Dealing with the bibliographies and publications about and by J L. Krapf, especially in the archives of the Basle Mission, I was astonished and I got the feeling that such an amount and such a variety of work could not have been done by one person only. At first, Krapf was a missionary by profession. He and Rebmann were called the pioneers of the East-African mission. Beyond this, however, different missionary societies were encouraged by the publications and proposals of Krapf to work in East Africa, e.g. the Church Missionary Society in the service of which Krapf and Rebmann started their work in Rabai Mpya, the Swedish Evangelical mission, the Methodist Mission, the St. Christona Mission, the Hermannsburg Mission and the Berlin Evangelical Mission. Though all biographers cannot avoid to state that Krapf did not convince more than two (some biographies speak about only one) persons to the Christian belief during all his missionary life, there is no doubt that Krapf's visions influenced missionary work in East Africa. We can say that he was a strategist of Christian mission in East Africa.

At the same time, however, Krapf was a pioneer of colonial expansion by European states in Africa, too. He tried to promote the idea that Germany should establish a strong influence in the South of Ethiopia, convert the Galla people to Christianity and support them to establish a state Ormania in order to have a strong bulwark against Islam. The name of the largest province in Ethiopia today is Oromiya and many members of the Oromo people know that the European missionary Krapf praised their people more than a hundred years ago. Krapf said in his book *Travels, Researches, and missionary labours*:

I conclude my notices of the southern countries of Abessinia with a brief description of the Gallas, a nation to which during my residence in Shoa I paid particular attention, as I consider them destined by Providence after their conversion to Christianity to attain the importance and fulfill the mission which Heaven has pointed out to the Germans in Europe. (Krapf 1860: 72)

In the English version of the *Travels* R. C. Bridges wrote in the introduction to the second edition:

In 1886, Carl Peters and others who were inclined to cast Krapf in the role of a hero of German imperialism called on Germans to respond to Krapf's example by forming a mission to work for the fatherland as well as God in East Africa. The Berlin Evangelical Missionary Society, which began work in German East Africa, was the result (Krapf 1860/1968: 50/51)

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*This paper was read at the Swahili-Colloquium in May 1996 at Bayreuth.*
So far I dealt with the missionary and political efforts of Krapf - beyond the borders of Germany, however, he became famous mainly because of his and Rebmann's geographical discoveries. R.C. Bridges stated in his above mentioned introduction to the *Travels*:

On his return to Europe in 1850, he (Krapf) was invited to Berlin where the geographer, Carl Ritter, took him to meet the most outstanding of Germany's scientists, Baron Alexander von Humboldt, who showed great interest in the East African snow-capped mountains. The King invited them all to dinner and was apparently much impressed with the missionary. Krapf contributed to learned journals, Ritter used his material, and Humboldt mentioned his work in the *Cosmos*. At the practical level, the journeys of the German explorers Albrecht Rösch and Baron Carl Claus von der Decken were, to a large extent, inspired by the example of Krapf and Rebmann, while later travellers like Johann Maria Hildebrandt were also to recognize their debt to the missionaries.

In France the adventures of Krapf and Rebmann were followed with considerable interest and the Paris Geographical Society, for example, gave the work of the two men much better coverage than did the Royal Geographical Society in London. In 1852, together with Livingstone and William Cotton Osowell, Krapf and Rebmann were each awarded the Society's Silver Medal. (Krapf 1860/1968: 51)

Beside the information on East African geography the ethnographical informations about East African people published by Krapf met with high interest in Europe.

As the main topic of my paper, however, I chose Krapf's linguistic work. Wilfred Whiteley wrote in his book *Swahili: The Rise of a National Language*:

To the missionary J.L. Krapf we owe the first systematic grammar of the language (1850), and this was followed thirty years later by his monumental dictionary (1882), which has recently been reprinted. But Krapf, too, directed our attention to a body of verse in Swahili, sending back to Germany manuscripts in the Arabic script which engaged the attention of later generations of scholars. His fellow countrymen, Velten, Delius, Büttner, Seidel, and later Meinhof, built on these foundations, providing at the same time a wealth of reading material. (Whiteley 1969: 13)

Polo mé commented in his *Swahili Language Handbook* on Krapf's Dictionary of the Swahili Language: "The first comprehensive Swahili-English lexicon, still most valuable for the cultural data supplied in connection with numerous lexical items" (Polo mé 1967: XII)

In the book *Swahili-Handbuch* edited by Mieleh and Möhlig in 1995 we can read:


