Baiweg constituted a sophisticated environmental infrastructure, about seven and a half to nine meters wide, extraordinary, to follow missionary Carl Hugo Hahn, who described it in his diary. “I must admit that even in the Colony (Cape) I have never seen such ‘a marvelous piece of road construction.’”¹¹⁹ Other newcom-

ers spoke of a “masterpiece” when describing other routes, adding “that one cannot justly agree any more that the Namaquas . . . are [supposed to be] stupid and lazy.”¹²⁰ German newcomers, who later belittled precolonial efforts,¹²¹ were thus delighted to use such arteries, especially once the death of Jonker Afrikaner and his Herero ally Tjamuaha in the early 1860s began disrupting established hegemonies.¹²²

Meanwhile the German quest for an alternative landing spot had brought mixed results. There simply were not many natural harbors to work with. Colonial officials searched relentlessly, surveying the coastline up and down, repeatedly. In 1890, the German ship *Habicht* succinctly outlined the limits of locations such as Lüderitzbucht: it was not a closed harbor, travel inland was difficult given desert and dunes, and there was no water.¹²³ The report also emphasized the lack of options when trying to access central Namibia, with the exception of Walvis Bay, of course: “Nowhere does the landscape become any better. Everywhere does the gaze meet sand dunes, occasionally broken up by loose piles of sand rocks; there is also no harbor to protect or land ships until Walvis Bay,”¹²⁴ none for 350 nautical miles, complained one newspaper. Locations such as Cape Frio, Ogden Rocks, and even the previously considered Cape Cross, the report continued, were of little use. One expedition pointed to the benefits of Tiger Bay. Silting-in, a process tied to the movement of sand along the coastline thanks to ocean currents, would only be a minor issue. Previous maps of the area might have been grounded in the mistakes by a British lieutenant from 1852, that expedition hoped.¹²⁵ For some time Sandwich Harbor south of Walvis Bay seemed promising as well. The landing spot located astride the Tropic of Capricorn had played a vital role in early interactions and trade. Plus, the Germans had utilized it when unloading cargo. In 1889 a description noted that the harbor itself was good and “a tightening of the entrance into the harbor was not to be expected”—though the water level had been falling constantly.¹²⁶ That year a meat-canning company, put in business by the German and English Southwest Africa Company, had already stopped working: exhausted animals arrived on site and desert sands repeatedly found their way into the building, interfering with the canning process.¹²⁷ A year later the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* newspaper saw problems when noting, “While the harbor was still considered good and safe in the year 1884,” even by 1888, by 1889 it had silted and shrunk dramatically.¹²⁸ Expeditions surveyed shifts in the following years and some even proposed the assistance of a small dredger.¹²⁹ Whereas the remoteness of the area made such propositions unlikely, further silting-in soon limited the harbor’s use anyway.¹³⁰ By 1896, Hugo von François summarized the situation when noting, “The harbor completely silted in, the entry barely usable for barges; we already ran aground with a steam pinnace [a light boat]. Due to that, but also because the connection to the interior is evidently the most difficult—the belt of dunes is getting wider southward—it

use as a location is actually impossible forever.”¹³¹ Alternative landing spots were hard to come by.

The British were content to watch as the Germans struggled with logistics. Media outlets from the Cape Colony, with at times immediate commercial and colonial interests in the region, saw little reason to help the Germans. According to the *Cape Times*, “The reason for a colonial force at Walfish [*sic*] Bay was not to take care of Germany, but was there to protect colonial interests.”¹³² There had been some voices in the press speculating about the possibility of making a deal and swapping territories with Germany. An article in *The Times*, at least, acknowledged that “Walvis Bay is absolutely useless to us now that the German possessions in South-West Africa surround it.” At the same time, it continued, as “the only good harbour” it is “indispensable to the proper development of the German colony, and as such might be to us the means of effecting a profitable arrangement with Germany.” Discussions of a trade for German possessions in Togo followed—“of no use to Germany, but a great source of annoyance to our Gold Coast colony.”¹³³ The colonial records underscore that British officials awaited the abandonment of the colony. They were not wrong. In February 1892, a telegram from Berlin pointed to Caprivi’s continuing “indifference” concerning German colonial possession.¹³⁴ Caprivi’s predecessor Bismarck had declared himself weary of colonies; Leo von Caprivi had originally agreed. Those in favor of German colonialism would not gain the upper hand until maybe mid-1892.¹³⁵ Plus, the British understood that some within the German administration had “been disappointed in the great expectations that had been formed as to the wealth of South-West Africa.” Their prediction in 1891 was thereby that “Damaraland will probably be evacuated in 1892.”¹³⁶ Although rumors and speculations dominated the press for some time,¹³⁷ Magistrate Cleverly became increasingly vocal about the importance of Walvis Bay. In his view, there was little to gain from giving it up, an argument that soon defined overall policy.¹³⁸

