

MiMoRA#2

HERITAGE, LEGACY, MEMORY

Mission and Modernity Research Academy
5-13 September 2019
Leuven, Belgium

KU LEUVEN

KADOC



Family portret in the Redemptorist mission of Thysstad (Mbanza-Ngungu, DR Congo) taken by Flemish missionary Joseph Seghers (1916).
[KADOC-KU Leuven]

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Over the past years, the history of missionary movements has become of interest to diverse disciplines within the humanities, including anthropology, theology, architecture, heritage studies, history, and educational sciences. However, this interdisciplinary booming of the field has also led to divergence. This is why in 2018, KU Leuven researchers from several faculties decided to set up **MiMoRA**: the 'Mission and Modernity Research Academy'. With this initiative, they aim to bring together current research projects and expertise on missionaries and steer them towards new thematic frontiers, by providing a forum for academic debate and by creating new networks for young scholars across the globe. It also aspires to familiarize foreign scholars with KU Leuven's long research tradition in the study of missions and missionaries and its unique archives and research libraries. **MiMoRA** is coordinated by KADOC, the interfaculty Documentation and Research Center on Religion, Culture and Society at KU Leuven.

While the first edition of **MiMoRA** centered on the topic of 'Mission and Education', the second Research Academy will study the theme of 'Heritage, Legacy and Memory' and take place from 5 to 13 September 2019. **MiMoRA#2** will consist of

a series of workshops, methodological sessions, seminars with keynotes and research papers, and consultations of the missionary collections of KADOC-KU Leuven and the Maurits Sabbe Library. Thomas Coomans (KU Leuven), Idesbald Goddeeris (KU Leuven), Karen Jacobs (University of East Anglia), Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha (California State University Northridge), Harald Suermann (RWTH Aachen University) and Ellen Veia Rosnes (VID Specialized University) are among the confirmed keynote speakers. Interested junior scholars – both PhD students and young postdocs – are invited to participate and to submit a proposal.

MiMoRA#2 welcomes researchers working on all types of topics within the field of Christian missions and missionaries in the modern era (1850-), both in a colonial and a postcolonial context, that are related to the thematic focus on 'Heritage, Legacy and Memory'. We are seeking papers that address a selection of the multiple ways in which the endeavors of missionaries and missionary organizations have affected local societies and cultures, and/or how their significance is negotiated in the present. Potential topics might include (but are not limited to):

Religion

The imprint of Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, etc.) within local communities, and missionary approaches to and views on local religions, religious practices, rituals and narratives; processes of appropriation of Christian/Western religious ideas and practices within local communities, and the blending of Christianity with local belief systems; confrontations between competing missionary religions and religious denominations and their impact on local social structures; the influence of local religious cultures on individual missionaries and missionary programs and activities.

Language

The role of missionary linguistics in shaping, standardizing and instrumentalizing local vernacular idioms; missionary translating activities between supporting the 'civilizing' goal of the missions and supporting the 'colonization of consciousness' through the unidirectional appropriation of language; missionary ethno- and sociolinguistics, the politics of language and the 'creation' of ethnolinguistic groups; the role of the vernacular in missionary policies and strategies.

Community and identity

The instrumentality of missionary ethnographic engagement with local cultures and traditional expressions in shaping social identities, creating subdivisions, and altering local social and religious hierarchies; the agency of local communities and individuals in such processes; the introduction/pursuing of Western ideologies about race, language and culture, and therewith of asymmetric social relationships between colonizers/evangelists and the colonized/evangelized.

Historiographies and individual life histories

The place and valuation of (Western) Christian missions, organizations and individual missionaries in local/national historical narratives; personal accounts and memories of missionaries and missionary institutions (schools, workshops, farms, hospitals, orphanages, etc.) as documented in interviews, (auto)biographies, oral traditions, etc.

Missionary legacies

The approach to, reminiscence and contestation of missions and missionaries in the 'South' as well as in the 'North' today (e.g. memorials, museum collections, buildings, literature, research, education, etc.); the tensions between heritagization, memorialization and mitigation of missionary/colonial history; the history of and the current positions in the debates on ethnological collections in the West originating from missionary activities, missionary archives, etc.

Architecture and spatial models

A re-engagement with the more archetypal research focus of missionary architecture (mission settlements, reductions, churches, schools, hospitals, etc.) could lead to, for example, exploring how the configuration of spatial models resonated missionary ambitions to restructure societal organization on the whole; how local communities responded to the physical alteration of the landscape; how missionary activities/affected local conceptions of 'space' (natural, human, profane, sacred); how remaining missionary buildings or sites are seen/used/heritagized today.

Heuristics and methodology

We also invite methodological interventions that address the practical challenges that are involved when studying the histories of missions and missionaries, and missionary legacies in particular (through oral history, material sources, archival records, ethnographic descriptions, iconography, music/sounds, myths, legends, etc.).

We feel very strongly about innovative and interdisciplinary research, preferably from a comparative perspective (e.g. diachronic analyses, cross-cultural interactions, interreligious influences, interactions between the secular and profane, etc.). Although we accept proposals from researchers who have attended the first edition of **MiMoRA**, we will give preference to newcomers and thus encourage the rotation of conveners.

PRACTICAL

MiMoRA#2 will take place at KADOC-KU Leuven (Leuven, Belgium) from 5 to 13 September 2019.

In order to apply, please upload your research proposal (max. 1,500 words, including both your current research and, possibly, its link with collections held in Leuven), a CV (max. 1 page, with a picture and language skills), copies of your diplomas, a letter of motivation (ca. 500 words), and a letter of recommendation by your supervisor.

The deadline for submissions is 29 March 2019. The selection of candidates will be based on the application file as well as on geographical and thematic criteria. This selection will take place before 1 May 2019.

Afterwards, a number of research papers will be selected for an edited volume within the KADOC *Mission and Modernity Studies* published through Leuven University Press (GPRC).

All participants will be offered accommodation (with a maximum of 10 nights). Participants from beyond Europe and North America will be able to apply for funding for travel costs.

Information and applications

Have a look on our website www.kadoc.kuleuven.be/mimora

Please send further inquiries to mimora@kuleuven.be

Organizing committee

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Sander Buyck, *Diamond Barway. Adivasi Christians in India* (2016). [© Sander Buyck]