Frankl characterized the work of Krapf in his article "Johann Ludwig Krapf and the Birth of Swahili Studies" in *ZDMG* 142 (1992) with the following words: "Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1881), the first foreigner to make a serious study of Swahili, is the fons et origo from which all later studies of Swahili derive" (Frankl 1992: 12) Already "in 1860", as we can read in Frankl's article,

Krapf had given a "Kisuahili Dictionary in four manuscript volumes to the Rev. Thomas Wakefield, of the United Methodist Free Churches' Mission at Ribe". In due course the
four volumes were presented to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London; each is inscribed "Dictionary of the Suahili Language - J.L. Krapf - Rabbai Mpia - 1853" (with 1853 amended to "1846-1853"). That work is the earliest Suahili lexicon of substance, and is the precursor of Krapf's printed lexicon of 1882; all four volumes are now in Rhodes House Library, Oxford (Catalogue reference, X 158-161) (Frankl 1992: 19).

The first version of Krapf's *Swahili Dictionary* was completed in 1848 but unfortunately mostly destroyed by white ants. The second version seems to be the one mentioned by Frankl and cited above, and another version was completed by Krapf in 1878 and became the basis for the publication in 1882. Frankl cited Krapf's words about this dictionary:

I have now completely done with compiling my Dictionary in Kisuaheli to which I have not to add anything more. Of course the work cannot claim having exhausted the complete treasure of the Suaheli language, but in fact no dictionary of any language can lay claim to absolute perfection... The Dictionary has not only a regard to linguistic matters, there is also a vast deal of information referring to ideas, customs and practices of the Suahelis and other East African tribes, so that a new coming European will soon set himself right about everything in his new home. (Frankl 1992: 18)

We owe to Krapf the first Swahili grammar and the first Swahili dictionary, important is also the *Vocabulary of Six East African Languages* in which he presented the vocabulary of 5 Bantu-languages and of the Galla (Oromo) language. In the preface to this publication (Tubingen 1850) Krapf wrote, speaking of himself in the third person:

In the progress of his stay at Mombas he became acquainted with Natives of various and distant countries, who spoke languages - which, departing as they appeared from the Suaheli, were soon recognised to be of remarkable accord with the fundamental substance of the language of the coast, viz the Suaheli. At that period he was not yet aware of the astonishing fact (which every new philological discovery seems to corroborate), that one common language lies at the bottom of all the idioms which are spoken from the Equator to the Cape of Good Hope (Krapf 1850: III)

In his vocabulary of 6 East African languages Krapf presented words from the Bantu languages: Kisuaheli, Kinika, Kikamba, Kipokomo and Kihiau (All languages are given here in Krapf's spelling ) Frankl wrote in his article about Krapf with the headline "Krapf and Bantu languages":

Krapf was the first to recognise the relationship between the Bantu languages of east and south Africa - M H C Lichtenstein (1780-1857) had already noted that most of the south African languages belong to one family. The Oxford English Dictionary (second edition, 1899) correctly attributes the first usage of "Bantu" to Krapf's fellow-German, W H I Bleek (the entry, however, requires correction in that the first printed instance of the word was not in 1862 but 1858) So while the notion of "Bantu" had been conceived by Lichtenstein, in south Africa, and by Krapf in east Africa, it was Bleek who gave the word birth.

The mentioned notes of Frankl's article are:
16) W H I Bleek, Comparative Grammar of South African Languages, I London 1862

When I presented my paper in Bayreuth the statement of Frankl about Krapf as the first to recognise the relationship between the Bantu-languages provoked the question if really Krapf was the first one and not Bleek. Therefore I now cited the complete passage of Frankl's article with the corresponding notes. But in the meantime I have learned - from a recommendation of Andrej Zhukov from St. Petersburg - that neither Frankl nor Knappert were right with their statements. A Zhukov gave me the bibliographical notes of two important publications from 1847 which I looked for immediately after returning home to Berlin.