For the Germans the situation on the ground had only gotten worse. Warfare and shifting alliances had resulted in the death of Afrikaner. Over time, Herero and Nama, the latter under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi, then increasingly gained influence. Still unwilling to relinquish his power to German rule, Witbooi in particular openly challenged German dominance in the region. His efforts primarily focused on the main artery, that vital Bay Way between Windhoek and Walvis Bay. Witbooi began attacking German convoys and effectively threatened Windhoek’s supplies.¹³⁹ In early 1893, he even struck out against an early experimental farm run by the German South West Africa Company at Kubub.¹⁴⁰ Both Walter Matthews, who later ran the guano operation at Cape Cross, and representative of the German colonial society Ernst Hermann, barely got away alive.¹⁴¹ The British tried to stay out of the conflict, clinging to neutrality and prohibiting any arms trade through Walvis Bay.¹⁴² In

at least one instance, local magistrate Cleverly seized German military equipment and cargo. This interference angered the German colonial troops under the command of Curt von François.¹⁴³ The German media equally cried foul and added pressure on decision-makers when writing that “the great power Germany is dependent on the permission and the international courtesy of England if it wants to bring weapons and supplies into its protectorate!”¹⁴⁴ Neutrality ended as British meddling ceased overall, a decision that all but wrecked the resistance of Witbooi. For him, supplies were hard to come by, and efforts to play colonial powers off each other now began to falter. Now supplies were hard to come.¹⁴⁵ German commander Curt von François used the moment and attacked Witbooi’s headquarters in Hornkranz or Hoornkrans in April 1893, slaughtering and massacring men, women, and children.¹⁴⁶ Witbooi retreated into the Naukluft Mountains, but had little option other than to submit to German rule. For the Germans, the short standoff around Walvis Bay stressed the value of owning their own entry point into central Namibia.

On 1 March 1893, Chancellor Leo von Caprivi announced to parliament a shift in policy. Apparently reeling from Witbooi’s resistance, and pointing to the “*Dreistigkeiten* boldness” of the Herero against Germans in Central Namibia, Caprivi saw the need for additional German troops—not to make war, but “to become masters of the country and consolidate our sovereignty without bloodshed.”¹⁴⁷ “We possess South-West Africa once and for all,” he continued, “it is German territory and must be preserved as such.”¹⁴⁸ Representatives in parliament seemed to agree, with many yelling Bravo! Caprivi, who seemed aware of the challenges that lay ahead, emphasized the lack of harbors and access. At the same time, and because it was British, he demeaned Walvis Bay as that “scraggy harbor with its half a dozen dirty huts and 36 inhabitants, or however many there might be.”¹⁴⁹ He then talked about alternative landing spots along the coastline to solve issues concerning access. By then initial efforts north of the Swakop River seemed promising—and encouraged Caprivi to lay out his vision for the future: “We cherish the hope that the settlement companies are able to bring more and more whites into the land. We believe, even if things move forward very slowly in Southwest Africa, that they will move ahead farther.”¹⁵⁰ Although decision-makers in Berlin would remain “of two minds” for some time,¹⁵¹ to borrow historian Horst Drechsler’s phrase, Caprivi’s decision led to more organized efforts regarding the development of a German access point.

At the mouth of the Swakop River, German colonists seemingly had found what they were looking for: a location for a harbor that allowed access into central Namibia. Outwardly this was a good spot to gain control of trade inland. For one, it was located between Hereroland and Walvis Bay, and adjacent to the existing Bay Road. Early descriptions gazing inland come from the British. In 1848, Lieutenant Ruxton noted that the Swakop River “must *once* ha[ve]

flowed with great force.”¹⁵² He did notice some vegetation. Regardless, the British seemed to have little interest in general. Now, almost four decades later, the British observed German endeavors in the same stretch. In 1884, the *Africa Pilot*, a bulletin published by the hydrographic office that was housed under the authority of the Royal Navy, described the location “Swakop or Swachaub River” when noting, “This river discharges into the sea almost regularly every year for one or two months in the summer; for the remaining ten months its course is dry (with the exception of a place just below Nxonidas where there is running water all the year around), and its mouth is blocked by a sand bar.” It added that a “German flagstaff and notice board beacon stand near the northern bank of the Swakop, and English beacons near the southern bank; the boundary line is midway between, in the bed of the river.”¹⁵³ By then most German reports and surveys had already hinted at the potential value of this location. The ship *Habicht* had few problems when landing a surfboat in April 1886.¹⁵⁴ It did seem like a sound option: there was access to good drinking water and a slight gap through the Namib Desert along the Swakop Riverbed allowed travel inland—unlike in Lüderitzbucht. Plus, and at least according to one report, “Breakers were not considered too strong [and] it will be possible, to land cargo with surf boats.”¹⁵⁵ Colonial authorities were also confident that thanks to the eventual construction of landing structures it would become a “rather easy task to create a good harbor.”¹⁵⁶ At the same time, the location had some issues. Take the experience of the gunboat *Wolf*. In late 1884, its crew had the mission to raise flags on numerous spots along the coastline. The usual thick fog and treacherous waters made that a difficult endeavor. Travelers at the time found themselves smothered in a white blanket of low-lying fog, limiting sight, hiding dangerous currents and surf, even the coastline.¹⁵⁷ North of the British enclave Walvis Bay near the mouth of the Swakop River the operation got into even more trouble. As outlined in a German newspaper later on, “The breakers off [the coast of] Swakopmund were impassable. The few German colonial inhabitants [living in Walvis Bay] had to return in their little boats back to Walvis Bay, and the ship *Wolf* had to wait for a weakening of the breakers.”¹⁵⁸ Only in the evening had it been possible to raise the imperial flag, then without the desired presence of the German inhabitants.

Without landing structures in place it was African labor that moved newly arriving cargo. Comparable to porters in other colonies, such human carriers compensated for difficulties unloading. Soon steamers on their way to the colony picked up Kru men in Monrovia to do such work.¹⁵⁹ These West African men could be Vai, Gola, Dei, Kpelle, Kru, Glebo, Bapo, Nyambo, or Sabo in ethnicity; they generally originated from eastern Liberia and the Ivory Coast.¹⁶⁰ German officials saw them as experienced and skilled professionals when it came to navigating dangerous waters; African oral histories speak of men “who chew off white people.”¹⁶¹ More recently scholars have described

them as intermediaries, “a social construct that has emerged out of various social and economic processes that occurred during a period of European colonial activity in West Africa.”¹⁶² In any case, these men soon steered and shuttled surfboats, filled with cargo and passengers, back and forth between steamers and the beach. This meant crossing strong currents and breakers, a dangerous task even for experienced workers. They were certainly experts in the handling of landing boats. According to Curt von François, “When on 26 January 1893 the cruiser *Falke* brought eleven Kru negroes to Swakopmund my sense of the western landing spot as more favourable was confirmed.”¹⁶³ A report much later referred to them as “rather versed and prudent boats men,” adding that they were “the only diligent and persistent workers of the west coast.”¹⁶⁴ The official foundation of Swakopmund took place on 12 September 1892. Kru men participated in the first noteworthy landing on 23 August 1893 when the vessel *Marie Woermann* brought in 120 soldiers, forty settlers, and all kinds of materials—including cattle.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, to follow Hugo von François, the climate in the region was too harsh for them, even when supplied with Manchester corduroy wear and military coats. Instead of staying on site permanently—as colonial authorities had originally envisioned—steamships from namely the Woermann-Line would pick them up on their way south and later drop them off once they returned.¹⁶⁶ Historian William Blakemore Lyon estimates that 500–600 such migrant contract laborers kept the landing process going prior to 1904; an additional 1,000 would be employed during the war.¹⁶⁷ In his view, “for approximately the first 10 years of Swakopmund’s existence, almost all supplies and people entering or leaving the settlement via the Atlantic Ocean needed to be transported from the beach to ships, anchored offshore, via surfboats manned by skilled workers”—and those laborers came from West Africa.¹⁶⁸

Although experienced and skilled workers were now on site, landing efforts remained precarious. The surf and waves were perilous and unpredictable, fog made it difficult to see much on most mornings, and large vessels could not come close to the shoreline. On 4 June 1895, a boat capsized. German landing official Ludwig Koch had granted its request to help unload the steamer *Carl Woermann*. These were experienced men, he thought. According to an article in the newspaper *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, the boat had no issues in its first run out to sea. All went well on the way back, too. On their second tour, however, when the boat was only partially loaded with cargo, a wave caught it from behind. “Barrels swam away, as did officer Schlüter along with two seamen. They swam back to the boat . . . trying to bring the boat ashore.” Their efforts were in vain and neither of them could grab the straps before another wave capsized the boat. All but one died in the ice-cold ocean waters.¹⁶⁹ Colonialist Kurd Schwabe, who observed the situation unfold that day, noted in this context, “It was a sad day, all the more so because we had been completely pow-

erless from ashore when it came to helping the swimmers.”¹⁷⁰ A report from December 1894 by a certain captain Meinertz from the Woermann-Line that had stated that “the surf would not provide any difficulties”¹⁷¹ did apparently not match what many experienced in those early years. Much still had to be done to turn Swakopmund into a safe and reliable entry point.

The incubation period of German colonialism was a muddled affair. Triggered by domestic quarrels, desires for imperial glory, and the commodification of nature, natural forces, animal transport, existing structures, and imported labor defined the access question. The treacherous ocean waters and the Namib Desert, plus a lack of water, made getting on good footing difficult. Hopes of what lay behind the desert rarely materialized and high officials in Berlin were at times not certain about the value and future of the protectorate. Investments from private companies in line with the British model provided few ways forward. Plus, central Namibia and the area around Windhoek lay in many ways beyond the reach of Lüderitzbucht. In 1894, ten years after the official German claim to the region, the colonial government stationed four military men in Lüderitzbucht. Meant to control the flow of goods into the harbor, they had little to do.¹⁷² Few things changed in the coming years, especially once the center of German interests moved toward the development of central Namibia. According to the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* newspaper, even if Lüderitzbucht was a good landing spot, travel costs were simply too high.¹⁷³ By then German newcomers found themselves dependent on the British enclave of Walvis Bay, challenged by Witbooi’s resistance, and pushed to consider alternative landing spots. A multiplicity of agents—imperial policies, local resistance, natural circumstances—had pointed them toward a reorientation northward. Lüderitzbucht, on the other hand, became a backwater. As one contemporary summarized much later, “Despite its good natural predisposition this harbor space [Lüderitzbucht] has only been visited and utilized sporadically in the subsequent times. Outwardly, the interior gave a dismal sight, so entry or even settlement seemed not inviting.”¹⁷⁴

German colonial storylines tied early efforts to missed opportunities, anti-British sentiments that spoke at times to admiration, and the conquest of nature. Colonialists such as Lüderitz certainly hoped to get on equal footing with the British empire. Along with others, he saw lots of untapped opportunities in Southwest Africa. Raw materials could be mined, and maybe nature could be conquered, shaped, and molded through hard work and the use of technology. If anyone, according to this mindset, the Germans would have the ingenuity and work ethic needed to build landing structures, cross arid landscapes with railways, and develop water sources. Hugo von François certainly

called for craftsmen and technology when noting that “The connection in the interior and the connection of the interior with the ocean are the most prominent weaknesses of the colony. Plus, there is the meager connection with the motherland, which almost solely connects via Walvis Bay—Cape Town and which requires the transfer of German money to English interests and forces the withdrawal of English goods into German spheres.”¹⁷⁵ The foundation of Swakopmund in 1892, and the construction of a harbor, was supposed to solve that issue. That could surely give Germany its very own entry port and put the colony on a path toward future development.