One was the publication of "THREE CHAPTERS OF GENESIS TRANSLATED INTO THE SOOAHELEE LANGUAGE" by the Rev. Dr Krapf with an introduction by W W Greenough (Vol 1, 1847, pp 259-274). The second publication recommended to me by A. Zhukov, was the first volume of ZDMG from 1847 which contains 3 articles in which the name and work of Krapf is mentioned. In the first article H. v. Ewald described the Ethiopian manuscripts which Krapf sent to Tübingen, in the second article H. v. Ewald, too, informed-based on the material he received from Krapf-on the people living in East Africa and the Suaheli language. The third article in this volume was written by von der Gabelentz and is called "Ueber die Sprache der Suaheli". In this last article von der Gabelentz wrote the following sentences:


In the following he explained morphological similarities of the Suaheli- and Sechuana languages and gave a list of words in German, Suaheli, Wanika, Sechuana, Angola and Kongo. In Volume 1 of the Journal of American Oriental Society from 1847 W W Greenough got the same result:
Of the two great races, spoken of above, the most important, most widely extended and most intellectual, is what may be termed, for want of a better name, the Kaffir family. Sufficient proof exists of similarity of physical structure and of affinity of language to authorize the conclusion that nearly all the tribes of Africa, of which we have account, south of the equator, with the exception of the Hottentots, possess a common origin, and are to be included in the Kaffir race. It was long since observed that the language of the natives of the west coast, at 20° south latitude, was cognate to the dialects of the same parallel at the east. Captain Owen says that the languages of Sabia and Sofala are akin to those of Delagoa Bay, which are undoubtedly Kaffir. Lichtenstein gives it as his opinion that all the native tribes south of Quiloa, (90 south latitude,) are of the Kaffir stock. It is now evident that the languages of Zanzibar and Melinda belong to the same class. Though the words which are common to the various idioms of South Africa, as yet written, are comparatively few in number, still they may be considered sufficiently numerous to indicate the same kind of affinity as that allowed to the Indo-Germanic nations. There is not space here to give as full proof of this fact as is desirable. We have annexed a table of numerals, from one to ten, taken from the languages spoken in various parts of the great terra incognita, in which sufficient similarity exists to substantiate in an important degree our assertion." (Footnote 7: Owen's Voyage. Vol. I, p.276.-Prichard's Researches. Vol. II p 295) (Introduction to Three Chapters of Genesis translated into the Sooahelee Language by the Rev. Dr Krapf, p 263)

At the end of his introduction Greenough wrote:

The accompanying version is from the hand of the Rev. Dr. Krapf, a gentleman for several years in the employ of the English Church Missionary Society in Abyssinia, and the author, with Mr. Isenberg, of a journal of travels in that country. His residence among the African tribes of that region gave him peculiar advantages in the acquisition of dialects, and he was appointed interpreter to the English Embassy to Shoa, under the direction of Captain Harris. This translation into the Sooahelee is the first connected specimen of the language yet published, and was made after a six months' residence among that people, in the year 1844. It was presented by the author to the United States Consul at Zanzibar, Richard P. Waters, Esq., now of Salem., Massachusetts, who sent it to the late Hon. John Pickering. (Greenough 1847: 264)

We can learn from these publications that the diagnosis of a genetic relationship between the languages of southern, eastern and southwestern Africa was published in the same year - in 1847 - by two different persons, one in Europe - von der Gabelentz-, and one in the United States - W W Greenough. Both could achieve the generalization concerning the East-African languages only by the help of J L Krapf's materials who was the first person to provide scientists in Europe and America with material about the East-African languages. After this depression provoked by the discussion in Bayreuth let us return to Frankl's article about "Krapf and the Birth of Swahili Studies". He wrote at the end of this article:

The Swahili publications of Edward Steere and Charles Sacleux have circulated more widely than those of Krapf, while the printed and manuscript works of W E Taylos (Swahili scholar of genius) are of quite exceptional value; these observations notwithstanding, Krapf's pioneering contribution to the study of Swahili will be esteemed for as long as studies in that language are pursued (Frankl 1992: 20)

With all the above mentioned merits of the missionary Krapf, however, we have not yet completed the list of Krapf's pioneering works. He wrote a vocabulary of the Masai-language - certainly the first to be compiled: Vocabulary of the Engutuk Eliokob (Tübingen 1854) and he
published the first grammar and the first vocabulary of the Galla (Oromo) Language (in 1840 and 1842). As it holds true for the Swahili studies, the Oromo studies can also not deny the origins laid down by Krapf.

It is one of the ironies of fate that Krapf was honoured with a Ph.D. degree of the Tübingen University in 1844 neither for his Swahili- or Bantu studies nor for his Oromo studies, but for his merits in collecting and describing sources in Amharic and Ge'ez. Krapf had collected between 70 and 80 Ethiopian manuscripts and sent them to Germany. Though he dealt with the Amharic and Ge'ez languages he did not publish works in or about those languages. It must be result of a misunderstanding that in An African Biographical Dictionary by Norbert C Brockmann he writes on p. 181:

Reverend Johann Ludwig Krapf, missionary pioneer of East Africa, played a leading role in evangelizing and exploring the region. His linguistic work on Swahili, Amharic, and Ge'ez provided some of the earliest scientific investigation of those languages.

Brockmann gave as a source "DAHB" which means Dictionary of African Historical Biography by Mark R. Lipschutz and R. Kent Rasmussen where we can find on p. 115: "Krapf was an accomplished linguist. His writings on Ge'ez, Amharic, and Swahili are among the earliest scientific works on those languages." Perhaps the authors of the DAHB thought that the references given in Krapf's Reisen in Ostafrika on p. 485 are also his own, however, he listed the titles of his works on p. 484 (including an unpublished vocabulary of the Amharic language) and added a list of publications by his brother and colleague, W. Isenberg. But even in this list of Isenberg's publications I could not find any title on Ge'ez. Maybe the confusion with respect to Ge'ez was caused by the list of manuscripts in Ge'ez and Amharic that, of course, were not written but described by Krapf. I was searching for Krapf's works on Amharic and Ge'ez everywhere but I did not find any, not even in the Basle mission's archives.

In the appendix I will add the main biographical data of J.L. Krapf and a list of all his scientific or linguistic publications and manuscripts. At least I will present a selected bibliography of biographies and publications that include chapters about Krapf and his linguistic works. In these lists I did neither mention the large number of Krapf's articles in missionary journals nor articles that deal with Krapf's missionary work or his geographical and ethnological merits only. In point 3 and 4 of the list of Krapf's publications there are some references printed in italics. Those are references which I found only mentioned, which, however, I have not seen personally. From the list published in Reisen in Ostafrika it is not always clear whether a work was really published or not, and if it was published the biographical data is not always complete. If one or the other of the readers of this journal finds one of those references (printed in italics) I would be very grateful for getting a copy of the front page so that I can be sure of the existence of a printed version. Coming to the end of my paper I wish to try an answer the question that may arise after reading these pages - why and how the missionary J.L. Krapf was able to create such a comprehensive oeuvre. As far as his theological and political ideas are concerned he was in many respects a child of his time, he had to face errors, mistakes and intolerance.
As far as his geographical and linguistic works are concerned he was a person with all-round interest and with a very good linguistic background. He must have been a hard worker as well as an excellent organizer. He had a relatively strong health and a very strong will. He never gave up, not even in situations that seemed to be hopeless. His life lasted nearly 71 years, however, we must not forget that a journey to Africa during that time did not take 5 or 6 hours only as today but usually half a year, and that such journeys were very dangerous and exhausting.

Krapf was born in 1810 as the youngest of 4 children in a peasant's family in a village near Tübingen. In his childhood he once was beaten by a tailor so badly that it took him half a year to recover. He dreamed of becoming a skipper, but his parents could not cover the expenses of such a career. His interest in geography coming up later on was surely connected with the child's yearning for distant and unknown shores. When his father bought the first geographical maps for him he was astonished about the empty spaces and the lack of names for towns and countries in East Africa. He got the chance to learn at the Latin school at Tübingen and worked very hard to study the Latin grammar. His studies at the missionary seminar at Basle as well as of theology in Tübingen widened his knowledge of Latin and added to that of Hebrew. Preparing the journey to Abessinia he used the time in Cairo to learn Arabic. Immediately after his arrival in Adwa he started to learn Amharic and later on he took all opportunities to learn the words of other languages and to collect all knowledge about other people and tribes he could find as well as all geographical information which could help to fill the empty spaces in the geographical maps of Africa. Though it was not his job to travel everywhere and to collect geographical data he did it and he encouraged his colleagues to do the same. Certainly not all his colleagues were pleased with such ideas, especially because of the various dangers connected with such journeys. At the same time he encouraged his colleagues to collect all available linguistic material and he supported them in publishing it. In some cases Krapf edited publications by colleagues, and, for example, Isenberg also edited some of his publications. In the bibliography in point II 4 you will find publications of other authors edited by J.L. Krapf. I am not sure if my list is complete.