Notes

1. Johannes Olpp, *Erlebnisse im Hinterlande von Angra Pequena*, 2nd ed. (Barmen, 1896), 5. See also Johannes Olpp, *Angra Pequena und Gross-Nama-Land: Auf Grund vieljähriger Beobachtung kurz geschildert* (Eberfeld, 1884), 7.
2. Rusch, Schroedder, and Otto, *Lüderitzbucht damals und gestern*, Vorwort; Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 28.
3. Olpp, *Erlebnisse im Hinterlande von Angra Pequena*, 8.
4. *Ibid.*, 10.
5. Eingabe von Ad. Lüderitz an das Auswärtige Amt vom 23.XI.1882, as quoted in C. A. Lüderitz, ed., *Die Erschliessung von Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika durch Adolf Lüderitz: Akten, Brief und Denkschriften* (Oldenbourg, 1945), 14.
6. Olpp, *Angra Pequena und Gross-Nama-Land*, 8.
7. August Seidel, *Deutschlands erste Kolonie: gesammelte Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse während eines Aufenthaltes von 9 Jahren in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika* (Hamburg, 1898), 6. See also Carl Hessler, *Die deutschen Kolonien: Beschreibung von Land und Leuten unserer auswärtigen Besitzungen*, 2nd ed. (Metz, 1889), 6. Contemporaries repeatedly spoke about entry ports *Eingangspforten* or portals *Thore*. Carl Gotthilf Büttner, *Das Hinterland von Walfischbai und Angra Pequena* (Heidelberg, 1884), 3; *Globus*, “Aus allen Erdtheilen,” no. 15, 1884.
8. Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*. Prussia held a colonial possession in West Africa from 1682 to 1721. For the telegram see Lüderitz, *Die Erschliessung von Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika durch Adolf Lüderitz*, 72–73.
9. Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 88; Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 31.
10. Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 116–17.
11. *Lüderitzbucher Zeitung*, “Fünfzig Jahre Lüderitzbucht,” 8 April 1933, Vorwort, as referenced in *Lüderitzbucht damals und gestern: ein Bildband*, ed. Edda Schroedder, Antje Otto, and Walter Rusch (Windhoek, 1983).
12. Hans Grimm, *Afrikafahrt West* (Frankfurt am Main, 1913), 94.
13. Press, *Blood and Diamonds*, 17–20; Erichsen and Olusoga, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 32.
14. *Daheim: Ein deutsches Familienblatt mit Illustrationen*, “Die deutsche Besitzergreifung von Lüderitzland: Geschildert von einem Augenzeugen,” 18 October 1884.
15. Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 36–37. See also Wallace, *History of Namibia*, 117–19.

16. Grotpeter, *Historical Dictionary of Namibia*, 175.
17. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, “Die Landschaft um Windhoek (Südwest-Afrika) nach einem Bericht des Lieutenants v. François,” 15 August 1891. See also Curt von François, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika. Geschichte der Kolonisation bis zum Ausbruch des Krieges mit Witbooi April 1893* (Berlin, 1899), 58 and 63.
18. Alex Kaputu, “The War Between the Nama and Herero,” Windhoek, October 1984, in *Warriors Leaders Sages and Outcasts in Namibian History: Narratives Collected from Herero Source for the Michael Scott Oral History Project (MSORP) 1985–6*, ed. Annemarie Heywood, Brigitte Lau, and Raimund Ohly, 1–49, here 3 (Windhoek, 1992). See also Julius Baumann, *Van sending tot kerk: 125 jaar Rynse Sending-arbeid in Suidwest-Afrika, 1842–1967* (Karibib, 1967), 23.
19. For discussions focusing on German narratives and spatiality, see John K. Noyes, *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884–1915* (London, 1991); Elizabeth Roberts Baer, *The Genocidal Gaze: From German Southwest Africa to the Third Reich* (Detroit, 2017).
20. Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 61.
21. *Ibid.*, 64.
22. Adam A. Blackler, “From Boondoggle to Settlement Colony: Hendrik Witbooi and the Evolution of Germany’s Imperial Project in Southwest Africa, 1884–1894,” *Central European History* 50, no. 4 (2017): 449–70.
23. Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 41.
24. E. L. P. Stals, *The Commissions of W. C. Palgrave Special Emissary to South West Africa 1876–1885* (Cape Town, 1991), xxi. See also William Coates Palgrave, *Report of W. Coates Palgrave, Report of W. Coates Palgrave . . . of his mission to Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in 1876* (Cape Town, 1877). For the album see NAN, A.0068, Palgrave Album 1876.
25. Jeremy Silvester, “Portraits of Power and Panoramas of Persuasion: The Palgrave Album at the National Archives of Namibia,” in *Hues between Black and White: Historical Photography from Colonial Namibia, 1860s to 1915*, ed. Wolfram Hartmann, 131–60, here 143 and 145 (Windhoek, 2004).
26. *Ibid.*, 146.
27. *Ibid.*, 145.
28. Cecil Northcott, *Robert Moffat: Pioneer in Africa* (London, 1961), 42, as referenced in Gilbert I. Schrank, “German South West Africa: Social and Economic Aspects of its History, 1884–1915” (PhD diss, New York University, 1974), 17.
29. Carl Hugo Hahn, *Tagebücher, Diaries, 1837–1860: A Missionary in Nama- and Damaraland*, ed. Brigitte Lau (Windhoek, 1985). See also Heinrich Beiderbecke, *Life Among the Hereros in Africa: The Experiences of H. Beiderbecke, Lutheran Pastor* (New York, 1924), 57–64.
30. Carl Gotthilf Büttner, “Vereinsnachrichten: Die natürlichen Hilfsquellen von Südwest-Afrika und die Möglichkeit ihrer Verwertung, (Schluß)” *EXPORT, Organ des Centralverein für Handesgeographie etc.* 18 November 1884, as accessible in BArch-B, R 1001/1501, Geographie und Kartographie.
31. Büttner, *Walfischbai und Angra Pequena*, 20.
32. *Ibid.*, 38, 3, and 18. See also Carl Gotthilf Büttner, “Angra Pequena,” *Über Land und Meer: Allgemeine Illustrierte Zeitung* 52, no. 45 (1884). On different ways of seeing land-

- scapes, see Anette Hoffmann, "Since the Germans Came It Rains Less: Landscape and Identity of Herero Communities in Namibia" (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2005), 20. See also Noyes, *Colonial Space*.
33. Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire 1884–1945* (Durham, NC, 2001), 87.
 34. Alvin Kienetz, "Nineteenth-Century South West Africa as a German Settlement Colony" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1975), 3–4. For a more recent discussion, see Adam Blackler, "Heathens, 'Hottentots', and *Heimat*."
 35. "Unsere Namaqua- und Herero-Mission," Bericht der RMG 36 (5, 1880): 142, as quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 116.
 36. Julius Baumann, "Die Missionare–Europa kommt nach Afrika," in *1884–1984: Vom Schutzgebiet bis Namibia*, ed. Klaus Becker and Jürgen Hecker, 87–96, here 93 (Windhoek, 1958). See also Büttner, *Walfischbai und Angra Pequena*, 65.
 37. Glen P. Ryland, "Translating Africa for Germans: The Rheinisch Mission in Southwest Africa, 1829–1936" (PhD diss., Notre Dame, 2013), 19.
 38. Jahresberichte der RMG 1883, 51, as referenced in Sena Yawo Akakpo-Numado, "Mädchen- und Frauenbildung in den deutschen Afrika-Kolonien (1884–1914)" (PhD diss., Ruhr-University Bochum, 2005), 60.
 39. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, "Aus Lüderitzland," no. 3, 1885. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, "Deutschland und Angra Pequena," no. 14, 1884; Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 126.
 40. Olpp, *Erlebnisse im Hinterlande von Angra Pequena*, 12.
 41. *Ibid.*, 13.
 42. *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, "Das Gebiet zwischen Angra Pequena und Bethanien. Vorläufige Mitteilungen aus Lüderitzland von Dr. Adolf Schenck," 31 (1885), 132–36, here 135.
 43. Sir James Alexander, *An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa* (London, 1938), I, 90, as quoted in "German South West Africa: Social and Economic Aspects of its History, 1884–1915," 18.
 44. Francis Galton, *The Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (London, 1853), 29.
 45. James Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa Comprising Fifteen Years' Hunting and Trading* (London, 1868), 338. For a similar narrative, see Thomas Baines, *Explorations in South-West Africa: Being an Account of a Journey in the Years 1861 and 1862* (London, 1864), 23.
 46. Christoph Nonn, *12 Tage und ein halbes Jahrhundert. Eine Geschichte des deutschen Kaiserreiches 1871–1918* (Munich, 2020), 218–22; Christoph Nonn, *Bismarck: Ein Preuße und sein Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2015), 310. For earlier discussions, see Winfried Baumgart, "Bismarck und der deutsche Kolonialerwerb," in *Die Deutschen und ihre Kolonien: Ein Überblick*, ed. Horst Gründer and Hermann Hiery, 45–61 (Berlin, 2017); Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 55–65.
 47. *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, "Bericht über die von Herrn Lüderitz ausgerüstete Expedition nach Südwestafrika, 1884–5," by H. Pohle, 32 (1886): 225–38, here 225.
 48. Angra Pequena, 28 October 1884, as referenced in Hans Schinz, *Bruchstücke: Forschungsreisen in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Basel, 2012), 15. See also Hans Schinz, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika: Forschungsreisen durch die deutschen Schutzgebiete Gross-*