I would like to close with some words by Frankl:

In 1934 a memorial to Krapf was unveiled at Mkomani, Mombasa. It is gratifying to add that in 1981, one hundred years after the great man's death, a commemorative evening and reception was held at Mombasa, and an exhibition displaying mementos of his life and work was mounted at the Fort. (Frankl 1992: 19)
APPENDIX

I. Krapf’s Biography

Born on 11/01/1810 in Derendingen near Tübingen as the youngest of four children in a peasant’s family

1823-1826 Attending the Latin school in Tübingen

May 1827 Entry into the Missionary seminar at Basle

May 1829 Leaving the Missionary seminar at his own request

1829-1834 Studies of theology in Tübingen

1834 For 6 weeks curacy at Altenburg near Calw

Autumn 1834 - spring 1835 curacy at Wolfenhausen (stepped down after being criticized because of one of his sermons)

1835 Private tutor at Kirchheim Autum

1836 Re-entry into the Missionary seminar in Basle

Feb 1937 Departure to Egypt via Marseille, Cairo (learned Arabic at Cairo)

Dec 1837 Arrival at Adua

March 1838 Expulsion of the Protestant Missionaries by prince Ubie

Jan 1839 Travel to Shoa to king Sahle Sellassie, stay at the king’s court at Ankober

March 1842 Return to Egypt

Sept. 1842 Marriage with Rosine Dietrich from Basle at Alexandria

1842 Krapf was given an honorary doctorate by the philosophical faculty of the university of Tübingen because of his merits in collecting and describing the Ethiopian literature

Nov. 1843 Travel to Zanzibar

Mai 1844 Moved to Mombasa

July 1844 Death of his wife and daughter in Mombasa

June 1844 Beginning the translation of the New Testament into Swahili

June 1846 Johannes Rebmann joined Krapf - establishing the missionary station Rabbai Mpio

May 1848 Rebmann saw mount Kilimandjaro as the first European

Dec. 1849 Krapf saw Mount Kenya

April 1850-April 1851 Travel to Europe

Sept. 1853 Krapf returns to Europe
1854 Travel to Ethiopia, the plans failed, health ruined, return and settling in the colony of pietists at Korntal

July 1856 Marriage with Charlotte Pelargus in Stuttgart

Autumn 1861-Nov. 1862 Travel to East Africa

Oct 1867-April 1868 Interpreter for the British military expedition to Ethiopia, early departure because of bad health

Nov 1868 Death of his second wife

Oct. 1869 Marriage with Nanette Schmid

26 Nov 1881 Krapf died at Korntal

II. Bibliography of Krapf's publications:

1. Journals / Descriptions of travels:

Krapf, J.L. 1858 (unchanged new print 1994) *Reisen in Ostafrika*. Stuttgart (Münster-Hamburg)


Isenberg and Krapf. 1843 (Newprint 1968) *Journals of the Rev Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf, Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, detailing their proceedings in the Kingdom of Shoa, and journeys in other parts of Abyssinia, in the years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842*. London

2. Linguistic Works:


Krapf, L. and J. Rebmann 1887 *A Nika-English dictionary*. London (391 pp)

Krapf, J.L. 1850a. *Vocabulary of six East-African languages (Kisuaheki, Kinika, Kikamba, Kipokómo, Kihiau, Kigálla)*. Tübingen

Krapf, J.L. 1850b. *Outline of the elements of the Kisuaheki language with special reference to the Kinika dialect*. Tübingen

Krapf, J.L. 1854. *Vocabulary of the Engítutk Eloikob or of the language of the Wakuaffnation in the interior of Equatorial Africa*. Tübingen

3. Translations of Religious Writings:

Krapf, J.L. 1841. Evangelium Matthaei translatum in linguam Gallarum. Ankobari
Krapf, J.L. and J Rebmann. 1848. The beginning of a spelling book of the Kinika language accompanied by a translation of the Heidelberg Catechism Bombay
Krapf, J.L. 1848. Translation of the Evangelium Lucii in Kinika Bombay.
Krapf, J.L. 1854. Translation of the English liturgy into the Suahelisprache Tübingen

4. Publications by other authors edited by Krapf:

Erhardt 1857 Ed. Krapf Dictionary of the Masai-language

5. List of unpublished works compiled by Krapf (according to Krapf, Reisen in Ostafrika. pp 484-485):

Krapf, J.L. Amharic vocabulary.
Krapf, J.L. Translation of the Evangelium Matthäi in Kikamba
Krapf, J.L. Translation of the whole New Testament into Suaheli
Krapf, J.L. Comprehensive Dictionary of the Suaheli-language (printed in 1882, see above)

II. Literature about Krapf or including statements about Krapf (Biographies and publications which mention (also) the linguistic work of Krapf):

Claus, W. 1882. Dr. Ludwig Krapf, Missionar in Ostafrika. Basel