- Nama- und Hereroland, nach dem Kunene, dem Ngami-See und der Kalahari, 1884–1887* (Oldenburg, 1891).
49. *Annalen der Hydrographie und maritimen Meteorologie*, XII, no. 3, “Kleine hydrographische Notizen,” 1884.
 50. *Ibid.* Captain Aschenborn of the ship *Nautilus* submitted a report as well. *Annalen der Hydrographie und maritimen Meteorologie* XII, no. 5, “Reisebericht S. M. Kbt. ‘Nautilus,’” 1884.
 51. *Lüderitzbucher Zeitung*, “Fünzig Jahre Lüderitzbucht,” April 8, 1933, as referenced in *Lüderitzbucht damals und gestern*. See also *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, “Bericht über die von Herrn Lüderitz ausgerüstete Expedition nach Südwestafrika, 1884–5,” 229; Ludwig Conradt, *Erinnerungen aus zwanzigjährigem Händler- und Farmerleben in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, ed. Thomas Keil (Göttingen, 2006), 31.
 52. *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, “Bericht über die von Herrn Lüderitz ausgerüstete Expedition nach Südwestafrika, 1884–5,” 229; *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Koloniale Chronik,” 15 June 1887. See also Ursula Massmann, “Laien, Forscher, Wissenschaftler,” in *1884–1984: Vom Schutzgebiet bis Namibia*, ed. Klaus Becker and Jürgen Hecker, 249–54, here 250 (Windhoek, 1958).
 53. Walter Wegner, *Aus Deutsch-Afrika! Tagebuch-Briefe eines jungen Deutschen aus Angra Pequena (1882–1884)* (Leipzig, 1885), 11/12.
 54. Olpp, *Angra Pequena und Gross-Nama-Land*, 8. See also Hahn, 1885, 263 and Hahn, 1887, 841, as referenced in Martin B. Schneider “Bewässerungslandwirtschaft in Namibia und ihre Grundlagen in der Kolonialzeit” (PhD diss., Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, 1990), 114.
 55. Olpp, *Angra Pequena und Gross-Nama-Land*, 11.
 56. Belck, (1885), 128, as quoted in Schneider “Bewässerungslandwirtschaft in Namibia und ihre Grundlagen in der Kolonialzeit,” 114.
 57. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Was haben wir von Lüderitzbucht zu erwarten?” no. 5, 1885.
 58. *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, “Bericht über die von Herrn Lüderitz ausgerüstete Expedition nach Südwestafrika, 1884–5,” 226.
 59. Angra Pequena, 28 October 1884, as referenced in Schinz, *Bruchstücke*, 16.
 60. Gross-Namaqualand, Aus 19. November 1884, as referenced in Schinz, *Bruchstücke*, 18. See also *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, “Bericht über die von Herrn Lüderitz ausgerüstete Expedition nach Südwestafrika, 1884–5,” 227; Schinz, *Bruchstücke*, x.
 61. Klemens Wedekind, *Impfe und herrsche. Veterinärmedizinisches Wissen und Herrschaft im kolonialen Namibia 1887–1929* (Göttingen, 2020), 45–46.
 62. Max Bremer, “Reitochsen in Südwest-Afrika,” *Die Gartenlaube* 26 (1885).
 63. Bernhard Schwarz, *Im deutschen Goldlande: Reisebilder aus dem südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiet* (Berlin, 1889), 58.
 64. *Ibid.*, 56.
 65. Kurd Schwabe, *Mit Schwert und Pflug in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin, 1899), 9.
 66. Schwarz, *Im deutschen Goldlande*, 49. See also Olpp, *Hinterland Angra Pequena*, 114; Peter Möller, *Resa i Afrika, genom Angola, Ovampo och Damaraland* (Stockholm, 1899), as referenced in Klaus Dierks, *Namibian Roads in History: From the 13th Century till Today* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 43–46.

67. Wegner, *Aus Deutsch-Afrika!* 20 (letter 15 August 1883); Schwabe, *Mit Schwert und Pflug*, 117.
68. Uwe Timm, *Morenga*, trans. Breon Mitchell (New York, 2003), 106.
69. *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, “Aus allen Erdtheilen,” no. 14, 1886.
70. Ludwig Worthmann, *Die Deutschen Kolonien in Westafrika* (Schweidnitz, 1887), 26–27.
71. Schwarz, *Im deutschen Goldlande*, 47 and 65.
72. Gustav Nachtigal’s disillusioned report from early December 1884 was not passed on. Gründer, *Geschichte der Deutschen Kolonien*, 56.
73. Wegner, *Aus Deutsch-Afrika!* 12 (letter 6 June 1883). This comment was based on hearing about Vogelsang’s initial journey. See Wegner, *Aus Deutsch-Afrika!* 12 (letter 15 August 1883).
74. Gerhard Rohlfs, *Angra Pequena: Die erste deutsche Kolonie in Afrika*, 2nd ed (Bielefeld, 1884), 10.
75. Karl Emil Jung, “Deutschlands Colonialbestrebungen: Deutsche an der Westküste von Afrika,” *Die Gartenlaube* 37 (1885). See also Johannes Baumgarten, *Deutsch-Afrika und seine Nachbarn im schwarzen Erdteil: eine Rundreise in abgerundeten Naturschilderungen, Sittenscenen und ethnographischen Charakterbildern*, 2nd ed (Berlin, 1890), 423–503.
76. *Globus*, “Aus allen Erdtheilen,” no. 14, 1886.
77. Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 52; Horst Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*: The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884–1915) (London, 1980), 35; Conradt, *Erinnerungen aus zwanzigjährigem Händler- und Fram-erleben in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 90–91.
78. Ernst Rudolf Scherz, *Südwesten Geschichten am Lagerfeuer* (Basel, 2005), 8. In another instance the illegal disposal of used oil made some believe they found this precious resource. Scherz, *Südwesten Geschichten am Lagerfeuer*, 9.
79. Mining efforts emerged with the Great Namaqualand Mining Company (1854/1855), a South African company. Ovambos had long smelted copper in Ondangwa. See Grot-peter, *Historical Dictionary of Namibia*, 76–77.
80. *Globus*, “Aus allen Erdtheilen,” no. 11, 1887; *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, “Geographischer Monatsbericht: Afrika,” 33 (1887): 122–26, here 124.
81. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Was haben wir von Lüderitzbucht zu erwarten?” no. 5, 1885.
82. Baumgarten, *Deutsch-Afrika und seine Nachbarn im schwarzen Erdteil*, 450; *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Das Hinterland von Angra-Pequena und Walfischbay,” 1 July 1887 (Conradt).
83. Rohlfs, *Angra Pequena*, 6 and 9.
84. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Die Angra Pequena-Frage,” no. 14, 1884.
85. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Kolonisatorische Vorgehen in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” no. 3, 1887.
86. Gustav Leipoldt, *Die Leiden des Europäers im afrikanischen Tropenklima* (Leipzig, 1887), 108.
87. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, “Das Namaqualand, dessen Bewohner und wirthschaftliche Verhältnisse,” 1 August 1890.

88. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Der Wert künstlicher Bewässerung,” no. 12, 1884 (Hemler).
89. Schwarz, *Im deutschen Goldlande*, 108 and 113.
90. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Eine deutsche Niederlassung am Oranienflusse,” 23 March 1889.
91. Rohlf, *Angra Pequena*, 10.
92. Worthmann, *Die Deutschen Kolonien in Westafrika*, 13–14.
93. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Die Angra Pequena-Frage,” no. 14, 1884. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Die Angra Pequena-Frage,” no. 13 1884; *Daheim: Ein deutsches Familienblatt mit Illustrationen*, “Aus Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 6 February 1886; Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, 28 and 47.
94. *Kladderdatsch, humoristisch-satirisches Wochenblatt*, “Kleiner Anzeiger,” 15 June 1884.
95. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Was haben wir von Lüderitzbucht zu erwarten?” no. 5, 1885. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Die koloniale Entwicklung Südwestafrikas,” no. 2, 1886.
96. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Deutschland und Angra Pequena,” no. 14, 1884.
97. Kundrus, *Modern Imperialisten*, 45. For different proposals put to the Auswärtige Amt (Kolonial Abteilung) Foreign Office in 1894–95 see BArch-B, R 1001/6492, Berichte von Dr. Hindorf, Dr. Dowe [sic] und Dr. Sander über den landwirtschaftlichen Wert und die Möglichkeiten zur Besiedelung Südwestafrikas (Dez. 1894—Febr. 1895).
98. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Die koloniale Entwicklung Südwestafrikas,” no. 2, 1886.
99. Kundrus, *Modern Imperialisten*, 29.
100. John C. G. Röhl, *Wilhelm II: The Kaiser's Personal Monarchy, 1888–1900* (Cambridge, 2017), 149.
101. Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für die Erschließung Afrikas 1880 bis 1960* (Paderborn, 2004), 109–10.
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103. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, Enclosure No. 284, John J. Cleverly, 31 Oct. 1893. For debates tied to Walvis Bay over the years, see also BArch R 1001/8847–8848, Walfischbai. Allgemeines. and BArch-B R 1001/8849–8850, Verhandlungen mit England über die Abtretung der Walfischbai.
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105. Goudie and Viles, *Landscape and Landforms of Namibia*, 3.
106. Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 2.
107. *Lüderitzbuchter Zeitung*, “Fünfzig Jahre Lüderitzbucht,” April 8, 1933, as referenced in *Lüderitzbucht damals und gestern*.
108. Schwabe, *Mit Schwert und Pflug*, 4.
109. François, *Nama und Damara*, 5.
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111. Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time*, 61–62.
112. Kienetz, “The Key Role of the Orlam Migrations,” 565–69.

113. Melber, "Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation," 24. See also Heinz Walter Stengel, "Der Baiweg," *Namib und Meer* 3 (Oct., 1972), 5–20.
114. Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time*, 61. See also Dierks, *Namibian Roads in History*, 23.
115. Melber, "Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation," 25.
116. Grotpeper, "Upingtonia, Republic of," 544–45.
117. Melber, "Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation," 24–25.
118. *Ibid.*, 25.
119. Dierks, *Namibian Roads in History*, 24. See also Kienetz, "The Key Role of the Orlam Migrations," 561.
120. Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time*, 61–62.
121. Dove, "Baiweg," *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, Band I, 118.
122. Melber, "Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation," 27.
123. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, "Die Häfen der Südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiete," 1 June 1890.
124. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, "Beschreibung der Küste zwischen Mossamedes und Port Nolloth," 15 November 1890 (Bokemeyer).
125. Max Esser, *An der Westküste Afrikas. Wirtschaftliche und Jagd-Streifzüge* (Berlin, 1898), 211.
126. *Annalen der Hydrographie und maritimen Meteorologie*. "Kleine Notizen," XVII, no. VI (1889).
127. Conradt, *Erinnerungen aus zwanzigjährigem Händler- und Framerleben in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 111; Gebhart, "Sandwich Harbour," 101 and 103; François, *Nama und Damara*, 11.
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131. François, *Nama und Damara*, 11. See also Goudie and Viles, *Landscape and Landforms of Namibia*, 20.
132. *Cape Times*, 27 July 1888, as accessible in R 1001/8849, Verhandlungen mit England über die Abtretung der Walfischbai.
133. *The Times*, 22 August 1888, accessible in R 1001/8849, Verhandlungen mit England über die Abtretung der Walfischbai.
134. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, no 30, "Telegram German South-West Africa," 5 February 1891. See also TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, no. 14, Colonial Office R. H. Meade, 7 January 1891.
135. Wallace, *History of Namibia*, 125–26. Scholarship generally points to a slightly later point, often chancellor Bernhard von Bülow's 1897 speech in parliament where he spoke about "a German place in the sun."

136. TNA, CO 879/34/4, no. 30, "Telegram German South-West Africa," 5 February 1891. See also TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 14, "Colonial Office to Foreign Office," 7 January 1891.
137. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, no. 93 and no. 94, translations, *Reichsanzeiger, Times, Daily Telegraph*, April 1891.
138. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, no. 139, John J. Cleverly, 6 January 1892.
139. Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 72. See also Blackler, "From Boondoggle to Settlement Colony."
140. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, "Deutsch-Südwestafrika," 1 January 1894. See also Rudolf Bittrolff, *Der Krieg in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Karlsruhe, 1895), 26; Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 73.
141. Krynauw, *Das Kreuzkap*, 35–36.
142. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, no. 253, Marquess of Ripon, 23 August 1893.
143. TNA, CO 879/34/4, African (South), no. 407, Further Correspondence Relating to Anglo-German Claims in the Neighbourhood of the Settlement Walfisch Bay, Enclosure no. 236, 8 June 1893 (John J. Cleverly, "Artillery for German Troops") and 14 June 1893 (John J. Cleverly, State of Affairs Walfisch Bay). See also François, *Nama und Damara*, 15.
144. *Süd-Afrikanische Zeitung*, "Deutschland und England in Walfischbai" 2 August 1893, as accessible in BArch-B, R 1001/8849, Verhandlungen mit England über die Abtretung der Walfischbai.
145. Helmut Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894–1914*, translated by Hugh Ridley. (Evanston, 1996), 30; Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen: Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880–1914* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 117.
146. Brigitte Lau, ed., *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 2nd ed., trans. Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorp (Windhoek, 1996), 207–10; Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 54; Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 151.
147. Caprivi, 1 March 1893, 55. Sitzung, Stenographischer Bericht des deutschen Reichstags (SBRT), vol. 128, 1539. Retrieved 1 April 2021 from www.reichstagsprotokolle.de. See also Oskar Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit* (Munich, 1955), 31.
148. Caprivi, 1 March 1893, 55. Sitzung, SBRT, vol. 128, 1539, as translated in Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894–1914*, 3.
149. Caprivi, 1 March 1893, 55. Sitzung, SBRT, vol. 128, 1359. Retrieved 1 April 2021 from www.reichstagsprotokolle.de.
150. *Ibid.*, 1360.
151. Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 44. Bley speaks of "Berlin's ambiguity towards the colony" in the early years. Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule 1894–1914*, xxvi.
152. Ruxton, "Notes on the South-West Coast of Africa," 12.
153. Hydrographic Office, ed., "Chapter VI," 21, in *Supplement Relating to Africa Pilot*.

154. *Annalen der Hydrographie und maritimen Metereologie*, “Rekognoscirungsfahrt S.M.Kr. ‘Habicht’, Kommandant Korv.-Kapt. von Schuckmann I., an der Westküste Afrikas von Walfisch-Bai bis Kap Frio,” XIV, no. XI (1886). See also Becker, “Bericht des Kommandanten S.M. Krzr. Falke über Landungsplätze bei Kap Cross und an der Swachaub-Mündung,” 1894 (University Library Frankfurt, Afrikabibliothek, S 17/9991); *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, “Verschiedene Mitteilungen. Bericht des Kommandanten S.M. Kreuzer ‘Falke’ über Landungsplätze bei Kap Gross und an der Tsoakhaub-Mündung,” 1 May 1893.
155. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Beschreibung der Küste zwischen Mossamedes und Port Nolloth,” 15 November 1890.
156. *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, “Die Häfen des südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebietes,” 1 June 1890.
157. Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 40/41.
158. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Erinnerung an die Gründung und Flaggenhissung in Swakopmund 1884,” 14 August 1909. It is striking that some German voices spoke about “overtaking” (*überflügeln*) Walvis Bay by 1896. See *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Kleine Mitteilungen,” 18 January 1896.
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161. *Ibid.*, 404.
162. Diana Frost, *Work and Community among West African Migrant Workers since the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1999), 8. See also William Blakemore Lyon, “From Labour Elites to Garveyites: West African Migrant Labour in Namibia, 1892–1925,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 47, no. 1 (2021): 37–55, here 42.
163. François, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 157. Local groups, described by German newcomers as “Topnaar-Hottentots,” helped carry those landing ashore. Emil Eisinger, *Im Damaraland und Kaokofeld: Erinnerungen aus Südwest-Afrika* (Bühl, 1913), 5; Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, 32. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Drei Tage in Südwestafrika,” 7 October 1893.
164. NAN, HBS, St. Unit 1, File 1/2, Bericht 31 March 1901.
165. Lyon, “Namibian Labor Empire”; Bravenboer and Rusch, *The First 100 Years of State Railways in Namibia*, 10.
166. François, *Nama und Damara*, 15–16. See also Karl Brackmann, *Fünfzig Jahre deutsche Afrikaschiffahrt: Die Geschichte der Woermann-Linie und der Deutschen Ost-Afrika-Linie* (Berlin, 1935), 71; Jeffrey S. Gaydish, “‘Old Swakopmund’ Reexamined: German Labor Mobilization Practices in Colonial Namibia” (MA thesis, Arizona State University 2001), 24–36.
167. Lyon, “From Labour Elites to Garveyites,” 42.
168. *Ibid.*, 41. According to Lyon, “West African migrant labourers who came to the colony in the 1890s were essential to the development and maintenance of the German colonial infrastructure before the First World War.” Lyon, “From Labour Elites to Garveyites,” 54.

169. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Kleine Mitteilungen,” 24 August 1895.
170. Schwabe, *Mit Schwert und Pflug*, 263.
171. BArch-B, R 8023/1078, Landungsverhältnisse an der Swakop-Mündung, Brief, 14 December 1894.
172. Wilhelm Külz, *Deutsch-Südafrika im 25. Jahre deutscher Schutzherrschaft: Skizzen und Beiträge zur Geschichte Deutsch-Südafrikas* (Berlin, 1909), 46. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Koloniale Rundschau,” 11 November 1893; *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Zur Lage in Südwestafrika,” 21 July 1894. The average population of around ten whites and 150 natives underscores that little trade had materialized. Külz, *Deutsch-Südafrika im 25. Jahre deutscher Schutzherrschaft*, 47.
173. *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Gross-Namaland,” 21 June 1890. See also *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, “Einiges über die Küste des südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebietes und den Verkehr an derselben,” 8 December 1894.
174. Külz, *Deutsch-Südafrika im 25. Jahre deutscher Schutzherrschaft*, 44. Külz speaks about a “illusion-like shortsightedness.” See Külz, *Deutsch-Südafrika im 25. Jahre deutscher Schutzherrschaft*, 47.
175. Francois, *Nama und Damara*, 307.